Report on the Findings from the Study:
Canadian International Development Organizations' Engagement with Localization

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Executive summary

Background: Localization of international assistance (IA), also known as "locally-led development", is broadly understood as shifting power and resources to local actors in the Global South. Localization is heralded as a more ethical, effective, and sustainable approach to international assistance. The idea of localization is embedded in the aid effectiveness principle of "local ownership" and the Grand Bargain commitment to principled humanitarian action "as local as possible and as international as necessary". However, there is no common definition of localization as well as a lack of data about what localization means in practice and its impacts.

Purpose: In February 2022, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) funded a national study to better understand Canadian international development organizations' [1] perspectives, practices, successes and challenges with regards to localization of IA.

Methods: The study was conducted by a research consultant who developed an online questionnaire and an interview guide adapted from a comprehensive international literature review including more than 40 sources from donors, civil society organizations, and academic institutions, including Canadian and international non-governmental organizations. This study used a localization assessment framework, which was adapted from the literature review and focused on the following five dimensions of localization: (1) partnerships; (2) funding; (3) local capacity; (4) policy, influence and visibility, and (5) local community participation.

Participants: Participation in the study was anonymous and open to all Canadian international development organizations, whether or not they received funding from GAC. By August 2022, a total of 91 Canadian international development organizations had responded to the study's online anonymous questionnaire and 15 of them had taken part in one-hour individual follow-up interviews. Two-thirds of the participants are civil society organizations (CSOs). The questionnaire and interview data were aggregated and analyzed for themes.

Key findings: There is a consensus that the existing IA operating models are not effective at shifting resources, decision-making, and power from the Global North to the Global South. However, there are many different localization perspectives and practices:

- **47%** of participants provided their last fiscal year's funding **directly to local partners.**
- **56%** of participants characterized their organization's general approach to localization as **"feminist."**
- **36%** of participants have a **formal operational localization strategy or policy**.
- Among the five dimensions of localization explored in this study, *partnerships* was ranked the least challenging (54%) and most successfully operationalized (55%).
- *Funding* was ranked as the most challenging dimension (42%).

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[1] For the purposes of this study, ''Canadian international development organizations" refers to organizations whose primary focus (at least 50% of their activities) is international development, humanitarian assistance or peace-building in official development assistance (ODA)-eligible countries, including civil society organizations, foundations, academic/research institutions, and private sector organizations.

- *Policy, influence and visibility* and *funding* were closely tied as the least operationalized dimensions.
- Participants repeatedly and consistently said that Canadian tax laws,[2] coupled with donor standards and requirements for proposals, due diligence, compliance, reporting, and language, make it nearly impossible for local organizations to access or manage funds.
- **54%** "strongly agreed" and 34% "agreed" that their capacity-strengthening efforts were based on local needs and priorities.
- **37%** of participants evaluate their localization efforts.
- Most participants gauged their success with localization by the fact that their local partners do the work on the ground and that they have either shut down their satellite offices in the Global South or staffed these with local employees and local partners primarily run or co-lead these offices.
- **86%** of participants said their local partners either led or co-led project implementation, 66% either led or co-led project design, 64% led or co-led in monitoring and evaluation, and 51% led or co-led the assessment reviews.
- Participants had mixed opinions about the implications of localization for their work and how Canadian international development organizations could support the shift to a more localized approach: 71% of participants think their roles would change if localization were to become the norm and 29% think their roles would not change. The three most commonly mentioned roles were as (1) intermediaries; (2) fundraisers, and (3) equal partners who accompany local actors in the Global South and co-create enabling environments for locally-led development to become the norm.

Areas for further research: This study shed light on outstanding gaps in localization research. Further research could focus on the perspectives of (1) the local communities involved; (2) the full range of local partners, in addition to CSOs, including local and national governments, foundations, the private sector, and academic institutions; and (3) international development organizations that are not currently engaged in localization. Another key area for further research is to explore the links between localization, feminist approaches to development, and decolonization.

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[2] Since this study took place in the spring/summer 2022, reforms have been made to Canada's Income Tax Act, the legislative framework for direction and control requirements, and Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has published its related new draft guidance for Canadian registered charities making grants to non-qualified donees (CG-032).

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Key terms

Canadian international development organizations: Actors whose primary focus (constituting at least 50% of their activities) is international development, humanitarian assistance, or peace-building in Overseas Development Assistance (ODA)-eligible countries. The term Canadian international assistance organization was chosen as it is inclusive of a cross-section of organizations, such as civil society organizations (CSOs), academic institutions/research centres, private sector/social enterprises, and foundations.

- **Small and Medium-Size Organization (SMO):** less than 10 million dollars in consolidated revenue based on the organization's annual budget last fiscal year (and large organizations are defined as more than 10 million dollars in consolidated revenue)

Core funding: The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines core funding as unrestricted funding given to organizations to fund their programs and activities, including operations.

Local partner / local actor: A local or national organization based and operating in an Overseas Development (ODA)-eligible country that is not affiliated with an international organization. A local partner that maintains independent fundraising and governance systems may be a member of a network or confederation.[3]

Localization: Localization of international assistance (IA) is broadly understood by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) as shifting decision-making, resources, power, capacity, and project management to local partners, including national and subnational governments and/or national and local CSOs and women's rights organizations.

Localization assessment framework:[4] This framework provided evidence-based parameters for the research methodology and data collection tools. This framework includes the following dimensions:
- **Partnerships**: Partnerships with local actors are built to be open (including transparency of finances), equitable and reciprocal.
- **Funding**: Local humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development partners have increased access to international and national funding.
- **Capacity**: Local partners are supported to design, manage, and deliver practical people-centred humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes
- **Policy, influence, and visibility**: Local partners have greater presence, influence, and leadership in international development, humanitarian assistance or peace-building forums
- **Community Participation**: Local community members are actively engaged and meaningfully influence humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes

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[3] Definitions Paper, IASC Humanitarian Financing Task Team, Localization Marker Working Group, 2018.
[4] Adapted from The Start Fund and Start Network's Seven Dimensions of Localisation (SDL) and the NEAR Network's Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF).

Research design

Literature review: *What we read*

The literature review surveyed over 40 publications from Canada and around the world, including reports, journal articles, briefings and summaries. It highlighted progress made, the challenges to localization, and the critical issues, themes and best practices that have emerged from global localization efforts. The review consisted of a cross-section of Canadian and international sources to explore localization trends, policies and practices. It was critical to first understand Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and the Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance Policy when reviewing these publications, given that many of the aid effectiveness principles indicated in the policies overlap and intersect with key localization components.

While there is a lack of Canadian government policy or guidance on the localization of international assistance, Canada delivers IA within a global set of agreements that aim to increase effectiveness and efficiency in development cooperation, with an emphasis on national and local ownership: the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and the resulting 2012 Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation. Canada is also a signatory of the 2016 Grand Bargain, an agreement to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action, and supports its localization commitments. Canada also endorsed the 2011 New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, which seeks to foster country leadership and ownership of international assistance in fragile contexts.

Furthermore, Canada's 2008 *Official Development Assistance Accountability Act* (ODAAA) requires that all ODA activities take into account the perspectives of those affected by poverty to ensure that local needs are being met effectively. Canada's 2017 Feminist International Assistance Policy and related Action Area Policies, as well as the Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance Policy, are grounded in internationally agreed development effectiveness principles, and include commitments and guidance to work with national and local actors for the design, delivery and monitoring of development and humanitarian initiatives. GAC's definition of innovation in international assistance incorporates ideas related to localization, such as "locally driven solutions," and indicates that "innovation in international assistance is a process, mindset and means to enable new or improved locally driven solutions for better results (outcomes) and greater impact."

The Grand Bargain Annual Independent Report 2020 by the Overseas Development Institute's Humanitarian Policy Group outlined key areas of progress made through the collective and individual efforts of signatories. The report pointed out that important progress and positive practices regarding localization had been made and identified opportunities for these to be scaled up (Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2020). Various innovative approaches and tools have been developed globally to support localization, for example: UNOCHA's Country-Based-Pooled Funds, Dutch Relief Alliance's joint-locally led accountability systems, and CARE's Gender in Localization Toolkit, which seeks to "hardwire" gender into their partnerships (UNOCHA, 2022, Van Lierde, 2020, CARE International, 2022).

At the same time, the authors warned that "ownership and accountability for the transformation envisaged by the Grand Bargain remained variable" (Metcalfe-Hough et al., 2020). This is underscored by the shortfall towards the Grand Bargain commitment to allocate at least 25% of funds as directly as possible to local or national actors. By 2021, The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report showed that only 3.1% of global humanitarian funding went directly to local and national groups that year (Abrahams, 2022).

Generally, the literature emphasizes the importance and efficacy of locally led development, and there seems to be a normative acceptance of localization (Fast and Bennett, 2020; Steinberg, 2022). However, much of the literature reviewed outlined various factors that are hindering the operationalization of localization, as summarized in the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream Regional Conference on Localization of Aid. Overarching challenges include: how to adequately identify context-specific ways for local and international actors to work together; how humanitarian coordination mechanisms should be reconfigured so that local actors can lead them; and how to address donor compliance policies and structures that impede shifts in power. Critics noted a lack of a systematic approach in policy and practice to bridge the gap between local and international actors (Alcayna and Al-Murani, 2016).

Canadian CSOs and others have pushed for a review of government regulations that limit localization, including tax laws. This advocacy resulted in an amendment to the *Income Tax Act* in the spring/summer of 2022, after this study was conducted. Cooperation Canada had previously published a [policy brief on the topic](), explaining the issues related to the international development sector: " 'Direction and control' regulations require charities to exercise 'full direction and control' over their 'own activities' whenever they work with partners without a formal charitable status. This leaves charities with two options: only work with actors legally recognized as charities or engage in one-sided partnerships whereby the local actors…are relegated to an intermediary role" (Charles, 2019).[5]

Additionally, the literature review included the sub-themes of decolonization and feminist approaches. There were questions about the intersection of decolonization and gender justice with localization. Some authors argued that localization efforts that fail to address organizational and structural inequalities within the international development sector will replicate existing inequities (Omaku, 2020; Currion, 2020; Slim, 2020). The Humanitarian Policy Group called out the sector itself for making structural changes, arguing that "the barrier to greater local action is not a dearth of capacity, but instead the reluctance of international actors – donors, United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organisations – to cede power. The necessary shifts in the system will require effort and will take a generation to embed, but they are long overdue" (Fast and Bennett, 2020). There have been positive developments in this respect, as indicated by the joint Donor Statement on Supporting Locally Led Development, which Canada signed and which was [announced]() during high-level meetings at the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in December 2022.

Some have warned that gender-blind localization could further perpetuate gender inequality within the sector. A 2018 Oxfam's [report]() included a call to adopt a feminist approach to localization, "which would seek to further tackle power imbalances and patriarchal structures in humanitarian action by shifting power to national and local women's rights actors, which should result in improved outcomes for women and girls and their communities."

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[5] Since this study took place in the spring/summer 2022, reforms have been made to Canada's Income Tax Act, the legislative framework for direction and control requirements, and Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has published its related [new draft guidance]() for Canadian registered charities making grants to non-qualified donees (CG-032).

Purpose: *What we wanted to learn*

In February 2022, GAC commissioned this study to learn more about Canadian international development organizations' perspectives and practices on localization. At the time, there was no national data on how localization is understood and operationalized within the Canadian international development sector.

The purpose of this study was to listen to what the sector had to say on localization without being prescriptive about what localization is or should look like. This study is not an evaluation of the efforts of Canadian international development organizations, but rather an initial inquiry on localization perspectives and practices within the Canadian sector.

The findings from this study will help inform GAC's thinking and work and contribute to further dialogue on localization within the Canadian international development sector.

Methodology: *How we got there*

A research consultant, Julia Rao, led a process that involved the following:

- Desk research and literature review
- A review of Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and the Civil Society Partnerships for International Assistance Policy
- A qualitative and quantitative questionnaire with Canadian international development organizations that included 91 participants
- Fifteen semi-structured one-hour interviews with Canadian international development organizations representing the linguistic, regional and organizational diversity within the sector

The study began with an international literature review involving broad themes, trends and perspectives on localization. This review informed the conceptual framework and the questionnaire and interview guide developed for this study. The conceptual framework for localization drew from the Start network's [Seven Dimensions of Localization](#) (Smruti and Koenraad, 2017) and the Global South CSOs-led NEAR Network's [Localization Performance Measurement Framework](#) (Featherstone, 2019).

These complementary frameworks informed this study's **Localization Assessment Framework (LAF),** which includes these five intersecting and overlapping dimensions of localization:

- **Partnerships**: Partnerships with local actors are built to be open (including transparency of finances), equitable and reciprocal.
- **Funding**: Local humanitarian assistance, peace-building, or international development partners have increased access to international and national funding.
- **Capacity**: Local partners are supported to design, manage, and deliver practical people-centred humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes.
- **Policy, influence, and visibility**: Local partners have greater presence, influence, and leadership in international development, humanitarian assistance or peace-building forums.
- **Community participation**: Local community members are actively engaged and meaningfully influence humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes.

The researcher collected primary-source quantitative and qualitative data from anonymous questionnaires (91) and semi-structured interviews (15) to understand how Canadian international development organizations conceive and operationalize localization, and how they see the effects of increased localization of IA on their roles and work.

In addition to a distribution list of 400 organizations, we used a snowball sampling strategy to send the invitation to participate in this study to a broad range of potential participants, including members from umbrella networks such as Cooperation Canada, regional and provincial councils, the Canadian Association for the Study of International Development (CASID), the Canadian Association of International Development Professionals (CAIDP) and the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health (CanWaCH), via e-mail. Various subgroups within the sector (CSOs, social enterprises, academic institutions, foundations, etc.) were reached, as shown in the table 1 below, which shows questionnaire participants by organization type. Most (77%) of the study participants are CSOs, reflecting that most international development organizations tend to be CSOs.

Demographics
Organization Type-from questionnaire
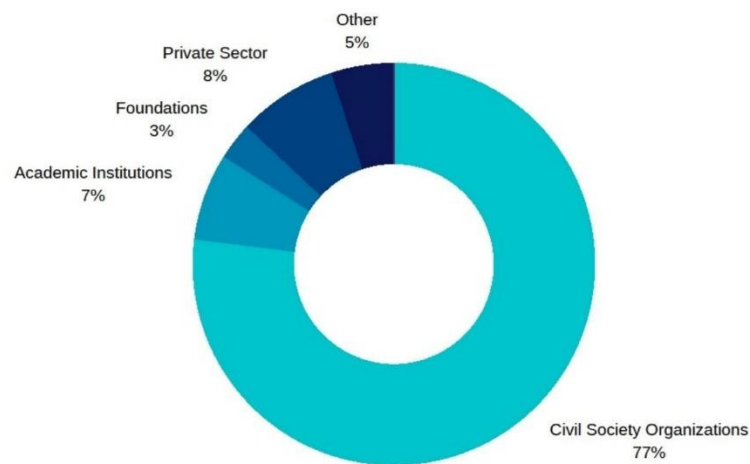
Table 1

The questionnaire and interview both included open-ended questions that provided valuable qualitative organizational-level insights from Canadian international development organizations whose primary focus is international development, humanitarian assistance or peace-building in ODA-eligible countries (see Appendix 1 for the questionnaire and Appendix 2 for the interview guide).

The semi-structured interview questions elaborate on key themes, findings and questions based on the data from the questionnaire. These interviews were conducted with 15 out of the 28 Canadian international development organizations that opted into the follow-up interview phase after completing the questionnaire. The interview sample was selected to reflect the regional, linguistic, and organizational diversity of the Canadian international development sector across the country. See Tables 2-4 below for comparative data on participant demographics from the questionnaire and interviews.

Table 1 — Demographics Organization Type-from questionnaire

Table 2 — Demographics Language of Participants

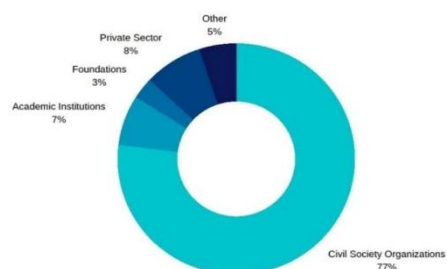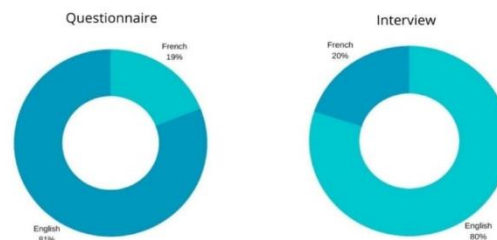Table 3 — Demographics Participants by Geographical Region
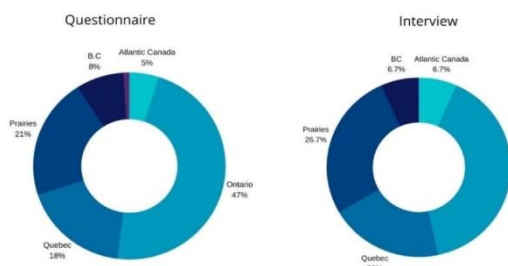
Table 4 — Demographics Organization size (based on annual revenue in the last FY):
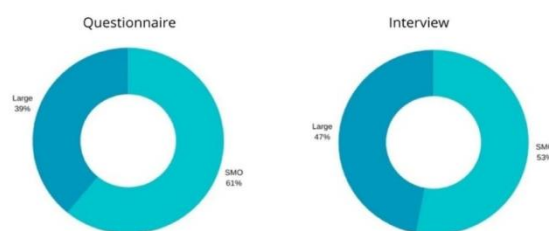
The names of participants cited in this report are pseudonyms, and any potentially identifying information has been removed.

Limitations of the research

In total, 99 questionnaires were submitted by Canadian international development organizations. However, only 91 were included since eight were incomplete. The study's 91 participants are comprised of CSOs (77%), including those registered as charitable organizations; private sector (8%), including social enterprises; academic institutions/research centres (7%), and foundations (3%). It is difficult to determine just how representative these 91 organizations are of the whole Canadian international development sector as there is limited information about the exact size and makeup of the sector. There is no single and recent source listing all the different types of international development organizations in Canada. The reviewed estimates[6] of the total number of Canadian organizations for whom

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[6] According to Ayer's 2013 report "Strength in Number: Metrics on the international development community in Canada," commissioned by Canadian Council for International Cooperation (now Cooperation Canada), the Canadian International Development sector comprises over 2,000 organizations. For 57% of these organizations (1,357 charities), "international aid and development" is their primary focus (i.e. constitutes at least 50% of their activities).

"international aid and development" is their primary focus (i.e. constitutes at least 50% of their activities) range anywhere from 1,357 to "more than 2,000", which indicate that approximately 5% (91/2000) to 7% (91/1,357) Canadian international development organizations participated in this study.

Another limitation of the study is self-selection bias, which is common in the survey method we have used. It is likely that many Canadian international development organizations that do not practice localization or are unfamiliar with this term decided not to fill out the questionnaire. Therefore, the study findings are more likely to reflect the perspectives and practices of a subset of Canadian international development organizations with experience and opinions on localization.

Findings: What we learned

Worth noting that there were no statistically significant differences between the responses of the different organization types other than just a few instances where there were some differences between SMOs and large organizations, which are noted below.

Perspectives

A key objective of this study was to learn more about what Canadian international development organizations think about localization from an organizational perspective, how they define localization, how this definition has changed over time, why they choose to practice localization and how it affects their roles and work. The study did not offer a specific definition of localization to participants to avoid influencing the responses.

Diverse understandings of localization among Canadian organizations

Canadian international development organizations that participated in this study (from here on, referred to as "participants") understand that there can be no singular definition of localization because of the complexity of international development work. As interview participant Anne notes: "I think localization is such a hard concept to pin down because it can mean so many different things to so many people and organizations" (CSO, SMO, Alberta, interview, August 26, 2022). What is clear is that localization is a process that needs to be contextualized. As one participant put it, "this is a long journey; there are no quick fixes. The localization journey varies by context (region/country) as well as depending on multiple factors (civil society capacity, legal infrastructure, national government support/or lack thereof towards civil society, fragility/conflicts, stability, the rule of law etc.)" (CSO, large organization, faith-based, Ontario, questionnaire).

Most participants (64%) did not have an operationalized strategy or policy on localization, and 52% stated that they did not have any tools or guides to increase localization efforts. Some stated that localization is just a new term for a movement within the sector to shift power from the Global North to the Global South that started decades ago. For some participants, the ideas behind localization are value-based guiding principles that underpin their work in the Global South. Participants stated that the key ideas behind localization, such as working directly with local partners, were already essential to their modus operandi and that they do not see the trend of localization changing their operations in this regard.

There were varied responses as to what increased localization might mean for the sector. In the questionnaire, 71% of respondents indicated that their roles would change, while 29% stated that they would not. Forty questionnaire participants and 15 interview participants provided different responses regarding how their roles would change. Overall, they anticipated a shift from providing technical and financial oversight on project design and implementation towards playing a supporting role for their local partners (see the section on changing roles for details). A questionnaire participant summarized the general sentiment as follows: "Our role is support/solidarity — sourcing funds and providing resources (human, financial or intellectual). Supporting local organizations also means supporting their leadership and organizational development. It means learning with them and from them. It implies supporting their advocacy on issues, taking their issues to our governments, and pushing for the change they are advocating for" (CSO, large organization, Quebec, questionnaire, [translation]). Three participants had a different view. To them, the end goal of localization would be to work themselves out of a job. One questionnaire participant put it bluntly: "It may mean that eventually, we would be obsolete. If funds flowed directly to our partners, we wouldn't be needed" (CSO, SMO, Ontario, questionnaire). Two-thirds of participants in the questionnaire also indicated that there were different understandings of localization between them and their external stakeholders (SMOs are 10% more likely to share the same understanding of localization with their external stakeholders than large organizations).

Intersections between localization, decolonization and feminist approaches

Across the questionnaire and the interviews, "decolonization/colonization" were mentioned 53 times, and "feminist/feminism" were mentioned 77 times. Participants situated localization within a larger global movement to decolonize international assistance and embed gender justice into the international development sector. A questionnaire participant put it as follows: "Sector-wide conversations concerning the decolonization of aid, anti-racism, gender justice, etc., have all added nuance to the localization agenda that has enriched our understanding of the concept… We do this [localization] because we believe it's critical for our programs to reflect local needs, capacities and priorities. This is at the heart of decolonization, anti-racism, gender justice, and other equity-focused agendas in our sector. Without respect for local ownership, none of that can be possible" (CSO, large organization, faith-based, Manitoba, questionnaire).

Fifty-six percent of participants stated that they take a "feminist approach" to their localization strategy or policy, which is higher than the percentage of organizations (36%) who have an operational localization strategy or policy). This difference seems to indicate that the feminist agenda is slightly further along than the localization agenda, which may speak to the power and influence that Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy has had on Canadian international development organizations.

One participant spoke of the challenges and importance of having a feminist approach to localization:

> Applying the feminist approach at every step of the project cycle takes much longer (especially the first time when trust is being built up from scratch) and it cannot be rushed in order to meet unrealistic donor deadlines (e.g., project implementation plan submission deadline). But it really pays off in terms of more open, transparent and equitable projects that really reflect the real needs of local partners. Applying the feminist approach cannot be a niche pilot that happens in one project (e.g., Women's Voice and Leadership Program) because we cannot be flexible and

feminist with a partner in one project and top-down and demanding in another; this would negatively affect the partnership as a whole. Local partners also get confused when different projects have different requirements. Therefore, there is a need for donors to accept feminist and flexible approaches across all projects in a consistent way. GAC's Women's Voice and Leadership Program is an example for what the future of development should look like. This program not only requires continuation with a Phase II, but also expansion and mainstreaming across all of GAC programming worldwide (CSO, large organization, Ontario, questionnaire).

For many participants, decolonization and feminist approaches to localization are critical because they challenge existing structures that largely maintain power in the Global North. They argue that localization efforts that are not underpinned by decolonization and a feminist approach may undermine the core goals of localization, which are to shift power and resources to those local actors in the Global South. One questionnaire participant noted the following distinction between localization and decolonization:

We have consciously decoupled our understanding of localization from decolonization rhetoric in our organization. Often the two terms get conflated, but the process of decolonization is comparatively complex to fundamentally influence or address, given existing normative structural and systemic processes that limit an organization such as ours to exert agency over the power structures behind donation and philanthropy in general. We now understand that we operate under colonial norms but have a model that intentionally amplifies and empowers partners to influence where and how funds are invested (CSO, SMO, faith-based, Ontario, questionnaire).

Practices

Another important goal of this study was to learn what Canadian international development organizations are doing about localization. The study examined how participants have operationalized localization across the five dimensions of the LAF, from least to most challenging (see Table 5).

5 dimensions of localization ranked from least challenging (1) to most challenging (5) for your organization:

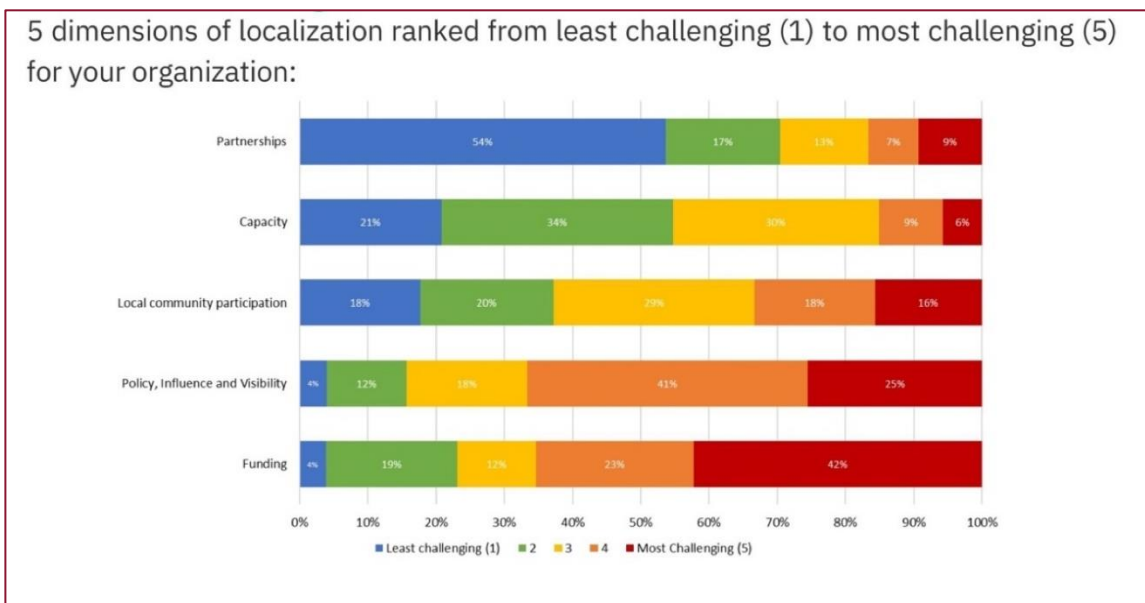|	Least challenging (1)	2	3	4	Most Challenging (5)
Partnerships	54%	17%	13%	7%	9%
Capacity	21%	34%	30%	9%	6%
Local community participation	18%	20%	29%	18%	16%
Policy, Influence and Visibility	4%	12%	18%	41%	25%
Funding	4%	19%	12%	23%	42%

Table 5

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Table 6 shows participants ranking of the 5 dimensions from the most to the least operational.

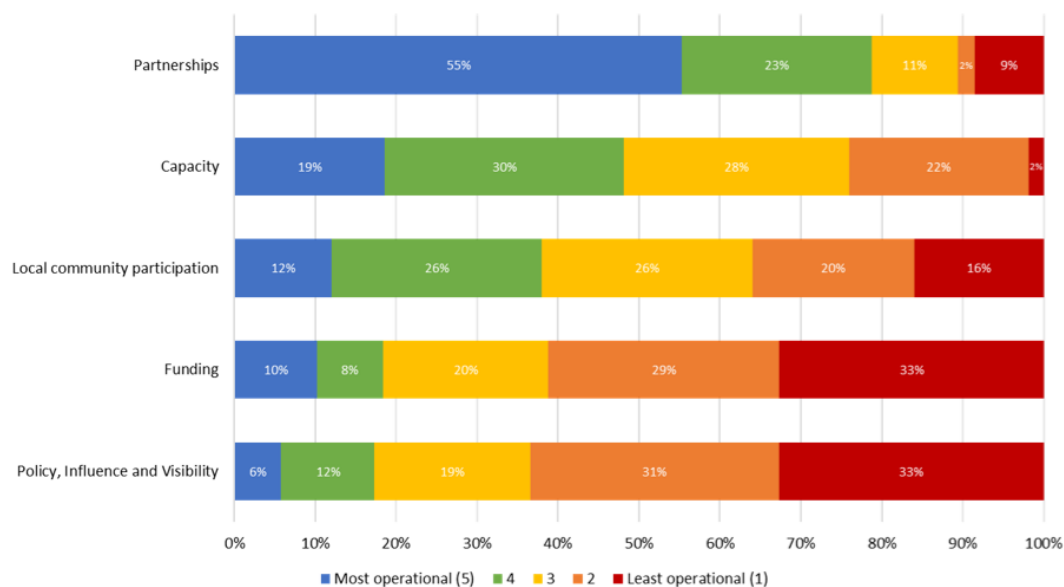## 5 dimensions of localization ranked from most operational (5) to least operational (1):

Table 6

Notably, only 37% of participants indicated that they assessed their localization efforts (large organizations were 10% more likely to do so than SMOs). As a result, these rankings are not necessarily based on measured results or systematic evaluations.

Partnerships

Definition: Partnerships with local actors are built to be open (including transparency of finances), equitable and reciprocal.

Partnerships was ranked as the least challenging (54%) and the most successfully operationalized (55%) of all the five dimensions (see Tables 5 and 6). Also, all but one of the 15 interview participants stated that they were confident in the strength of their relationships with local partners.

Many organizations use the words "co-owners" and "co-creators" to describe their partnerships. One participant described this approach in detail: "Our country strategies are being written with a 'localization lens' and projects are run with a relatively high degree of autonomy. We strive to set and deploy co-creation approaches for any new proposal and adopt a co-implementation practice through equal partnerships." (CSO, large organization, faith-based, Ontario, questionnaire)

Others spoke in terms of "solidarity" and "accompaniment" to strengthen their partners as an organization over the long term. Longevity, trust and mutually shared values were also considered integral to their healthy partnerships. There was a clear mission to support the autonomy of their local partners: "In the last couple of decades, we have been using the term 'localization' mainly to refer to

supporting some of our southern country offices to become registered as local autonomous organizations" (CSO/Foundation, large organization, Ontario, questionnaire).

Data from the questionnaire highlights aspects of this "co-creation" in practice: 84% of participants stated that partners either led or co-led project implementation, 66% led or co-led project design, 64% led or co-led the monitoring and evaluation, and 51% led or co-led reviews of assessments (see Table 7).
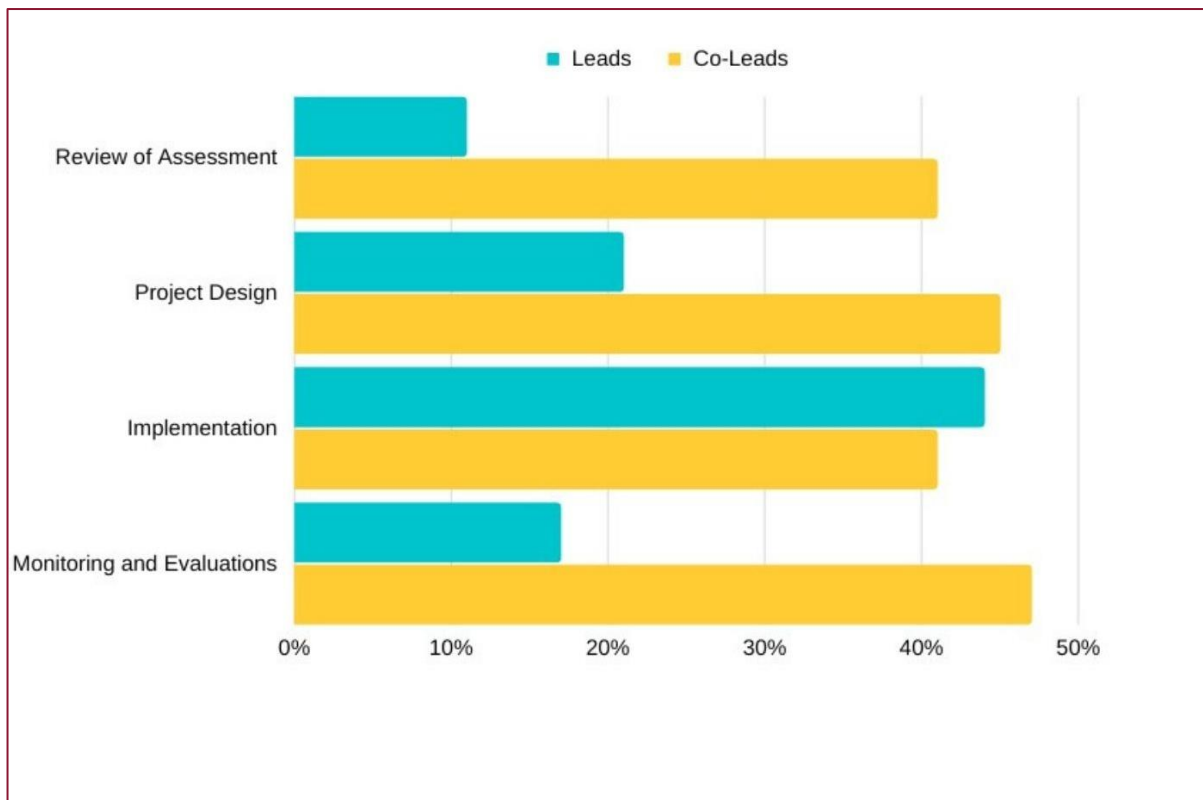
Table 7

Most participants gauged their success at localization by emphasizing that their local partners do the work on the ground, noting that they have either shut down satellite offices or have changed their makeup so that local partners primarily run them.

Local partners are valued and seen as necessary actors in project implementation. However, some participants expressed concern that relying heavily on local partners as implementers, without the advantages of the other four dimensions of localization (particularly access to increased funding), might end up being burdensome and lead to non-equitable relationships for local partners. As Angela explained in her interview, "if you're also going to download all the bureaucratic administrative burden on them…then to me that's not true localization." (CSO, large organization, Ontario, interview, July 29, 2022)

Capacity

Definition: Local partners are supported to design, manage, and deliver practical people-centred humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes.

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According to the participants, it is not a lack of organizational capacity that limits local partners in project implementation and project success: most organizations praised their local partners, indicating that being closer to the intervention made them better suited to design, manage and deliver the programs most effectively. Henry summarized the general sentiment simply: "The partners are in the best position to define their needs and also meet the needs of the local communities." (volunteer sending agency, large organization, Quebec, interview, August 19, 2022, [translation])

Moreover, participants seemed to take a localized approach to providing capacity support, with 87% of participants "strongly agreeing" (54%) or "agreeing" (34%) that their capacity-strengthening efforts were based on local needs and priorities.

When capacity concerns arose, they usually had to do with the ability of local partners to manage donor compliance requirements and funding, which hindered their financial autonomy outside their relationship with the Canadian international development sector. In their questionnaires and interviews, participants consistently repeated that donor standards and requirements for proposals, due diligence, compliance, reporting and English language skills make it nearly impossible for local organizations to access or manage IA funds. It should be emphasized that these constraints are amplified for smaller local organizations. Some participants also discussed the challenges of building this type of capacity: "It is difficult for our organization to provide a level of capacity-building support that increases the ability of our local partners to access more international/national funding or to increase their level of participation with various clusters/foras etc. This requires a financial and time investment that exceeds what we can typically provide." (CSO, large organization, faith-based, Manitoba, questionnaire)

Local community participation

Definition: Local community members are actively engaged and meaningfully influence humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes.

The importance of local community participation within their partnership model came up in some of the interviews including Lucinda's:
> One of the main things that we have built into our model is that we would never go into a community and say, and tell them, what they need and give them solutions. Our local partners go into a community, and for the first three years, they actually just start creating relationships. They are not offering any solutions. They are not promising anything. They're just getting to know the community to understand their needs, and when the communities themselves have articulated what they need, only then do we partner and suggest solutions. That is the way our partnership is structured.
> (SMO, CSO, faith-based, Alberta, interview, August 2, 2022)

Local community participation ranked in the middle of the five dimensions in terms of how challenging it was to put into practice (see Table 5).

The quantitative results (multiple-choice questions in the questionnaire) also reflect this middle ground regarding the quality of engagement with and depth of participation from local communities, with only 35% of questionnaire respondents stating that "local community members always informed decisions about projects," and 39% stating that they "often informed" those decisions. In addition, 69% of

respondents also stated that local populations are always (29%) or often (40%) involved in project reviews and evaluations. Seventy percent of respondents agreed that "formal communication, feedback and response mechanisms are established with participation from diverse local community members."

Policy, influence and visibility

Definition: Local partners have greater presence, influence and leadership in international development, humanitarian assistance or peace-building forums

Nearly half of the participants (49%) stated that local partners actively participate[7] in international development, humanitarian assistance or peace-building forums. However, only 8% of questionnaire participants stated that their partners play leadership roles in this context (See Table 8 below). Local partners were more likely to have a leading role in communicating on local/national development, peace-building, or humanitarian assistance issues, with 57% of participants stating that their partners always or usually played a leading role in this area.

Local partners' participation in relevant international forums and coordination mechanisms can generally be described as:
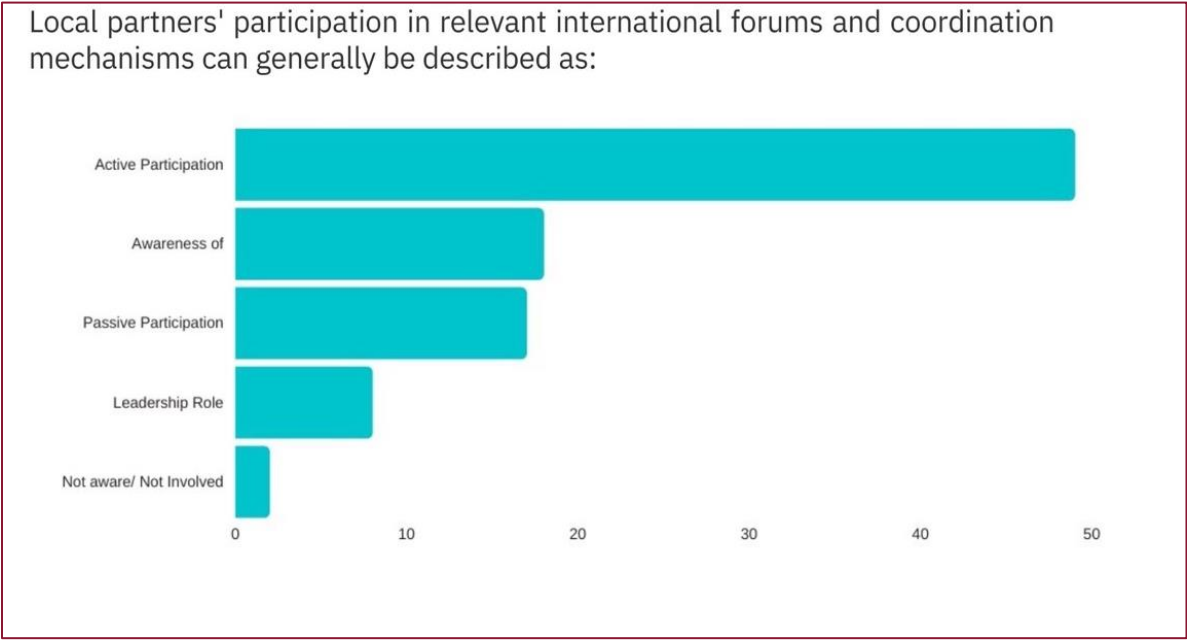
Table 8

Interestingly, this dimension is tied closely with funding as the least operational dimension of localization (see Table 6). Overall, policy, influence and visibility as a theme was not apparent in the qualitative findings (in the interviews or responses to short-answer questions in the questionnaire). The reasons for this would need to be explored further with both Canadian international development organizations and their local partners. A potential explanation could be that some of the participants themselves are not involved in high-level international development, humanitarian assistance or peace-building forums and, therefore, do not have much influence in this area of activity, or they do not see it as a priority considering other competing needs for limited financial and human resources.

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[7] Active participation was defined in the questionnaire as playing a role in coordination where local partners can equally speak to the activities and aims of partnerships and projects.

Funding

Definition: Local humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development partners have increased access to international and national funding.

Almost half of participants (47%) stated that their previous fiscal year's funding was provided directly to local partners (see pie chart below for funding by percentile).

FUNDING BY PERCENTILE

■0-24% ■25-49% ■50-74% ■75-100%
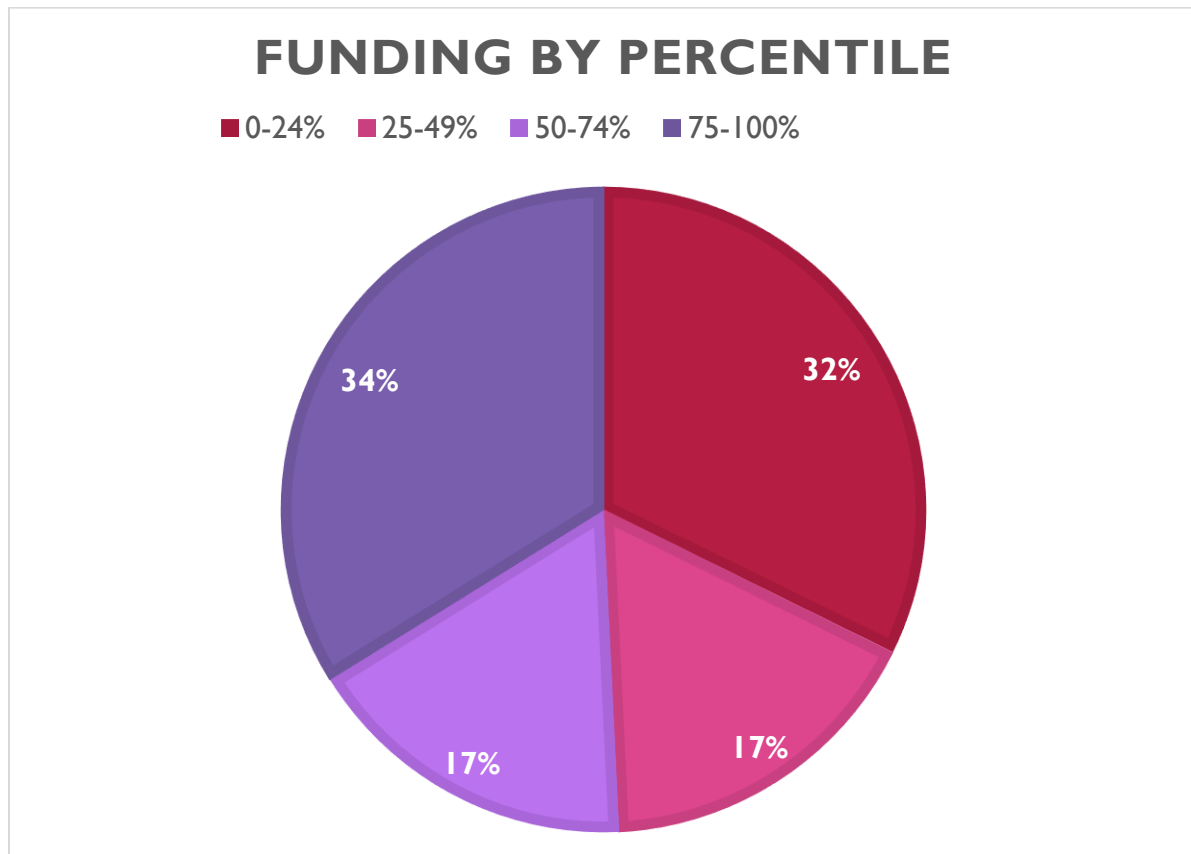
Participants were asked to select all the types of local actors that were funded by their organization- as shown in Table 9, the top two were local and national CSOs (78%), followed by direct to community members (28%).
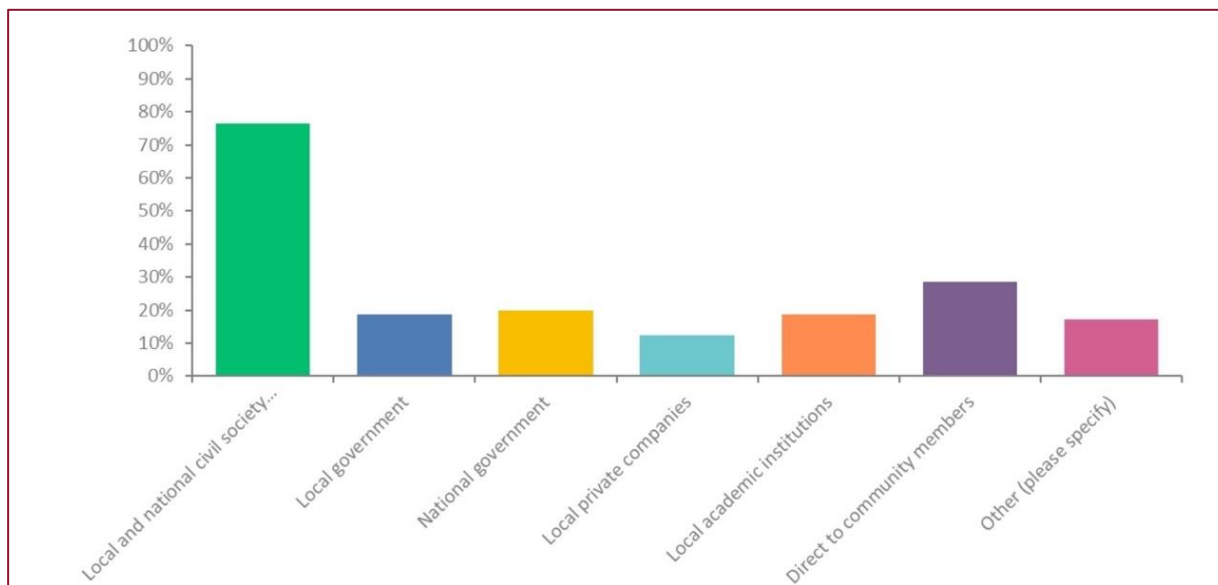
Forty-two percent of the questionnaire participants indicated that increasing local partners' access to international and national funding (including direct access to donor networks and grants) was the most challenging dimension to operationalize (see Table 5). Seventy-eight percent of participants strongly agreed that increased financial autonomy and sustainability of local partners is a strategic objective. Some of them noted that it was challenging to diversify funding opportunities for their local partners outside the bilateral flow they currently have with their Canadian partners. This is noteworthy, given that one of the key commitments of localization in the Grand Bargain is to increase direct funds to local actors. Participants saw funding core costs as key elements for strong partnerships and for the sustainability of local actors. Of those surveyed, 37% stated that direct funding "always" (22%) or "usually" (16%) includes core costs. In the interviews, participants who had the flexibility to provide core funds often stated that this came from public donations rather than restrictive government grants.

Increased funding to local actors is an important goal for localization and a priority for participants. However, participants were divided over whether increased funding for local actors would result in a proportional decrease in their own access to funding. Seven interview participants saw increased localization as increasing their work and the need for additional IA funds. Three other interview participants explicitly stated that the outcome of localization is that they would eventually become unnecessary IA actors.

Localization successes

Models of success: Shifting power from the Global North to the Global South

Participants are at different stages in what one of them described as the "localization journey." Ten interview participants mentioned that localization was not a new concept and is already embedded in their guiding principles. Five interview participants noted that they have changed or are attempting to change their organizational structures and operational models to adjust for localization, including

measures such as shutting down satellite offices and hiring local staff instead of sending Canadian technical advisors abroad. Participants responded to the questionnaire that their local partners were implementing 62% of all ongoing projects that their organization funded during last fiscal year. Regardless of where participants were on the localization spectrum, there were unified calls to shift power from the Global North to the Global South, especially regarding decision making, project design and implementation.

Antoine underscored how their organization attempts to shift power from the Global North to the Global South: "We shift power in terms of the way our governance arrangements are designed... to ensure that partners closest to the phenomenon have the greatest level of power and decision making in our activities and our allocation of resources. So, it's power in terms of how we make decisions, but then it's from the design stage right through to implementation and evaluation, that it responds, that it's triggered by opportunities and needs that are identified there, and that then is commensurate with resource allocations." (academic/research institution, SMO, Ontario, interview, August 9, 2022.)

For participants, evidence of success was mostly in relation to the strength and longevity of their relationships with partner organizations. Mohammed described it as follows: "I think that commitment to the relationship is an important part of what we do. We're not like, come in, come out and then, you know, find a project, leave, and then go to another place. Most of our partnerships are repeated and ongoing for many, many years. To me, that feels like a success and an opportunity to really build strong capacity partners." (CSO, large organization, faith-based, Manitoba, interview, July 29, 2022)

Participants also saw success in terms of the level of organizational autonomy and financial independence of their local partners. Angela noted that power is intrinsically embedded in funding relationships, so they recognize that working with "independent, autonomous organizations that engage politically in their own context… is fundamentally different than, you know, being part of a family organization." She noted that a key element to equitable partnerships and a cornerstone of localization is the ability of local partners to say no, to walk away and to have the confidence to share when things are not working. (CSO, large organization, Ontario, interview, July 29, 2022)

Overall, localization success for participants is two-fold. First, participants stated that they had forged strong partnership models with local actors they considered the most capable and well-positioned to carry out locally relevant international assistance programming. Second, participants underscored that Canadian international development organizations must shift power and resources directly to local actors for localization to become a reality. However, participants found this challenging for a variety of reasons.

Challenges with localization

Barriers to operationalizing localization: Funding and compliance burdens

Funding was the most often-cited barrier to increased localization. It was also ranked as the most challenging dimension and tied for successfully operationalized with Policy, Influence and Visibility (see Tables 5 and 6). This is noteworthy, given that one of the key commitments of the Grand Bargain is to increase direct funds to local actors. However, direct funding to local actors is restricted within the Canadian international development sector in accordance with Canada's *Income Tax Act* and due to the "direction and control" guidance from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), which legally limits the

autonomy and flexibility of funding provided to local organizations. "Direction and control" and "CRA" were mentioned in six of the 15 interviews and nine times in the questionnaire. There were calls to change this regulation and create a framework where power and funds could be readily transferred to local partners. To cite just two examples:

- The fund management requirements of the Direction and Control limit not only Canadian INGOs ability to fund appropriately their southern partners but also restricts direct access of Southern INGOs to GAC funding. (CSO, large organization, faith-based, Ontario, questionnaire).

- We are trying to shift more resources to our partners and decrease our staff at HQ, but the complex demands of funders and charity laws make that difficult. If we could change some of these, we would be smaller at HQ and shift more leadership and accountability to our partners locally. (CSO, large organization, Quebec, questionnaire, [translatation]).

*Since this study took place in the spring/summer 2022, reforms have been made to Canada's Income Tax Act, the legislative framework for direction and control requirements, and Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has published its related new draft guidance for Canadian registered charities making grants to non-qualified donees (CG-032). It remains to be seen how these new guidelines will be applied in practice and their effects on the international development sector but it is highly likely that the concerns and examples mentioned above will change.

Project-based funding model

The other frequently cited challenge to localization is that support for local actors is project-based, mostly linked to short-term grants and rigid funding modalities: "In most cases, partners are still thinking in terms of projects and not in terms of influencing overall systems surrounding international development" (CSO, large organization, faith-based, Ontario, questionnaire). During their interviews, Ayesha and Angela, who work at different large civil society organizations in Ontario, expressed similar concerns with the typical project-based funding model. They observed that large, short-term, project-based grants may benefit donors with greater ease of financial oversight and project management. At the same time, having funds exclusively for time-bound, thematically specific projects encourage short-term planning, limits innovation and adversely impacts local partners' ability to obtain and retain local talent. (Summarized from interviews August 16, 2022; and July 29, 2022).

One participant stated that their organization was strategizing how to move away from this model, sharing that their "strategy map 2021–24… wants to build strategies and organize work in a comprehensive and integrated way, beyond the 'project-based' basis. This is particularly important in the area of partnerships because we would like to be able to support certain partners sustainably beyond the funding and projects obtained." (CSO, large organization, Quebec, questionnaire, [translation])

Another participant argued that, in order for localization to become the norm, there must be "more unrestricted funding because institutional donors rarely cover many core costs of local partners or the full costs of implementing feminist methods, which take more time and Level of Effort (e.g., our organization had to invest unrestricted funds to top up what GAC covered for salaries in our Women's Voice and Leadership projects)." (CSO, large organization, Ontario, questionnaire) Furthermore, one participant spoke to the need to enable local partners to access GAC funds and other funds directly (CSO, large organization, Ontario, questionnaire).

In addition to the funding restrictions and limitations of project-based funding, rigid compliance measures and high levels of due diligence were repeatedly cited in the questionnaires and interviews as significant impediments to localization. As one participant stated, "if we were able to identify funding that enabled us to support core funding for partner organizations, we would still need to address the administrative procedures required by our main funder and address the scope of eligibility requirements for the use of funds to help ensure that they were responsive to local realities." (academic/research institution, SMO, Ontario, questionnaire).

Ultimately, for localization to become a new way of doing IA, "the goal of localization has to be larger than the potential accountability risks," as Susan put it in her interview (CSO, SMO, Alberta, interview, August 24, 2022).

The changing roles of Canadian international development organizations

Participants saw themselves as being committed to the values of localization and playing a unique role in localization given that they, for the most part, have forged strong partnership models, connecting Canada to local actors worldwide that work closely with local communities on local issues.

Participants discussed how their role might change if localization becomes the norm. Below is an overview of the three most commonly suggested roles.

Intermediaries

As discussed in the funding section earlier, some Canadian international development organizations are already playing a role as intermediaries in terms of channelling IA funds to their local partners. Participants spoke of a shift in their intermediary role from project design and implementation to supporting local partners in terms of accountability requirements for existing donor financial requirements and quality assurance mechanisms. Many within the sector believe that, until the CRA's direction and control rules are changed, and large donors have the internal capacity to provide direct funding and adequately oversee local partner relationships, Canadian international development organizations will remain crucial actors in localization efforts. They see themselves as playing an essential role in balancing donor and CRA requirements while building trust and long-term relationships with local actors. As one participant noted, "there is an opportunity for more direct funding to go to local partners, who have been vetted and are continuously supported by Canadian organizations. Canadian organizations can be listed as sub-grantees or hired as contractors for international funding and support partners to deliver results, ensure financial accountability and provide capacity development in identified gaps to help maintain accountability for funds and Canadians." (CSO, SMO, Alberta, questionnaire).

Another participant spoke of flattening the existing hierarchal partnerships:
> Our organization already sees itself as a technical partner in subsidiary support of its partners' mission. This will be more and more the case, less and less vertical partnerships. Our organization is called upon to become more often a co-applicant for funding and co-manager of projects rather than an applicant and lead manager.
> (CSO, large organization, Quebec, questionnaire, [translation])

However, participants were wary of the pitfalls of a localization approach that downloads responsibilities and compliance burdens to local actors. They saw value in their intermediary roles which allows local partners to access funding without dealing with complex funding and compliance measures. Ayesha saw her organization's role as an intermediary, almost like a buffer to ease the existing compliance burdens:

> We could be that kind of buffer between the donor and the local organization to protect them. Protect them from the red tape. The daily request, the ad hoc requirements, the overall burden and red tape, so they can focus on doing the work. So that they get protected from spending their whole lives just focusing on reporting and compliance.
> (CSO, large organization, Ontario, interview, August 16, 2022)

The role as an intermediary "buffer" also indicates the need for structural changes to occur so that, eventually, local partners, and even small community organizations, would have improved ease of and equitable access to funding sources from the Global North. In this way, Canadian international development organizations, as intermediaries, could also play a role in challenging the standards and norms relating to funding, due diligence and accountability requirements, (work that has already begun through Cooperation Canada's Localization and Direction and Control Working Groups.)

Fundraising and public engagement

According to participants, there is a need to increase funding to local actors in the Global South, especially more flexible and long-term funding of the organizations' core costs. As Canadian international development organizations shift their focus, resources and roles away from project implementation, they can still play a necessary role in raising funds and awareness for local partners' development work and cultivating awareness and buy-in for localization from relevant stakeholders and the Canadian public. One questionnaire participant spoke of the need to promote localization:

> We need internal and external communication strategies to promote the vision of localization and highlight achievements to external audiences, and to create a shared internal narrative around localization that engages stakeholders with success stories, lessons learned and challenges/gaps where more progress needs to be made.
> (Other, large organization, Ontario, questionnaire)

Equal partners: Co-creating enabling environments for localization

According to participants, local actors should be more than just project implementers: they should hold equal power and decision-making authority in an organization-to-organization level. For this to occur, Canadian international development organizations should support their local partners in facilitating and creating conditions that support locally led localization in an empowering way. One participant described this change in roles as follows: "There needs to be a shift of most Canadian-based international CSOs to undertake true community-level engagement on development as solidarity across the country. It would both strengthen the legitimacy of these organizations and build global citizenship in an environment where these values are increasingly marginalized, as CSOs become instrumentalized for the purposes of donor and INGO-determined development priorities" (SMO, Nova Scotia, questionnaire).

One participant noted that "the role of the organization would partially change in that we would be less direct project management and implementation, and would be more focused on providing technical

advice, accompanying partners and strengthening their capacities, and on creating spaces for knowledge co-creation and sharing." (CSO, SMO, Quebec, questionnaire, [translation])

From the participants' perspective, accompaniment can mean many things, such as standing in solidarity with and advocating for local actors on critical issues that affect them; sharing relevant knowledge and capacity-building efforts in a complementary manner; and ensuring that local partners have a greater presence, influence and leadership in international development, humanitarian assistance and peace-building forums. As one participant put it, this means "more local support for an enabling environment (workshops, proposal development support, and support to connect into international networks and communities of practice.)" (CSO, large organization, Ontario, questionnaire)

Key insights and considerations for policy and practice

There has been increasing discussion of locally-led development. This principle can be found in the international development literature in Canada (local participation is discussed in Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy and locally-led development is discussed in Canada's innovation approach as well as in international agreements, such as aid effectiveness principles (local ownership), the OECD Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society and the Grand Bargain commitments. According to the literature reviewed, which was echoed by the study participants, there has been a normative shift in the acceptance of localization and in its general pursuit. Canadian international development organizations that participated in this study indicated strong support for localization and varying degrees of progress operationalizing the five dimensions of localization, with the funding dimension being most challenging given donor compliance requirements and fiscal regulations. Localization is a complex undertaking that will take time and resources and opportunities to pilot new ways of working.

This study sheds light on the perspectives, practices and insights of Canadian international development organizations on localization and what they think needs to change in order for locally-led development to become the norm. The study's findings suggest that the Canadian international development sector seems generally open to adopting a localization agenda, although localization would need to take different forms depending on the context, and there may never be a singular definition.

The participants suggested that there is a need for more in-depth, nuanced conversations about how localization looks like in practice within various contexts and concrete plans to get there, in order to achieve better coherence and cohesion between Canadian and global stakeholders.

Some important questions will require further discussion: What are the perspectives and experiences of local communities with regards to the localization of IA initiatives and the effectiveness and community impacts of these initiatives? (Only 29% of participants stated that local populations are always involved in project reviews and evaluations.) What is the end goal of localization? Where will Canadian international development organizations fit in the broader picture? Will the roles of Canadian organizations change if localization becomes the norm, and if so, how? Having Canadian international development organizations pivot their resources to raise the profiles of the work of local actors, obtain more flexible funding and assist local partners in gaining direct access to funds could support Canada's work in achieving the Grand Bargain goal of increasing access to funds for local actors to 25% by 2020.

The study's localization assessment framework reflects the complex and multi-dimensional nature of localization, allowing for a more dynamic, nuanced and context-appropriate approach to understanding

localization practices. For instance, in cases where direct funding might not be possible, focus could be placed on other dimensions of localization. A similar tool could help Canadian international development organizations work with a more unified understanding of how progress towards localization can be achieved and measured along the way.

There is an opportunity to learn from the localization-related challenges expressed by Canadian international development organizations and to build on their strengths, especially when it comes to relationships with local partners and the communities they work in.

The previous section discussed three of the key roles they could play: intermediaries, fundraisers who meaningfully engage the Canadian public in international development needs and issues, and equal partners who provide accompaniment to their local partners while co-creating an enabling environment for locally-led development to flourish. Further dialogue will be needed to discuss how these roles could be operationalized and what structures and mechanisms would need to be changed, removed or put into place to facilitate the process and help transform power dynamics within the international development sector.

Further areas of research

This study confirmed that Canadian development organizations have much to contribute to the dialogue on localization. Many insights were revealed through this study and important questions were raised, such as: Who is "local"? and Who is being prioritized in the efforts to localize? Some of the participants voiced concerns about a blanket approach to increased localization. They noted that localization is complex and that it might not be necessarily empowering for smaller local actors. They cautioned that a nuanced approach is necessary and urged against "paths of least resistance that might fund multilateral or large organizations with large grants, which would result in diminished support for smaller local organizations" (SMO, faith-based, Ontario, questionnaire). Participants believe that Canadian international development organizations and their relationships with local actors are integral to the localization process and that the Canadian international development sector is well-positioned to sustain longer-term partnerships with local actors to support locally-led development in the Global South.

There is more to learn from the Canadian international development sector on localization. Given that 77% of participants in this study are CSOs, future research could focus on different types of Canadian international development organizations such as academic institutions and research centres, social enterprises and foundations, as well as Canadian (and other) international development organizations that are not currently engaged with localization. Many participants spoke of their many years of experience forging solidarity and long-term relationships with partners. They have task forces, strategic plans and guiding principles on localization. There is an opportunity for the Canadian international development sector to share what it has learned and pave the way for a uniquely Canadian feminist approach to localization.

Further research could also include input from local partners and local communities themselves to corroborate the data in this study and to understand their views and their practices with regards to locally-led development.

Here are two other research questions that could help to deepen the localization conversation within the Canadian international development sector and beyond:

- How can localization take a feminist approach? What have we learned from evaluating the Feminist International Assistance Policy, the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives and the Women's Voice and Leadership Program? How can these be streamlined and piloted more broadly within a Canadian localization assessment framework?
- How do we understand localization in the context of decolonization? How does localization fit in with calls to decolonize aid? Can decolonization efforts inform Canada's approach to localization?

The localization of IA is a global movement that has brought together diverse international development actors, including donors, as indicated in the [December 2022 Donor Statement on Supporting Locally Led Development](#), which was signed by the Government of Canada. There are many insights, information and examples from the Global South and Global North to draw from. The literature review and the study participants highlighted innovative partnership and funding models, such as gender-responsive localization, multi-donor trust funds, national pooled funds, local coalitions accelerators, and demand-based localization, which are being piloted in various contexts. There is no shortage of robust research, practical tools, and case studies to draw from to provide structure and direction for Canadian international development organizations, including the NEAR Network's Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF), and, more recently, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)-Development Assistance Committee (DAC)'s toolkit "Funding civil society in partner countries" related to the DAC's Recommendation on enabling civil society.

Overall, this study points to an urgency in bridging the gap between the understanding and the practices concerning the key IA localization tenet of shifting power and resources from the Global North to the Global South. Further cooperation, dialogue and integrated research from the Canadian and global international development sectors, local actors and communities will be needed to help to close this gap.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Invitation to participate in questionnaire for the study: Canadian international development organizations' engagement with localization

This online questionnaire is distributed in support of a study commissioned by Global Affairs Canada (GAC). This study aims to understand the practices, perspectives, successes, and challenges of Canadian international development organizations vis-à-vis the localization of international assistance. It is conducted by an independent researcher, Julia Rao.

Please note that this study is **not** an evaluation of these organizations. Your organization does not need to receive funding from GAC to participate in this study.

You are receiving this invitation for your organization to participate in this study by responding an online questionnaire because you are employed or associated with a Canadian international development organization. (If this is not the case, please disregard this invitation).

> (For the purposes of this study, "Canadian international development organizations" refers to organizations whose primary focus (at least 50% of their activities) is international development, humanitarian assistance or peacebuilding in official development assistance (ODA)-eligible countries. For this study, these organizations are divided into the following categories: civil society organizations, foundations, academic/research centres, and private sector organizations (including social enterprises).

Responding to this online questionnaire should take approximately 60 minutes; however, upfront internal consultation within the participating organization will be required.

Responses are completely anonymous. The questionnaire will not contain information that will personally identify you or your organization such as name, email address or IP address. Some interviews will be conducted in the second phase of this study (see FAQ document attached for more details). All responses will be kept confidential. Data will be stored in a password-protected electronic format.

The results of this study will be summarized in a report that will be shared with GAC representatives. GAC will host a forum, likely in the fall of 2022, to share and discuss the findings with all participating Canadian international development organizations and the sector at large. The results will help strengthen GAC's work on localization.

Participation in this study is voluntary. No individual or organization will be penalized for not participating or withdrawing at any time.

If your organization chooses to participate, please fill out **only one questionnaire.** We are requesting that each organization submits only one questionnaire, because we want to capture *organizational level* rather than individual staff perspectives and practices. The organization's representative assigned to respond should therefore consult with and coordinate responses with their colleagues *before* filling out the online questionnaire. A copy of the questions is attached here to facilitate this process. Please review these questions before filling out the online questionnaire to avoid technical difficulties.

If you have any questions, please refer to the attached FAQ document. You can also contact the independent researcher conducting this study, Julia Rao, at research.intldev@gmail.com.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT:

• you have read the above information

• you voluntarily agree to participate

• you are at least 18 years of age

If you consent and read the above, please click here to start filling out the questionnaire: link

The deadline to submit a questionnaire is: July 7th, 2022

Questionnaire: Canadian international development organizations' engagement with localization **Section 1: Organizational Representative Information**	Answers
1. My organization has designated me to respond to this questionnaire. I confirm that I am over 18 years of age and have been working here for at least 12 months. I have reviewed the questions with my colleagues to ensure that the responses reflect the perspectives and practices of my organization as a whole.	Yes No Other (please specify)
2. Please indicate your role within the organization (please select the one that most closely describes your work).	• Senior leadership role • Programming • Finance • Communications • Advocacy & Public engagement/Education • Fundraising • Administrative support • Policy • Other (please specify):
3. Number of **years** working in the international development sector:	Number of years:_____
4. Number of **years** at your current organization:	Number of years :_____
Section 2: Organization Information	
5. Your organization's primary mission, funding and activities are related to international development, humanitarian assistance or peacebuilding in official development assistance (ODA)-eligible countries.	Yes No Other (please specify)
6. If no, does your organization have a branch or division which does this work as a primary function?	Yes No Other (please explain)
7. Please choose the category that best identifies your organization type.	• Civil Society Organization (including non-profit Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) • Academic/research institution • Foundation • Private sector (including social enterprises)
8. Please check all that apply to your organization. We are…	• Faith-based • Secular • Indigenous • Other (please specify):_____
9. Organization size (based on the organization's annual budget last fiscal year):	Small or Medium- less than 10 million in consolidated revenue Large- more than 10 million in consolidated revenue
10. What were your organization's main sources of revenue in your last fiscal year? (Please select the top two sources)	• Global Affairs Canada • Other Canadian government funding • Government institutions outside of Canada • Multilateral organizations (e.g. UNESCO, World Bank, etc.) • Private foundations

	• Donations from individuals (including major gifts, planned giving, monthly or single donations) • Religious institutions • Other (please specify):_____
11. Where is your organization's main headquarters or head office in Canada?	• Alberta • British Columbia • Manitoba • New Brunswick • Newfoundland and Labrador • Northwest Territories • Nova Scotia • Nunavut • Ontario • Prince Edward Island • Quebec • Saskatchewan • Yukon

Section 3: Local Partnerships Information

Please provide information about your local partnerships.
A "local partner" refers to a local or national government or a local or national organization based and operating in official development assistance (ODA)-eligible countries that are not affiliated* with an international organization.

(Note: "A local partner is not considered to be affiliated merely because it is part of a network, confederation or alliance wherein it maintains independent fundraising and governance systems" (text endorsed by Grand Bargain signatories).

12. Number of local partners funded by your organization in the last fiscal year:	Number:_____
13. Types of local partners funded by your organization in the last fiscal year:	Select all that apply: ● Local and national civil society organizations (CSOs) including non-profit, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)) ● Local government ● National government ● Local private companies ● Local academic institutions ● Direct to community members

	● Other (please specify)
14. What is the percentage of ongoing projects <u>implemented by</u> local partners in your organization's last fiscal year?	Percentage:_____
Section 4: Understanding of Localization	
15. What does "localization" mean to your organization?	Short answer
16. Has your understanding of localization changed over time and if so, how?	Short answer
17. When you discuss "localization" with other stakeholders, do you share the same understanding?	Yes Somewhat Not at all
18. Does your organization practice localization, and if so, why?	Short Answer
19. Does your organization have an operational localization strategy or policy?	Yes/No/Other
20. Do you take a feminist approach to your localization strategy or policy?	Yes/No/Other
21. If you do take a feminist approach to your localization strategy or policy, please describe how so.	Short Answer
22. Does your organization provide any tools or guides on increasing localization efforts?	Yes/No
23. If your organization does provide tools to guide on localization who receives these? (select all that apply.)	-Canadian staff -Local partners -Canadian staff and local partners -Others (please specify):_____
24. Does your organization evaluate its efforts to localize?	Yes/No/Other
25. If yes, please describe your methods of evaluation.	Short Answer
Section 5: Practicing Localization	
Reflecting on your organization's activities over the past year, please rate how your organization has operationalized the following 5 dimensions of localization: 1. **Partnerships** 2. **Funding** 3. **Capacity** 4. **Policy, Influence and Visibility** 5. **Local community participation**	Scale from 1 to 5 with 1 = not operational at all with any partner to 5= fully operational with all partners

26. **Dimension 1) Partnerships**: Partnerships with local actors are built to be open (including transparency of finances), equitable and reciprocal.	1 -not operational at all- 5- fully operational N/A
27. **Dimension 2) Funding**: Local humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development partners funded by your organization have increased access to international and national funding.	1 -not operational at all- 5- fully operational N/A
28. **Dimension 3) Capacity**: Your local partners are supported to design, manage and deliver effective people-centred humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes.	1 -not operational at all- 5- fully operational N/A
29. **Dimension 4) Policy, Influence and Visibility:** Local partners funded by your organization have greater presence, influence, and leadership in international development, humanitarian assistance or peace-building forums.	1 -not operational at all- 5- fully operational N/A
30. **Dimension 5) Local community participation**: Local community members are actively engaged and meaningfully influence your organization's humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes.	1 -not operational at all- 5- fully operational N/A
31. Are there any other dimensions not mentioned? (please explain)	
Section 6: Dimensions of localization: Please respond to the following questions related to each of the 5 dimensions of localization based on your organization's activities over the past year.	
Dimension 1) Partnerships 32. Does your organization have partnership agreements, with local actors that emphasize equitable and complementary partnerships?	Yes/No
33. If yes, are these agreements monitored and reviewed to ensure compliance?	Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never N/A
34. Are there formal ways in which local partners can share feedback?	Yes/No
35. If yes, are there mechanisms for concerns to be addressed?	No Yes, please explain:
36. Overall, what is the local partner's level of participation at each step of the project cycle (review of assessment, project design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation)	for each 4 aspects of project cycle: • review of assessment • project design • implementation • monitoring and evaluation respondent describes local partner's level of participation:

	- Leads - Co-Leads - Consulted - Not always consulted - Not consulted - Unsure
Dimension 2) Funding	
37. What is the percentage of your last fiscal year funding that was provided directly to local partners?	Percentage
38. How often does funding to local partners include core funding? *Core funding is generally defined by the OECD as unrestricted funding given to organizations to fund their programs and activities, including their operations.*	Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
39. Has your organization participated in any pooled funding initiatives to increase funding access to local actors? *Funding channelled through a pooled/national fund that is directly accessible to national and local organizations, excluding UN pooled funds.*	Yes/No
40. If yes, please specific which one(s):____	Short Answer
41. Your organization encourages and facilitates direct contact between its local partners and your donors.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
42. Increased financial autonomy and sustainability of the local partner is a strategic objective in all your relationships with local partners.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
Dimension 3) Capacity	
43. Partnership contracts provide tangible support for local partners' organizational development beyond project-based activities.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree

	Disagree Strongly disagree
44. Capacity-strengthening efforts are based on local needs and priorities.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
45. Local partners' participation in relevant international forums and coordination mechanisms can generally be described as: *Active participation is defined as playing a role in coordination, and local partners can equally speak to partnership/projects activities and aims*	-Local partners are *not aware or involved* in relevant international forums and coordination mechanisms -Local partners are *aware of* relevant international forums and coordination mechanisms -Local partners *passively participate* in these forums and mechanisms -Local partners *actively participate* in these forums and mechanisms. -Local partners play a *leadership role* in these forums and mechanisms -N/A
Dimension 4) Policy, Influence and Visibility	
46. The roles, work, risks taken, and contributions of local partners are accounted for and rendered visible when safe to do so.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree N/A
47. Local partners' input is included in policy debates on international development, peace-building or humanitarian assistance that may have an impact on them.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree

	Strongly disagree N/A
48. Local partners play a lead role in communicating local/national international development, peace-building or humanitarian assistance issues.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
Dimension 5) Local Community Participation	
49. Decisions about projects have been informed by local community members.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
50. Formal communication, feedback and response mechanisms are set up with participation from diverse members of the community.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree
51. Formal communication, feedback and response mechanisms are tested.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
52. Supported populations are involved in reviews and evaluations of projects.	Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
53. Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls are taken into account when engaging community members on local projects.	Strongly agree Agree Neither agree nor disagree Disagree Strongly disagree N/A
Section 7: Emerging Challenges and Successes	
54. When thinking of localization in practice, please rank the following 5 dimensions of localization from least challenging (1) to most challenging (5) for your organization. **Dimension 1)** **Partnerships**: Partnerships with local actors are built to be open (including transparency of finances), equitable and reciprocal.	Scale from 1 to 5 with 1 = least challenging and 5= most challenging

Dimension 2) **Funding**: Local humanitarian assistance, peace-building, or international development partners funded by your organization have increased access to international and national funding. **Dimension 3)** **Capacity**: Your organization's local partners are supported to design, manage and deliver effective people-centred humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes. **Dimension 4)** **Policy, Influence and Visibility:** Local partners funded by your organization have greater presence, influence, and leadership in international development, humanitarian assistance or peacebuilding. **Dimension 5)** **Local community participation**: Local community members are actively engaged and meaningfully influence your organization's humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes.	
55. *Please describe what challenges your organization has faced with the dimensions you've indicated to be challenging.*	Short Answer
56. When thinking of operationalizing localization, please rank these 5 dimensions of localization from 1 (being the least operational) to 5 (being the most successfully operational). **Dimension 1) Partnerships**: Partnerships with local actors are built to be open (including transparency of finances), equitable and reciprocal. **Dimension 2) Funding**: Local humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development partners funded by your organization have increased access to international and national funding. **Dimension 3) Capacity**: Support local partners to design, manage and deliver effective people-centred humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes. **Dimension 4) Policy, Influence and Visibility:** Local partners funded by your organization have greater presence, influence, and leadership in international development, humanitarian assistance or peacebuilding. **Dimension 5) Local community participation**: Local community members are actively engaged and meaningfully influence humanitarian assistance, peace-building or international development programmes.	Scale from 1 to 5 with 1 = least operational and 5= most successfully operationalized
57. Please describe how your organization has been successful in operationalizing this/these dimension(s). *please note any techniques, tools or guides that were helpful for your organizations*	Short Answer
58. If your organization takes a feminist approach to localization practices and policies, please describe any successes and/or challenges, and lessons learned along the way.	Short Answer

Section 8: Implications of localization	
59. If there were to be increased localization of international assistance, would the role of your organization change in any way, and if so, how?	Short Answer
60. What concrete changes would be required by your organization to increase its localization efforts?	Short Answer
61. How would these changes maintain accountability to Canadians and local populations for results and financial stewardship?	Short Answer
OPTING IN- Sign off message	
Thank you for participating in this questionnaire. Your responses are an invaluable part of this study. If your organization would like to participate in a follow-up interview and you are available to participate in a 45-60 min interview some time over the next 1-2 months, please fill out this form or contact Research Consultant Julia Rao at research.intldev@gmail.com with your name, title, and the name, size (small & medium organization (SMO) or large), and location (province/territory) of the organization you represent and the interview language of your choice (English or French). Please note that expressions of interest in participating in the interview phase of this study do not guarantee that you will be interviewed. We will only be conducting ten interviews at the moment and need to ensure regional, linguistic, and organizational type diversity that is representative of the Canadian international development context.	

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Interview Guide for localization study individual interviews (60 min)

Hello and thanks again for your participation in this study. I understand you may have already responded to the first few background questions of this interview in the questionnaire but as participation in the questionnaire was completely anonymous, I need to ask these again for the purpose of this interview, to have some context before we get into the following main topics regarding your organization's successes and challenges and its perspectives on the implications of localizing international assistance. As stated in the consent form, please rest assured that your participation in this interview will remain completely anonymous: no identifying information such as your name and the name of your organization will be shared with Global Affairs Canada or anyone else nor in any written reports about this study.

The interview will take approximately one hour. I will be recording this interview so that I can concentrate on listening to you rather than taking notes and I will destroy the recording after the study has been completed. You can withdraw your participation at any time just by letting me know you wish to stop this interview.

*Before we get started, I would like to remind you that this study is focused on the **organizational** rather than individual perspectives and practices on localization.*

A) Warm-up/introductory/context questions (3 min):

i) How many years have you been working in the field of international development and in what role(s)?
ii) How long have you been working at your current organization and in what role(s)?

B) Understanding and practices (20 min):

1. How is "localization" understood and operationalized by your organization, including its financial practices?

   Follow-up questions *(if not raised by the respondent already)*:
   - What have been the impacts of these localization efforts on results, programming, and financial practices?
   - Has your organization put in place measures to ensure accountability, compliance, and due diligence for localized programming and funding, and, if so, can you please describe them and comment on the effectiveness of these measures?

2. Why does your organization engage in localization efforts?

   Follow-up questions *(if not raised by the respondent already)*:
   - There has been a lot of discussion about localization in the context of the decolonization of international development. How does your organization address/reconcile issues of power dynamics and differentials, gender equality, equity, diversity and inclusion? (For instance, how can an organization ensure localization is inclusive and not only enabling gatekeepers at the local level?)

   - Are there times when your organization has chosen not to pursue a localization approach, and if so, what were the reasons?

C) **Successes and challenges (15 min):**

3. What has worked well in terms of your organization's localization efforts, can you share any localization success stories?

4. What are the biggest challenges your organization has experienced in its localization efforts?

D) **Implications for IA policy (20 min):**

5. Do you have any suggestions for the Government of Canada and other international assistance donors with regards to the localization of international assistance?

   Follow-up question *(if not raised by the respondent already)*:
   - How might the Government of Canada support localization efforts?

6. If localization of international assistance were to become the norm, do you see the role of Canadian international development organizations such as yours changing in any way, and if so, how?
   Follow-up questions *(if not raised by the respondent already)*:
   - How would this affect accountability, compliance and due diligence measures?
   - If a greater proportion of IA funds starts going directly to local partners in countries eligible for Overseas Development Assistance (ODA), how would this affect Canadian international development organizations such as yours?

7. Are there any other questions or topics that have not come up in the questionnaire or this interview that you feel would be important to include in this study on Canadian international development organizations' perspectives and practices on the localization of international assistance?

Closing remarks: Thanks for your participation in this interview. I will be in touch sometime this Fall with details about the event that will be hosted by Global Affairs Canada to share and discuss the study's findings with the Canadian international development community. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me.