



**Promises vs. Practice:  
The Reality of localizing Humanitarian and Development Aid  
in Colombia**

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**Master's thesis for obtaining the degree:  
Magíster en Conflicto, Memoria y Paz.**

**Escuela de Ciencias Humanas  
Maestría en Conflicto, Memoria y Paz  
Universidad del Rosario**

**Bogotá - Colombia  
2 September 2024**

## **Executive Summary**

This thesis analyzes the present situation of localization in Colombia and explores the gap between the promises and practice of localizing humanitarian and development aid in the country. The concept of localization, which gained prominence after the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, includes promises of shifting power and resources more efficiently and directly to local and national actors who are at the forefront of humanitarian crisis responses and executing development activities. Despite several agreements and commitments made after the Summit by International Organizations, significant gaps remain between these promises and their implementation on the ground, which impedes an effective international cooperation and humanitarian response.

The present research focuses on local and national actors in Colombia. This country is characterized by a complex humanitarian landscape marked by decades of armed conflict, natural disasters, and migration challenges. The study examines the status of localization in Colombia and how this new concept impacts the operational capacities of local and national organizations.

The findings reveal that while there is progress in distinct areas, significant challenges persist, and the implementation of the commitments is slow. These include unequal partnerships, inadequate funding, and insufficient capacity building. Especially local organizations often feel sidelined in decision-making processes, and there is a lack of genuine power-sharing with international actors. The thesis concludes that for localization to be fully realized in Colombia, there needs to be a concerted effort to address these challenges, ensuring that local actors are genuinely empowered, and that the humanitarian system is restructured to support locally led development.

## **Resumen ejecutivo**

Esta tesis analiza la situación actual de la localización en Colombia y explora la brecha entre las promesas y la práctica de la localización de la ayuda humanitaria y al desarrollo en el país. El concepto de localización, que ganó prominencia después de la Cumbre Humanitaria Mundial de 2016, incluye promesas de trasladar el poder y los recursos de manera más eficiente y directa a los actores locales y nacionales que están al frente de las respuestas a las crisis humanitarias y ejecutan actividades de desarrollo. A pesar de los diversos acuerdos y compromisos asumidos tras la Cumbre por las organizaciones internacionales, sigue habiendo importantes lagunas entre estas promesas y su aplicación sobre el terreno, lo que impide una cooperación internacional y una respuesta humanitaria eficaces.

La presente investigación se centra en los actores locales y nacionales de Colombia. Este país se caracteriza por un complejo panorama humanitario marcado por décadas de conflicto armado, catástrofes naturales y retos migratorios. El estudio examina el estado de la localización en Colombia y cómo este nuevo concepto repercute en las capacidades operativas de las organizaciones locales y nacionales.

Las conclusiones revelan que, si bien hay avances en distintas áreas, persisten retos significativos y la implementación de los compromisos es lenta. Entre ellos se encuentran las asociaciones desiguales, la financiación inadecuada y el desarrollo insuficiente de capacidades. Especialmente las organizaciones locales se sienten a menudo marginadas en los procesos de toma de decisiones, y no existe un auténtico reparto de poder con los actores internacionales. La tesis concluye que, para que la localización se realice plenamente en Colombia, es necesario un esfuerzo concertado para abordar estos retos, garantizando que los actores locales estén realmente empoderados, y que el sistema humanitario se reestructure para apoyar el desarrollo liderado localmente.

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## List of Abbreviations

AUC	United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia)
CBPFs	Country Based Pooled Funds
CBOs	Community-Based Organizations
C4C	Charter for Change
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ELN	National Liberation Army (Ejército de Liberación Nacional)
EPL	People's Liberation Army (Ejército Popular de Liberación)
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia)
GBA	Grand Bargain Agreement
GBA2	Grand Bargain Agreement 2.0
GBW2	Grand Bargain Workstream 2
HLPHF	High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
L/NAs	Local and National Actors
LMF	Localization Measurement Framework
LPMF	Localization Performance Measurement Framework
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PoPs	Principles of Partnership
UN	United Nations
UNCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHS	World Humanitarian Summit

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## 1. Introduction

In the world of international cooperation and humanitarian aid, certain buzzwords often dominate the discourse, shaping agendas and influencing policies. One such term, *localization*, gained significant traction during and after the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) in 2016, where it was brought up as a solution to the inefficiencies of the global humanitarian system. While the idea of *localization* – meaning to shift power and resources more directly and efficiently to local and national actors – was not new, the WHS emphasized this concept to improve the effectivity of the humanitarian system. The summit highlighted the persistent power imbalances between the Global North and International Donor Organizations on the one side, and the Global South, local and national actors on the other side, urging a shift towards aid that is “as local as possible, and as international as necessary” (UN, 2016).

The outcome of the Summit was summarized in the Grand Bargain Agreement (GBA), an accord comprising nine workstreams and various commitments by the world’s most powerful countries and international organizations. Among these, the second workstream (GBW2) specifically addressed *localization* and included six commitments that should provide “more support and funding tools for local and national responders” (IASC, 2024). In summary, these commitments promised nothing less than a transformation of the humanitarian and development system, challenging the persistent power imbalances between the actors, that existed since years. Nevertheless, despite the ambitious commitments, the years following the WHS revealed significant gaps between the promises and the reality of the practice on the ground. Many of the International Organizations failed to complete their commitments vis-a-vis the local organizations and it became apparent that “in this sector, we are very good at talking, but we are bad at making change” (Cornish, 2021).

However, *localization* remained a focal point on the agenda of the International Organizations and in 2023, a new consensus, the Grand Bargain Agreement (GBA2) was adopted that sought to renew and reinforce the localization agenda. Today, every major humanitarian or development organization as well as countries from the global north emphasize the importance of *localization*.

A country that is widely affected by this new agenda is Colombia. The country is marked by decades of armed conflict, natural disasters and significant migration challenges and therefore has been a recipient of humanitarian and development aid for decades. Furthermore, as a developing country, Colombia is making efforts to lift its population out of poverty and achieve progress towards becoming a more developed, economically advanced and sustainable nation. Therefore, the country on the northern tip of the southern cone of South America is a region

where humanitarian, development and peace building efforts are implemented and work closely together.

Against this backdrop, this thesis poses the question of how this new localization agenda shapes out in Colombia and impacts local and national organizations that work in the field of humanitarian assistance, development aid or peacebuilding. The research question that is aimed to be solved in this regard is:

**What is the status of localization in Colombia and what are the impacts on the operational capacities of the local and national Organizations?**

The objective of this question is two-fold. First, it seeks to analyze the status of localization, i.e. how far the commitments of the WHS and the GBA have been implemented and to what extent local and national organizations and especially their operational capacities in Colombia have been affected and impacted by these commitments.

To answer these questions, the thesis begins by reviewing the relevant literature on localization (chapter 2) and the context in Colombia (chapter 3), to establish a solid analytical background and foundation for the research. It then presents the analytical framework and methodological approach in chapter 4, that is used to gather and interpret the necessary data. The results of this research and its findings are analyzed in chapter 5, followed by a discussion in chapter 6. Finally, chapter 7 considers some limitations of the study and chapter 8 concludes the thesis by summarizing the results and responding to the research question.

## **2. Unpacking Localization**

### **2.1 A Historical introduction to Localization**

As previously mentioned, the recognition of local actors, or *the local* in broader terms, has roots in earlier discussion about the effectiveness of international cooperation. Historically, humanitarian aid has often been dominated by international organizations (INGOs) based in the Global North, which would deploy resources and personnel to crisis zones, frequently sidelining local capacities and knowledge. However, the concept of localizing aid has been present in various forms for decades already, particularly in regions like Latin America, where local organizations have long been involved in the humanitarian work despite external intervention pressures (Lucatello & Gómez, 2022). In the early 2000s, INGOs and donor organizations increasingly recognized the need for a whole-of-society approach, that should be more inclusive and complementary to engage local and national actors (L/NAs) in humanitarian action (ICVA, 2018: 2).

A similar idea also gained prominence in the peacebuilding literature, which was later called “The Local Turn in Peacebuilding”. This new perspective in the late 1990s and early 2000s was a response to the failing Peacebuilding efforts by the international community and “emphasized the necessity of empowering local people as the primary authors of peacebuilding instead of externally designed and driven peace interventions.” (Pfaffenholz, 2015: 859). This discourse emerged as a critique of western dominated peacebuilding approaches and stemmed from post-colonial, feminist and post-development theories that called for a better integration of local actors into peacebuilding processes (Aoun et. al., 2022: 84). In short, “the local turn poses a fundamental challenge to the dominant ways of thinking and acting about peace” (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013: 772).

One of the earliest formal commitments to *localization* in the humanitarian field was the Principles of Partnership (PoPs) established in 2007. Initiated by the Global Humanitarian Platform (a forum of leaders from 40 humanitarian organizations, including NGOs, UN agencies, the World Bank, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement), the PoPs emphasized complementarity and recognizing local capacity as a fundamental asset in humanitarian response. These principles laid the groundwork for subsequent efforts to integrate local actors more meaningfully into the humanitarian system (ICVA, 2018).

Meanwhile, The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) also began to acknowledge the need for improved development cooperation and aid by adopting the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. Back then, the term of *the local* or *localization* was not yet very common, the focus of the declaration was to “take far-reaching and monitorable actions to reform the ways we deliver and manage aid”, especially through improved partnerships with developing countries and supporting their national development strategies (OECD, 2005: 1).

One of the first INGOs to use the term *localization* by today’s understanding was the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in 2012, presenting three case studies from Guatemala, Liberia, and Uganda (Glennie et. al., 2012). The report concluded that “while localizing aid is no magic bullet”, it is still a crucial element in any strategy to strengthen the humanitarian systems (Ibid.: 82). The shift towards recognizing the need for local engagement and capacity building started the path that eventually led to the WHS. Additionally, there were two other crucial developments in this process: the Charter for Change (C4C) and the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing (HLPHF) Report to the Secretary-General titled “Too Important to Fail - Addressing the Humanitarian Financing Gap” (UN, 2016a).

The C4C, launched in 2015, included commitments to enhance transparency, shift more power to local actors, and allocate at least 20 percent of humanitarian funding directly to southern-based NGOs by 2018. (C4C, 2024). The C4C was thus a direct role model for the WHS, which happened a year later.

Concurrently, the HLPHF's report highlighted the severe funding gaps in humanitarian aid, advocating for increased funding to local actors, diversified funding sources, and enhanced accountability. The HLPHF was established by then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to address the present humanitarian challenges and to formulate recommendations on how to tackle these. In fact, one recommendation of the report was “a Grand Bargain between the big donors and organizations in humanitarian aid (...) that does away with inefficiencies and embraces best practices in humanitarian action, on both sides of the fence” (UN, 2016a: 17).

Eventually, in 2016 the international community gathered in Istanbul, Turkey, to discuss the urgent issues in the humanitarian system and how to overcome them. Ban Ki-moon noted that the summit “came at a time of skyrocketing humanitarian needs alongside a historic shortfall in the funding required to meet them.” (UN, 2016: 2).

It was during this summit that *localization* gained prominence as a key workstream that should help guide the system to improve the humanitarian response. This workstream, called “more support and funding tools for local and national responders” included six commitments that are displayed in the figure below.<sup>1</sup>

The outcomes and commitments of the WHS were summarized in the Grand Bargain Agreement (GBA), titled “A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need” which was signed by all of the major international institutions and country governments.

These commitments are notable, particularly number 4, which draws special attention as it includes a quantitative measurable number. It should be mentioned that prior to the WHS and in 2014, only 0,2 percent of humanitarian funding was transferred directly to L/NAs (UN, 2016: 3). Against this backdrop, reaching 25 percent by 2020 is a high benchmark, that until today is far from being fulfilled. In 2020 it was only about 3.1 percent of funds being directed to L/NAs (Robillard et. al., 2021: 21). Furthermore, as analyzed by many reports, the other commitments are also lacking completion. Partnerships have remained largely unequal, with subcontracting models that provide little decision-making power and insufficient resources for L/NA; barriers in accessing coordination mechanisms persists due to physical, linguistic, and technical

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<sup>1</sup> The other 8 workstreams are: 1. Greater Transparency; 3. Increase the use and coordination of cash-based programming; 4. Reduce duplication and management costs with periodic functional reviews; 5. Improve joint and impartial needs assessments; 6. A participation revolution: include people receiving aid in making the decisions which affect their lives; 7. & 8. Enhanced quality funding; 9. Harmonize and simplify reporting requirements; 10. Enhance engagement between humanitarian and development actors.

challenges; capacity building tends to be short-term and focusses on meeting the needs of the INGOs, rather than the local priorities (Robillard et. al., 2021; Derzsi-Horvath et. al., 2017: 7; ICVA, 2018).

1.	Increase and support multi-year investments in the institutional capacities of local and national responders, including preparedness, response and coordination.
2.	Understand better and work to remove or reduce barriers that prevent organizations and donors from partnering with local and national responders in order to lessen their administrative burden.
3.	Support and complement national coordination mechanisms where they exist and include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms as appropriate and in keeping with humanitarian principles.
4.	Achieve by 2020 a global, aggregated target of at least 25% of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible to improve outcomes for affected people and reduce transaction costs.
5.	Develop, with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and apply a localization marker to measure direct and indirect funding to local and national responders.
6.	Make greater use of funding tools that increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders, such as UN-led Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs), the IFRC Secretariat’s Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) and NGO-led and other pooled funds.

Table 1: The six localization commitments. Own elaboration, Source: ICVA, 2017.

Nonetheless, the WHS brought significant attention to the battered humanitarian system and embraced *localization*, bringing it to the forefront of the agendas in international cooperation. Today, *localization* is a central concept in the operations of local, national, and international organizations (Robillard et. al. 2021: 6). Furthermore, other progress could be seen with certain donors increasing their funding to local actors, and INGOs and UN agencies adopting policies to provide overhead costs and support for local capacity building.

It became apparent that even though *localization* was high on the international agenda, the extent “to which this political interest has translated into fundamental changes in practice remains varied.” (Metcalf-Hough et. al., 2022: 14). Therefore, in 2021, the signatories met again, and the Grand Bargain evolved into its 2.0 version, which emphasized two enabling priorities: quality funding and localization. The importance of these two factors was again underscored by the signatories as a response to the evolving needs and lessons learned from the Grand Bargain (Metcalf-Hough et. al., 2022: 28).

Simultaneously to the adoption of the GBA 2.0, the Covid-19 pandemic raged and disrupted the world. However, several studies argue that these disruptions actually led to some improvements in the humanitarian system and accelerated the localization efforts. A case study in the Pacific, for instance, found that due to the pandemic, new spaces had opened for local

leadership and changed traditional ways of working, which was facilitated by the reduced presence of international staff, that was repatriated due to international travel restrictions and lockdowns (Australian Red Cross, 2020: 6). Financially, while there was an increase in funding to L/NAs, most donor funding continued to be channeled through international mechanisms (Australian Red Cross, 2020. 8f.).

Another report by Barbelet and colleagues (2021) confirms this finding and emphasized that while L/NA have demonstrated remarkable resilience and capacities during the pandemic, donor organizations still dominate funding and decision-making processes which is exacerbated by the lack of funding as outlined above (Barbelet et. al., 2021: 9f.).

In summary, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided a window of opportunity to rethink the process towards more locally led action. *Localization* today is one of the top priorities for INGOs but for these changes to be sustainable and meaningful, there must be a concerted effort to address the systemic barriers that hinder true localization, ensuring equitable funding practices, and genuinely empower local actors (Australian Red Cross, 2020: 12; Barbelet et. al., 2021: 38).

One group of actors who are important in the process to overcome these barriers are networks and alliances by L/NAs in the Global South, who formed after the WHS. They set to work putting the commitments of the GBA into practice and making *localization* a tangible and measurable concept.

## **2.2 Localization as a concept**

Defining *localization* has been a challenge ever since the WHS. The agreements of the summit remained vague, stating that humanitarian action should be “as local as possible, as international as necessary” (Barbelet, 2018). For the scholars and organizations alike, it is imperative to clearly define their understanding of *the local* and *localization*. Therefore, a clear understanding and definition of these terms is crucial to tailor the framework and analysis of the present research to the respective target group.

The terms alone differ widely in the literature and change in line with the different focus areas. Sometimes *localization* is referred to as *locally led Development* (USAID, 2022); *Local humanitarian action* (Barbelet, 2018); *Aid Localization* (de Geoffroy & Grunewald 2017); or *localizing the humanitarian response* (Baguios et. al., 2021).

There are two main reasons why these different typologies came up in the literature around *localization*. First, the different terms account for the specific area where the local action is taking place, meaning in humanitarian or development work for instance. Secondly, the term *localization* got increasingly criticized for being too narrowly focused on international response

systems and processes, and not on L/NAs. However, these actors have always been at the forefront of humanitarian action, no matter the international discourse and the power-imbances (Barbelet, 2018).

To shift the attention to local actors, the term *Local Humanitarian Action* (LHA) and other similar terms as stated above, were used more frequently. They aim to recognize the work of L/NAs and place them “at the center of humanitarian response and reform efforts, with decision-making authority over whether and how humanitarian aid is carried out (Robillard et. al., 2020: 10).

These definitions refer a lot to the discourse around *localization*, how global power asymmetries shape this discourse, and the way *localization* is implemented on the organizational level. The fact that the understanding of *localization* and its definition vary across the different actors that are involved also greatly impacts the way how *localization* shapes out in the field (de Geoffroy & Grunewald 2017: 11). For instance, funding models from INGOs that have different understanding of *the local* or *localization* can include and exclude certain organizations and therefore affect L/NAs in very different ways (Fox & Hallok 2024 p.11).

As it is emphasized by Barbelet and colleagues: In its most basic form, power is an obstacle to localization because it remains in the hands of international actors to decide who has capacity and who doesn't, what kind of capacity counts or is “the right one”, who gets funding or not, what types of partnerships prevail, and who gets access to coordination structures and strategic decision making forums (Barbelet et. al. 2021: 25).

*Localization* in the discourse and in the operational field are two sides of the same coin. As this thesis looks more at the operational side of localization, it is important to understand what it means for local actors and their work.

*Localization* as a way of working is the approach to integrate L/NAs into decision-making processes and strengthening their capacity through increased funding and improved partnerships. USAID for instance, defines *localization* as the “process in which local actors – encompassing individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private entities, and governments – set their own agendas, develop solutions, and bring the capacity, leadership, and resources to make those solutions a reality.” (USAID, 2022). Noteworthy here is that this definition not only regards organizations, but all types of actors, including individuals that act on the local level. However, this definition leaves out the necessary shift in the power asymmetry that persists in the humanitarian and development system. Others, like Canada's Governmental Department for International Development and Humanitarian Assistance

understand *localization* 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” (Rao, 2023: 5).

Including this emphasis is important, as the global power asymmetries are one of the key factors to improving the humanitarian action – and as it was agreed on at the WHS.

Independently from the emphasis, most definitions in the literature understand *localization* as a process. Oftentimes though, these definitions do not further define the outcome of *localization*. If there is a process, what is at the end of the process? Similarly, the question of how long this process is going to be and what this means for all the actors involved is oftentimes left out of the discussion.

Therefore, Baguios and colleagues (2021) propose to make a distinction between *localization* as a process or journey on the one hand, and *locally led practice* as a destination on the other hand. This distinction is useful to clarify and separate the different terms that float around in the literature. According to the authors, the journey of localization is understood as “what is necessary to achieve locally led practice in international development – whether that takes the form of changing the architecture of an existing system, or the emergence of a new one” (Baguios et. al, 2021: 9). The outcome of this process is what they call *locally led practice*. However, the exact shape and form of this destination is subject to the process and who has the power to control and shape it.

The way how partnerships, funding and capacity-building efforts are carried out, is defined by those sitting in the driver seat of the process of *localization* and therefore can also determine its outcome. This is especially important as the understanding of *localization* oftentimes does not match between INGOs and L/NAs, as it was never universally agreed on. In this regard, the negotiation process of what *localizations* means and who controls it, is a direct mirror of the global power structures that are reflected in this exact question.

Going forward, this thesis adapts the understanding of *localization* as the process and *locally led development* as the destination as proposed by Baguios and colleagues. Further considerations are made in chapter 4.

## **2.3 Who is local?**

Further to the debate around the correct depiction of what counts as *localization*, there are also deviating opinions about the question who is or who counts as *the local*. Barbelet (2018) highlights the ambiguity around the term *local*, noting that it encompasses a wide range of actors including local and national governments, community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), faith-based organization, and even the local private

sector. This underscores the diversity and complexity inherent in identifying local actors, who might range from grassroots volunteers to nationally recognized NGOs. However, another additional debate came up “over whether ‘local’ refers to national-level actors as well as community-based ones, with terms such as ‘ultra-local’ emerging.” (Barbelet, 2018: 6).

Robillard and colleagues (2021) emphasize the relativity and context-specific nature of the term *local*. They argue that *local* is often used in opposition to *international*, but this binary distinction can oversimplify the intricate social and geographical divides within affected regions. For instance, diasporas, though physically distant, may possess significant social ties to the affected communities and thus play a crucial role in local humanitarian efforts (Robillard et al., 2021: 7).

The NEAR Network provides a more operational definition, identifying local actors as those actors who are present before, during, and after a crisis, accountable to local laws, and led by local nationals without international affiliations in terms of governance or financing (NEAR, 2019). This definition aims to clarify the scope of local actors by emphasizing sustained presence and local accountability.

Comparatively, while Barbelet (2018) includes a broad spectrum of entities within the definition of local actors, the NEAR Network offers a more stringent criterion based on local leadership and accountability. Robillard et al. (2021), meanwhile, focus on the relative and context-specific nature of *local*, highlighting the fluidity and adaptability of the term depending on social and geographical contexts.

These differing definitions underscore the ongoing debate within the humanitarian sector about who qualifies as a local actor and the implications for implementing localization effectively. Not every national actor may be regarded as local and in contrast, international actors may be counted as partially local, depending on the context. To summarize, it is crucial to clearly define for this thesis who and what counts as local and therefore will be included in the research. Chapter 4 provides more details in this regard.

## **2.4 Measuring localization**

Due to the variety of understandings and diversity of actors in this field, it is a complex undertaking to measure *localization*. As mentioned earlier, since the WHS several local and national groups, primarily in the Global South, have published methodologies that operationalize the localization commitments and track their progress. The table below gives an overview of frameworks that are frequently used in the literature, and their respective areas of focus.

<b>Measuring Localization Framework</b> (HAG & PIANGO, 2019)	<b>Seven areas of localization:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Coordination and Complementarity</li> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Policy Influence and Advocacy</li> <li>• Capacity</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>
<b>Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF)</b> (NEAR, 2019)	<b>Six localization components:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Funding</li> <li>• Capacity</li> <li>• Coordination and complementarity</li> <li>• Policy, influence and visibility</li> <li>• Participation</li> </ul>
<b>The Seven Dimensions of Localization Framework</b> (Patel & van Brabant, 2017)	<b>Seven areas of localization:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Leadership</li> <li>• Coordination and Complementarity</li> <li>• Participation</li> <li>• Policy Influence and Advocacy</li> <li>• Capacity</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>
<b>National Localization Framework</b> (Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships, 2019)	<b>Four areas of localization:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Capacity</li> <li>• Financial Resources</li> <li>• Coordination</li> </ul>

Table 2: Overview of the different Localization Frameworks. Own Elaboration.

Looking across the different frameworks, one can quickly identify a lot of similarities in the focus areas. The first to mention is the dimension of *Partnerships*, which is consistently highlighted in these frameworks. The Measuring Localization Framework (HAG & PIANGO, 2019) emphasizes fair and ethical collaboration that empowers local actors, while NEAR (2019) stresses sustainable relationships ensuring fairness in resource distribution and decision-making. As defined by the National Localization Framework, a good partnership “explicitly and strategically aims to strengthen local leadership of humanitarian action through training and mentoring, policy development, contribution to overheads, flexible funding and reporting arrangements, and increasing trust to manage parts of project planning and Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning”, what makes clear that partnerships are also strongly connected to the other dimensions, such as funding (Accelerating Localization through Partnerships, 2019: 7).

*Funding* is equally important to these frameworks, but each framework has a slightly different focus here. The Measuring Localization Framework calls for sufficient financial resources to support local initiatives, while NEAR (2019) advocates for fair distribution of funds and emphasizes accountability and transparency measures to ensure the effective use of the funds. Patel and Van Brabant (2017) link funding to capacity-building, especially in the area of the financial management systems of the local actors. In summary, it is clear that all frameworks

emphasize the need for sufficient quantity and quality of funding as a prerequisite for the success of the localization agenda.

The dimension of *Capacity* assesses the ability of the L/NAs to independently manage and respond to humanitarian crises and to reduce the reliance on INGOs. The importance of this dimension is underscored by its universality and impact from and on the other dimensions. Sufficient funding, equal partnerships, better coordination and strengthened local leadership and participation, just to name a few, all influence the capacities of L/NAs (Barbelet, 2018: 8). Another aspect to include here is to look at the respect from INGOs and UN entities for local capacities and whether they are undermined by the international actors or not (NEAR, 2019: 8). Therefore, the Measuring Localization Framework for instance, emphasizes both immediate project-based capacity building and long-term organizational development to ensure the sustainability of the L/NA and their operations. (HAG & PIANGO, 2019: 18). Another aspect mentioned by the Seven Dimensions Framework, is the undermining of local capacities through the active recruitment of local staff by INGOs (Patel & van Brabant, 2017: 18).

Moving to the dimension of *Coordination and Complementarity*, which is also frequently included in the several localization frameworks. By measuring this dimension, frameworks can assess how effectively local, national, and international actors collaborate; whether L/NA are engaged in coordination forums and meetings; and if there are clear guidelines for INGOs ensuring not to duplicate local efforts, but to complement them. Finally, the delivery of humanitarian aid should be collaborative and complementary, leveraging the specific strengths of various actors to maximize impact (HAG & PIANGO, 2017: 4).

Lastly, the dimension of *Policy Influence and Advocacy* assesses how well local actors can influence international policy discussions and to what extent local voices and needs are regarded and respected (Patel & van Brabant, 2017: 18). The importance is undermined by the fact that L/NA are those who implement these policies and there should have a say in their formulation. Furthermore, this dimension assesses whether L/NA can influence INGOs in their partnerships, so that these reflect the local and national needs (HAG & PIANGO, 2017: 5).

### **3. Unpacking the Colombian case**

The present chapter will provide the theoretical foundation of this research for the case of Colombia. To achieve this objective, it includes three subchapters that present a brief overview of the historical preludes of the armed Conflict in Colombia, followed by the Humanitarian Situation and the Situation of Localization in Colombia today.

#### **3.1 A brief history of the armed conflict in Colombia**

For over 60 years, the Colombian civil society has endured one of the world's longest-running civil wars, often linked to the 1948 assassination of liberal candidate Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, that sparked a decade of violence known today as *la violencia* (Shiraz, 2014: 97). However, the roots of this conflict trace back to Spanish colonization, which fostered socio-economic inequality through unequal landownership. Despite independence in 1819, this inequality persisted because economic and political power merely shifted from the Spanish crown to a new Colombian elite, without accounting for the rest of the population which led to a continuous struggle over land distribution and socio-economic disparity (Cantillo & Garza 2020: 4; Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2019: 16).

*La violencia* severely impacted Colombia, which “never returned to full normality” until today (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2019: 101). During this violent period, 200,000 people lost their lives, 600,000 were injured, and millions displaced. The establishment of the Frente Nacional in 1958 sought stability by alternating power between major parties, yet it excluded other political and social movements, leading to continued dissatisfaction and violence (Shiraz, 2014: 103; Forero, 2005: 60; Restrepo et. al., 2004: 398).

Inspired by the Cuban Revolution, some peasant groups with Marxist ideals formed guerrilla groups in the 1960s, the most prominent being the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), emerging after a military attack on an agrarian self-defense group (Restrepo et al., 2004: 398). Other groups like the National Liberation Army (ELN), the M-19, and the People's Liberation Army (EPL) also emerged during this decade. These groups, though varied in origin, arose in response to the oppression and socio-economic inequality in the country, claiming to fight for the rights of the poor, especially the rural population (Forero, 2005: 73; Chaparro, 2017: 27f).

The 1970s saw intense fighting between guerrilla groups and the Colombian army, with significant casualties on both sides. The number of homicides rose dramatically from around 5,000 per year to 270,000 by 1989 (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2019: 100). The ELN and FARC were particularly active, targeting military and economic sites, like large landowners, police stations or military posts. Failed agrarian reforms and the government's counter-reformist policies

contributed to the growth of the armed guerilla groups, as the rural peasant population increasingly supported these (Shiraz, 2014: 183f.).

During the late 1970s, a new element was added to the conflict: the cultivation of first marihuana, then coca plants and the international drug trafficking of cocaine especially. Very quickly, Colombia became part of the global market in illicit substances, first as an intermediary and then as a producer. The narco-trafficking industry funded various armed groups, including guerrillas and paramilitaries alike, which fueled an ongoing cycle of violence that the Colombian state was unable to control. Civilians were caught in the crossfire of these battles, facing massacres, kidnappings, and other forms of terror. The money from the drug trade corrupted institutions and weakened the state, exacerbating the violence and leading to widespread human rights abuses (Henderson, 2012: 87).

The Colombian government, supported by the United States, launched military campaigns like Plan Colombia adopted in the 2000s, which intensified efforts against guerrilla groups (Restrepo et al. 2004: 400). Meanwhile, paramilitary groups added another layer of violence to the conflict. Supported and funded by large landowners, international and national companies and drug cartels, these groups carried out numerous massacres and human rights violations against the civilian population, all in the name of fighting against the guerilla groups (Uribe-López & Correa-Barrera, 2022: 176f.; Shiraz, 2014: 210). During the paramilitary violence, the homicide rate rose to an all-time high in 2002, with over 270.000 people (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2019: 100).

Peace negotiations were attempted multiple times, including President Betancour's efforts in the 1980s and President Pastrana's in the late 1990s, but these failed due to continued violence and mistrust (Restrepo et al., 2004: 402; Rios, 2018: 475). In 2002, President Alvaro Uribe, himself a wealthy landowner and cattle rancher, adopted a hardline stance, aiming to restore state control, reducing violence, and dismantling guerrilla groups with U.S. support through Plan Colombia. His administration achieved partial success against the FARC but faced criticism for human rights abuses, including the displacement and extrajudicial killings of civilians, known as the "falsos positivos scandal" (Gutiérrez-Sanín, 2019: 212).

In 2003, the largest paramilitary group, the Self-Defence Forces of Colombia (AUC) began demobilization talks with the government, what eventually lead to the disintegration of the group. However, not all paramilitary fighters joined the demobilization process and formed new paramilitary groups that remained active until today that are known as *Bandas Criminales* (Bacrim) (Restrepo et. al., 2004: 400; Cruz & Suárez Valencia, 2018).

A significant breakthrough came with President Juan Manuel Santos's peace process, beginning in 2012. Before that and despite heavy military spendings, the Colombian government could not defeat the FARC, prompting a new willingness to negotiate with it and that led to the Havana peace talks (Rios, 2018: 486). These talks incorporated lessons from previous failures, involving civil society, conflict victims, and international mediators. In 2016, a peace agreement with this guerrilla group was reached, addressing not only conflict issues but also underlying social inequalities. The agreement included a rural reform, a land fund for dispossessed peasants, political participation for the guerrilla group, and the disarmament and reintegration of the guerrilla ex-combatants (Rios, 2018: 471; Erçakıca, 2022: 127). Despite the agreement being rejected in a 2016 referendum and many of its promises being unfulfilled, it remains a crucial step in Colombia's path to peace (Erçakıca, 2022: 130).

### **3.2 The humanitarian situation in Colombia today**

The developments outlined in the previous chapter led to a very challenging humanitarian situation in Colombia, which is exacerbated by natural disasters, the impacts of climate change and migration flows.

Although the confrontations between armed groups and the government decreased in the last years, the armed conflict continues to have severe repercussion on the civilian population, especially those living in the conflict zones where the clashes between armed groups and/or non-state actors have intensified. In 2024, the Red Cross counted eight non-international conflicts between the Government and armed groups; and five current conflicts between non state actors (ICRC, 2024: 6).

Despite the demobilization of the FARC, other armed groups such as the ELN and the new Bacrim groups have filled the power vacuum in many regions. These groups are involved in drug trafficking, illegal mining, and extortion, perpetuating cycles of violence and insecurity (Prieto, 2013). In 2020 alone, more than 80.000 people have been affected by their criminal activities (OCHA, 2021: 1). However, as the groups have transformed, the dynamics of the violence have changed as well. Today, the Bacrim have shifted away from using massacres as their primary tool of terrorizing civilians and are now targeting social and community leaders (Gutiérrez-Sanín 2019: 111; Gutierrez et. al. 2020). This strategy aims to disrupt the social fabric of the communities, preventing their development and to eradicate peacebuilding efforts, especially in rural regions.

Due to the persisted violence in during the conflict regions, many Colombians were forcefully displaced from their homes, a trend that continues to this date. Today there are 5.1 million people internally displaced in Colombia because of conflict and violence, which is the fourth

highest number worldwide and the highest in the Americas. Last year alone, 293.000 people were displaced, predominantly in the Pacific region and departments such as Valle del Cauca, Nariño, Antioquia and Cauca where African-Colombian and indigenous communities reside. Another 351.000 people were displaced due to natural disaster and the impact of climate change (IDMC, 2024: 82).

The effects of displacement on the victims can be severe. Internally displaced people (IDPs) experience economic hardship due to the loss of their livelihoods, particularly vulnerable communities are also at risk of re-victimization and the consequences of displacement have a direct impact on mental health (ICRC, 2024: 4).

The serious humanitarian situation in Colombia is aggravated by a large inflow of migrants who flee from the grave economic situation in Venezuela. The UN Refugee Agency, (UNCHR), estimates that Colombia hosts approximately 3 million Venezuelan migrants, who often live in vulnerable conditions and requiring urgent humanitarian assistance and social integration (UNHCR, 2024). Furthermore, Colombia's geographical position makes it a transit country for refugees on their way through the Darien Jungle to North America.

The Humanitarian Response Plan counts that 7.7 million people in Colombia in 2023 were in need of humanitarian assistance, especially food security and nutrition, health, protection and WASH assistance. These are compounding effects, created through the conflict, displacement, natural disasters and migration (OCHA, 2023).

Three groups are especially vulnerable in this dire humanitarian situation, starting with women and girls who face sexual violence in the context of the armed conflict. The Red Cross documented 50 cases of sexual violence in 2023, although emphasizing that this is only “a small fraction of the huge number of victims and survivors of this type of violence.” (ICRC, 2024: 6). The consequences of sexual violence are severe, impacting the physical and mental health of victims and their families, as well as having broader social and economic effects on communities (ICRC, 2024: 6). The humanitarian response has prioritized survivors of gender-based violence, providing support through women-led organizations (ICRC, 2024). Children are also vulnerable as they often are recruited by armed groups, leading to psychological and physical trauma or their death. This separation from their families leads to a loss of support systems and a sense of stability. The psychological impact includes trauma, anxiety, and long-term mental health issues, which affect their ability to integrate back into society. The ICRC documented that 49 out of 222 disappearance cases in 2023 were children, highlighting the extent of their vulnerability. Furthermore, the children's access to education, nutrition and health services are often disrupted by the conflict (ICRC, 2024: 5).

Lastly, Indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities are disproportionately affected by the conflict due to their geographical location. The majority of mass displacements occur predominantly in the Pacific region and departments such as Nariño and Valle del Cauca where these communities live and which exacerbates their historical marginalization and vulnerability (CODHES, 2023: 11). These regions are strategically important for the armed groups for the trafficking and production of drugs, illegal mining, logging and human trafficking across the borders to Ecuador and Panama (IDMC, 2024: 91).

To summarize, the humanitarian outlook for Colombia remains complex and characterized by multiple humanitarian challenges that affect a variety of groups. The situation is likely to be exacerbated by climate variability and natural disasters, further straining resources and response capacities, which makes an effective humanitarian action and localization even more important.

### **3.3 Localization in the Colombian context**

Local actors in Colombia were always at the forefront of the humanitarian responses, providing the necessary resources long before aid from the state or humanitarian organizations could arrive. The high demand of humanitarian assistance in the country coupled with the absence of the governmental institutions in rural areas led to the establishment of numerous Civil Society Organization (CSOs) over the last decades (Austin et. al., 2019: 6). In fact, the yearlong exposure of the civil society to the conflict and other humanitarian challenges “has built up the operational capacity of both formal and informal groups to respond to humanitarian crises, and this capacity represents an important opportunity for future local humanitarian leadership, both as it currently exists and in formal/international systems.” (Robillard et. al., 2020: 28).

Especially Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities that are disproportionately impacted by humanitarian crises, have developed numerous robust local organizations through decades of social mobilization. Due to the governmental absence and a high mistrust in its institutions, local actors have predominantly looked for partnerships with INGOs in the past. This development was intensified under President Uribe’s administration, who focused heavily on security and military, rather than humanitarian solutions to the conflict and its humanitarian challenges (Garcia Duque & Casadiego, 2021: 2379).

This local and national need for partnerships together with the humanitarian situation led to many UN entities and INGOs, who work in the triple area of humanitarian, development or peacebuilding, to establish themselves in Colombia (Austin et. al., 2019: 8).

Therefore, the country was also strongly considered in the preparation of the WHS in 2016. Prior to the summit, several regional and thematical consultations that looked at the effectiveness of the humanitarian assistance and how to improve it, were undertaken in

Colombia. This initiative consulted members of communities that were affected by the armed conflict or natural disasters in the country (PLAN, 2016: 4).<sup>2</sup> The results emphasize that humanitarian response and development cooperation must not be viewed in isolation, particularly in protracted and multifaceted crises like Colombia. Despite having distinct functions, both must collaborate closely (PLAN, 2016).

In fact, many of the lessons learned from these consultations informed the WHS and were included in the GBA, creating close ties between the humanitarian situation in Colombia and the localization agenda of the international community. Furthermore, in 2021 and to inform the GBA2, the Colombian Red Cross-National Society, together with the Swiss Embassy in Colombia, UN OCHA and Caritas Colombia conducted a country level dialogue on localization with the objectives of sharing information about the Grand Bargain, raising awareness, gathering feedback, identifying gaps and challenges, and promoting the importance of localization at various levels (OCHA, 2021). The activities included meetings with the Humanitarian Country Team, workshops, dialogues and surveys. The main findings revealed that INGOs in Colombia are well-informed about localization, while local actors are less. Also, local actors face significant challenges in accessing direct funding due to administrative capacity issues, and although there is growing investment in institutional strengthening, it needs to be broadened and made more flexible. Partnerships often treat local actors as “sub-contractors” rather than equal partners, and there is a need for enhanced dialogue and understanding of the security context. Coordination mechanisms are not accessible to all local actors, and there are limitations in the visibility and involvement of local actors in planning and evaluation processes (OCHA, 2021). Although these results are not based on strictly scientific research, they give a good and important overview of the situation in Colombia and even though this country is an important research field in this topic and there are many localization efforts in the country, the literature that deals with this topic is rather slim and lacks diversity in depth and range of topics. The most important ones to be mentioned here:

A study by Robillard and colleagues conducted three case studies on local humanitarian action in Haiti, Colombia, and Iraq (2020). Their analysis, through interviews with local, national and international actors, revealed interesting insights about the perception and efforts around localization in Colombia. First, local actors often do not identify their work as purely humanitarian; rather, they see it as part of their ongoing efforts in human rights, development,

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<sup>2</sup> Plan International Germany and Fundación Plan in Colombia, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office, were in charge of these consultations and conducted 11 focus group discussion in the departments of Chocó, Nariño, Cauca, and Valle del Cauca, with members of communities affected by the armed conflict and/or natural disasters, which had been recipients of humanitarian aid (PLAN, 2016).

and social services, blurring the lines between development and humanitarian work. Secondly, it was shown that the label “local actor” is not exclusively connected to the geographical location of the actor but rather to its “respect for community processes and autonomy” (Robillard et. al., 2020: 26). This is an interesting classification that has not been reflected in other case study results very often as it expands the understanding of “the local” to a new dimension of respecting local values, processes and autonomy and therefore rejects the black and white dichotomy between strictly locally located and international organizations, disconnecting it from the geographical classification. Hence, local actors include a diverse range of entities such as women’s rights, Afro-Colombian, indigenous and peasant organizations; the Colombian Red Cross; and local governmental institutions (Robillard et. al., 2020: 26).

One major challenge to locally led response is the mistrust by local actors of the Colombian government, which is often perceived as absent and inefficient in many regions, leading to a preference among local actors to collaborate with INGOs, rather than the government (Robillard et. al., 2020: 26). Another interesting observation is the existence of two parallel humanitarian response systems in the country: One as the formal humanitarian coordination mechanism, through the Humanitarian Country Team (HTC) that is primarily composed of INGOs and UN entities. The second one in the rural areas of the country, run by community-based organizations, which, unlike the other, shows strong local leadership in the humanitarian responses (Robillard et. al., 2020: 27).

Another example of this was analyzed by Appe and colleagues (2024), who examined how a local organization in Medellín responded to the Venezuelan migration crises. Their results emphasized the valuable effect that an actor who is present and engaged in the local community for decades can have. Furthermore, their case “underlines especially the value of local expertise in issues around migration and the promise of accompaniment in this policy area.” (Appe et. al. 2024: 18). Unsurprisingly, the authors also pointed out the insufficient funding of these local operational activities to be able to respond quickly and adequately to the humanitarian challenges. In their work, they also criticized the slow implementation of the commitments made by the INGOs, what mirrors the observation here made in the previous chapter.

Another article by Kuipers and colleagues (2020) examined the humanitarian response to the Mocoa mudslide in 2017 and the cooperation between local, national and international actors in this operation. The authors illustrated the benefits and challenges of implementing a locally led response in the case of the Mocoa mudslide. One of their primary findings was a tension between state and non-state actors, each claiming legitimacy and control over the disaster

response. State actors asserted their mandate and capacity to lead the response, often sidelining local NGOs and community organizations. In contrast, international actors, who had long-established presences in the region, believed their expertise and local trust justified their involvement. This competition led to coordination issues, duplication of efforts, and ultimately, a less effective response (Kuipers et. al., 2020).

The research further highlights the importance of local trust and legitimacy, which were predominantly attributed to the local government by the affected communities and local NGOs. Despite limited resources, the local government's engagement and proximity to the community fostered a higher degree of trust compared to the national governmental or international actors. The study emphasized the need for nuanced localization policies that recognize the diversity of local actors and the complex dynamics in conflict settings. Effective humanitarian response requires inclusive coordination mechanisms that integrate local, national, and international actors, with international support playing a complementary role to strengthen local capacities and facilitate long-term recovery and peacebuilding. This also confirms the findings from the previously mentioned study by Robillard and colleagues that international organizations can be and are well respected, when they are involved in the local community processes and respect these.

A recurring topic mentioned in the literature is the issue of inadequate and insufficient funding of local and national actors. Over the last years, the funding requirements could never be met. For instance, the Humanitarian Response Plan states that in 2022 only 37 percent of the required financial resources were received, which is a decrease from 47 percent in the previous year (OCHA, 2023). However, these numbers for the entirety of the humanitarian system in Colombia. L/NA receive a fraction of these funds. Looking at the available information for direct funding to local and national organizations, around 10 percent, is well below the promised 25 percent of the Localization Workstream (Austin et. al., 2019a: 9).

These findings are underscored by the study of Fox and Hallock (2024) who analyzed the funding stream of USAID, the largest international donor organization in Colombia. Similarly, USAID is far from their proclaimed 25 percent funding target to L/NNGOs with only 10,2 percent of its funding in Colombia going to L/NAs (Fox & Hallock, 2024: 8). Additionally, they point to the concerning fact that even though the overall amount of funding to organizations in Colombia has increased each year, the proportion of direct funding to local partners has decreased between 2017 and 2022 (Fox & Hallock, 2024: 19).

However, funding is not the only challenge that L/NA face in Colombia. Assessing the situation today, the humanitarian and development sector in Colombia has not yet arrived at a state of

*locally led practice* in accordance with the definition of this thesis. The challenges in Colombia mirror the ones that have been outlined by the literature around localization. One of these profound challenges is that the international humanitarian system has persistent, embedded power imbalances. As mentioned, the research indicates that this sector has been dominated by international actors, something that often sidelines local actors. Too often, local actors experience direct funding and partnership challenges at eye level leaders who undermine their leadership in humanitarian responses (Robillard et al., 2020: 36).

## 4. Analytical Framework and Methodology

The following chapter will set the basis for the research by explaining the working definitions of *localization*, the local and operational capacity. Based in the theoretical examinations outlined in the previous chapters, the analytical framework for the research, the Localization Measurement Framework (LMF), is explained in detail. Lastly, the research methodology to gather the necessary data to answer the posed research question is presented as well.

### 4.1 Working definitions

Generally, when *localization* is approached analytically, scholars talk about measuring the progress of *localization* in a specific area (IASC, 2021: 9). However, this approach requires reference points that allow for comparison and assessment between different stages of *localization* over time. The objective of this thesis is not to track the progress longitudinally, but to analyze the current state of *localization* – essentially capturing a snapshot of how the localization commitments are being realized and their impact within the Colombian context.

Coming back to the definitions presented earlier, Baguios et. al. (2021) proposed to make the distinction between *localization* as the progress and *locally led development* as the destination. This research positions itself at an intermediary point within this framework, introducing the *state of localization* as a new element in the classification. Hence, the *state of localization* is understood as a specific moment within the broader progress of *localization* towards locally led development, analyzed with the reference to the commitments and objectives set forth in the localization agenda.

In this framework, locally led development is the ideal scenario, characterized by L/NAs forming equitable partnerships with INGOs; leading and participating equally in humanitarian and development efforts and decision-making processes; having direct access to and receiving sufficient funding; and being supported by INGOs in building sustainable operational capacities. This approach contributes to the scientific literature and discourse on *localization* by providing a detailed examination of where Colombia currently stands in terms of *localization* and how L/NAs in the country are impacted by this agenda.

Colombia was selected as the point of this study because of its distinctive circumstances, that make it an ideal environment, for examining *localization* trends. As discussed earlier, Colombia is marked by an ongoing armed conflict between different groups and the government, displacement issues and the repercussions of migration. Due to this situation, local and national actors are playing pivotal roles in these interventions often in collaboration with international bodies. Despite this situation, there is a gap in the literature concerning evaluations of the status of *localization* and its effects on the operational capacities of L/NA. By concentrating on

Colombia this research seeks to offer a perspective on the implementation of *localization* efforts the challenges faced by local actors and how well international commitments to *localization* are fulfilled.

Regarding the classification of L/NAs, this research follows the definitions proposed of Robillard et. al. (2020), who have developed this classification based on their research and findings in Colombia. Therefore, the scope of the present research focusses on organizations that work in the field of Humanitarian assistance, Peacebuilding, Development cooperation, or all three.<sup>3</sup> This is a broad spectrum, however, the context in which the L/NAs operate in Colombia is very much characterized by the overlapping nature of these three topics (Duque & Casadiego, 2021: 2375). In fact, the boundaries between these three topics are rather blurry and *localization* is “in many ways (...), central to the idea of a humanitarian-development-peace nexus” (ICVA, 2018: 11). Therefore, this research regards L/NAs as organizations who are operating in the field of either Humanitarian, Development, Peace or all three together.

Actor type	Working definition
National NGO	A formal, registered NGO, based in Colombia and operating in more than one province
Local NGO	A formal, registered NGO based in and primarily operating in one province
INGO	A formal, registered NGO with its headquarters in a country other than the one where they are working

Table 3: Working definitions of this thesis. Own elaboration, based on Robillard et. al. 2020.

The second emphasis of this research project is to analyze the impact of *localization* on the operational capacity of the organizations. Capacity as an indicator is oftentimes included in the *localization* debate and literature, as well as in measurement frameworks to analyze *localization* efforts and progress. However, the definition of this indicator is not as straight forward as it may seem. First, looking at capacity as a general term, it can be defined as “the organisational and technical abilities, relationships and values that enable countries, organisations, groups and individuals at any level of society to carry out functions and achieve their development objectives over time” (Kamstra, 2017: 25).

Sufficient capacity is a prerequisite for any organization to adequately execute their operational activities and in therefore also for *locally led practice*. Therefore, and due to other reasons, it is important to give a bigger emphasis on capacity in this research project. Some of the most important and closely connected reasons are:

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<sup>3</sup> To keep it concise and for a better reading experience, in the coming pages, *localization* will be referred to in the context of humanitarian and/or development work as the literature mainly focuses on those. However, this should not exclude the peacebuilding area which is part of the research as well.

- Sustainability and effectiveness of the operational activities: Improved capacities are crucial for local organizations to ensure that they can sustain their business operations and operational activities in the long-term (USAID, 2022a).
- Improvement in effectivity and responsiveness: L/NAs with sufficient operational capacities can better tailor their operational activities to local contexts and adapt to changing situations, a central indicator of locally led practice.
- Building resilience: Improved and high resilience of L/NAs is crucial for these actors to be able to effectively respond to humanitarian emergencies and to maintain their operational activities, especially in times of crises, political or economic instabilities.
- Reducing dependencies and changing the power balance: A higher independence in the way organizations manage, mobilize and use their financial resources. Sufficient operational capacities are crucial to this end. Furthermore, as stated by Barbelet and colleagues, “(i)n its most basic form, power is an obstacle to localisation because power remains in the hands of international actors to decide who has capacity or not, what capacity counts, who gets funding or not, what types of partnerships prevail, and who gets access to coordination structures and strategic decision-making forums” (Barbelet et. al., 2021 60). Therefore, to take a deeper look into the power relations around capacity, as outlined in the quote, will give a very good insight on the status of localization.
- Empowerment and inclusion: Sufficient operational capacity is necessary for L/NAs to be able to take part in decision-making processes and partnerships, especially with international organizations.

This list is non-exhaustive but gives an overview of why operational capacities are crucial for *localization* and *locally led practice* alike.

Having determined that capacity is crucial for the process and destination, it is equally important to define this variable and what exactly this research projects is trying to analyze. Since capacity is such a broad concept, there are numerous different ways to define and analyze it, especially for the field of humanitarian and development work.

According to the literature, local actors’ capacity can be separated into two overarching categories: *operational capacity*, referring to the management, governance and decision-making side of an organization; and *organizational capacity*, which touches on the aspects of delivery of programmes and projects (Barbelet, 2018: 7). It is important to note that an organization needs both areas to work effectively as these concepts enable each other.

Therefore, these two concepts cannot be separated, rather they are two sides of the same coin and closely interrelated (Barbelet, 2018: 7).

Interestingly and as shown by Howe and colleagues (2015), actors in the Global South tend to value operational capacities higher than their counterparts from the Global North. This is understandable looking at the organizational nature and perspectives of these actors and where their priorities lie on: For local actors the effective execution of their operations is important in order to fulfil their commitments vis-à-vis the affected population. Organizations in the Global North on the other hand tend to emphasize strong institutional or organizational structures that secure the long-term existence of the organization (and potentially their investments in organizations that are located in the Global South) (Barbelet, 2018: 9).

Against this backdrop and since *localization* aims to improve the humanitarian and development work, this thesis will adapt the term of *operational capacity* for its analysis in order to give it some emphasis. However, aspects of organizational capacity are also covered in the measurement framework.

## **4.2 The Localization Measurement Framework**

As explained, the Localization Performance Measurement Framework (LPMF), developed by the NEAR Network, will be the base for this research, but it will also be tailored to the research objective of this thesis. As research questions here does not ask for performance and to avoid confusion, the framework of this thesis will just be called Localization Measurement Framework (LMF).

The NEAR network is composed of NGOs, located in the Global South that aim to improve the humanitarian system and the aid effectiveness. The vision of this Network it is to achieve a world “where local communities have the resource and agency to address the challenges that impact them”, and “to reinvent aid through innovative ideas, knowledge sharing, and influencing.” (NEAR, 2023: 3).

The network was founded after the WHS in 2016 and since then, NEAR regularly publishes analysis, reports and discussion papers on the progress of localization. As one of these undertakings, NEAR developed the LMPF to measure progress towards the achievement of the localization commitments. As they state, the framework focuses on local and national actors, but also for international NGOs, donor organizations, research and academic institutions (NEAR, 2019: 3). Among all the other frameworks presented earlier, the LMPF presents itself as the most useful one due to several reasons. First, it is developed by organizations from the Global South, the actors who localization affects the most. This is important to prevent the use of any neo-colonial frameworks that are shaped by the views of researchers and scholars from

the Global North and their perspectives. Secondly, the LMPF is also designed for scientific use, making it adaptable for this research project, and thirdly, the localization dimensions fit well to the research topic and question of this thesis.

Regarding the dimensions, the LMPF will be adapted to the exact purpose of this research question and the two variables that are analyzed. From the 6 dimensions of the LPMF, the LMF adapts *Partnerships; Funding; Capacity; Policy influence and visibility; and leadership*.

Since not all of the indicators will be needed, the first change is to merge the *influence and visibility* and *Leadership* dimensions *Policy* into one. To maintain conciseness and to focus on these two aspects, the dimension will be called *Policy and Leadership*.

Next, to adequately assess the impact of *localization* on the operational capacity of Colombian L/NAs, the LMF will be expanded by a few indicators that are drawn from the Localization Framework developed by HAG & PIANGO, that was also presented in the previous chapters. Combining indicators from the NEAR and HAG & PIANGO frameworks will provide a comprehensive list of indicators that are perfectly suited for the present research.

Lastly, the LMF will exclude a number of indicators from each dimension that don't fit to this research questions, for instance those focusing on the performance of INGOs.

The LMF is designed to gather the necessary data to respond to the research question. To do so, it is structured around the 4 aforementioned dimensions. Each dimension includes 2 or 3 indicators that are broken down into Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The KPIs are measurable metrics that are used to measure the state of *localization* in Colombia. The LMF states how each KPI is measured and their results. The results are statistically presented in the next two columns, first through the frequency distribution of the responses (percentage of "agrees" etc.) and second through the calculation of the mean and mode for each response. The last two parameters give useful additional information that help to understand the data and to evaluate the KPIs. The assessment of these KPIs is done in the next column, using a traffic-light system that mark the KPIs in green (positive), orange (neutral), or red (negative). However, even though these three codes are also calculated statistically, the survey results and frequency distribution are the main basis for this analysis. The traffic light system provides an additional visual and straightforward way to interpret and assess the KPIs, which is included to facilitate the assessment. To translate the survey questions results into the traffic light system codes, each response category is assigned to one of these codes based on the response frequency distribution, such as "agreement" for green or "disagreement" for red. The percentage of the responses in each category is calculated by dividing the number of responses by the total number of responses and then multiplied by 100. The result, in percentages, provides a clear

visual summary of the overall sentiment of the responses, allowing for a quick assessment of positive, negative or neutral opinions for each question. The table below visualizes the response options that were used in the online survey (for the different question types) and the respective intervals for the classification into the traffic light system.

Response options	Interval	Traffic light code
Strongly Agree; Agree; Yes; High	67% - 100%	Green (positive)
Neither Agree nor Disagree; Moderate; Sometimes	34% - 66%	Orange (neutral)
Disagree; Strongly Disagree; No; Low	0% - 33%	Red (negative)

Table 4: Classification of the traffic-light-system. Own elaboration.

For instance, the positive category, is estimated using the following calculation:

$$Green (positive) = \left( \frac{Number\ of\ strongly\ Agree + Agree\ responses}{Total\ number\ of\ responses} \right) \times 100$$

The same calculation will be made for the neutral and negative category and the highest number of these three categories decides how the KPI will be classified. However, in cases where these three numbers are very close to each other and where there’s no clear indication, the classification will be decided on a case-by-case bases.

Coming back to the dimensions of the LMF, each of them are explained in detail on the following page.<sup>4</sup>

### 4.2.1 Partnerships

One major commitment or promise from the localization agenda is to reshape the power asymmetries between the Global North and Global South, meaning between donor organizations and those who implement the activities. Therefore, it is crucial to look into the practice, how the partnerships between these two groups of actors actually played out and how they have changed since the commitments of the GBA.

It is important to note that Partnerships have been at the center of humanitarian and development work long before the WHS in 2016. Traditionally, international cooperation that includes work on the ground is based on bilateral partnerships between international and local actors (Barbelet, 2018: 12). These exact partnerships have been widely criticized for being

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<sup>4</sup> For an improved accessibility, the LMF is also available as an online Excel file here: [https://uredu-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/maximilian\\_schulze\\_urosario\\_edu\\_co/EcxXJvd16JpAkazNSsj82C8B9vZqc9OZJ0lxt5mLRuEeTg?rttime=VncXfE\\_H3Eg](https://uredu-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/maximilian_schulze_urosario_edu_co/EcxXJvd16JpAkazNSsj82C8B9vZqc9OZJ0lxt5mLRuEeTg?rttime=VncXfE_H3Eg)

asymmetric, dominated by the INGOs and therefore impeding an effective local response to humanitarian or development challenges (ibid). Therefore, the first indicator here will be *Quality in relationships*.

The GBA commitments promised to put these partnerships on a new footing. For NEAR, the desired change in this dimension is to have “more genuine and equitable partnerships, and less sub-contracting” (2019: 6). Others emphasize that “Once the capacity of a local humanitarian responder is positively assessed, the partnership should be based on the same basis as it would be with an international organization.” (OECD, 2017: 14). Whether this change can be witnessed in Colombia will be analyzed through the second indicator *Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships*.

The last indicator *Engagement of partners through the project cycle*, will assess whether joint projects and their budgets are co-designed, implemented and evaluated between INGOs and L/NAs.

I. Partnerships		
Indicator	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measured through
I.1 Quality in relationships	Relationships with L/NA are guided by the Principles of Partnership (PoP) (equality, transparency, results- oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity) and are periodically reviewed	Survey question 11
	L/NA have power in partnerships and are equal to international actors	Survey questions 12, 13
	Perceptions of local and national actors that they have increased decision making	Survey question 14
	Partnerships have a mechanism by which issues of concern can be raised and resolved	Survey question 15
I.2 Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships	Existence of longer-term strategic partnerships that commit to build systems and processes that reflect the ambition and goals of L/NA	Survey question 16
	Perception of local and national actors of a shift from project-based to strategic funding and partnerships	Survey question 17
	Perception of local and national actors of improved sustainability and impact of their projects	Survey question 18
I.3 Engagement of partners through the project cycle	Projects and budgets are co-designed, implemented and evaluated with L/NA	Survey questions 19, 20

Table 5: Excerpt from the LMF for the Dimension *Partnerships*. Own Elaboration.

## 4.2.2 Funding

Closely linked to partnerships and capacity is the component of *Funding*, which is an overarching topic, that influences all aspects and especially the operational activities and capacities. Sufficient funding is a central aspect of the GBA, shown by the commitment of the transfer 25 percent of the funds directly to L/NAs. Sufficient financial resources and access to funding have a direct effect on local organizations and their capacities to work effectively because it “allows local organizations to maintain assets and staff between crises and project-based funding.” (Barbelet, 2018: 10).

However, not only the quantity but also the quality of funding matters, which includes the ability of L/NAs to independently use the received financial resources and to not be depended on project-based or earmarked funding. Furthermore, this indicator focuses on the access of direct funding for L/NA. “Direct” means that the funds are transferred from the INGO to the L/NA without passing through more than one intermediary organization or that the funding that can be accessed through a pooled fund (A4EP, 2019: 2). Therefore, the first two indicators of the funding dimension are: *Quantity of funding* and *Quality of funding*.

Lastly, the topic of risk mitigation and corruption is also included in the funding dimension. This issue is particularly important for international donors and sometimes hinders trust building and partnerships from the perspectives of the Global North. To avoid being accused of fraud and corruption, it is important to analyze whether local and national actors have sufficient financial management systems and accountability structures in place. This aspect will be covered in the indicator of: *II.3 Financial management and risk mitigation*.

All three indicators and the respective KPIs are summarized here:

II. Funding		
Indicator	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measured through
II.1 Quantity of funding	Type and source of funding	Survey questions 21, 22, 25, 26
	Perception of local and national actors receiving appropriate amounts of funding	Survey questions 23
	The amount of funding to L/NA increases in line with Grand Bargain and Charter for Change commitments	Survey question 24
II.2 Quality of funding	Perception that L/NA have increased control over funding decisions and quality of funding	Survey question 27
	INGO/UN actively seek to strengthen the financial sustainability and independence of L/NA partners	Survey question 28
	L/NA can access funding ‘as directly as possible’ (e.g. funding channeled through a pooled/national funds that are directly accessible to L/NA)	Survey question 29, 30

II.3 Financial management and risk mitigation	Fraud and corruption risks are acknowledged by L/NA and effective systems are put in place to mitigate and manage risk	Survey question 31
	Local and national perspective about financial mechanisms to mitigate the risks of fraud and corruption	Survey question 32

Table 6: Excerpt from the LMF for the Dimension *Funding*. Own Elaboration.

### 4.2.3 Capacity

Implementing the localization commitments means strengthening local and national capacities that are well equipped to respond to the respective humanitarian and development needs. Therefore, the capacity dimension analyses whether L/NAs can do exactly that and if they receive adequate support from INGOs to develop and strengthen their capacity.

Local capacities were oftentimes undermined by INGOs, impeding any localization efforts. Either by not including the local knowledge and experience into the operations, by recruiting local staff from the L/NAs or simply by not providing sufficient resources for the L/NAs to develop capacities in the first place (Barbelet, 2018: 14). The latter, meaning the notion that local organizations don't have sufficient capacities, can lead to INGOs believing that they have to compensate for this, which in turn leads to local capacities being undermined even more. Therefore, trust and partnerships with sufficient funding need to be established and capacity building needs to be based on the needs of the L/NAs. Furthermore, it should be acknowledged by INGOs that capacity building takes time, effort, resources and changes in their operational practices because “the most effective capacity strengthening initiatives have been country-specific and customized, taking into account local experiences, history, risks and conflict, current capabilities, capacity-strengthening programs already under way, political will and how the donor has influenced the country historically” (Barbelet, 2018: 15). The capacity indicators will analyze whether this can be confirmed from the perspectives of L/NA in Colombia, using the indicators of *Capacity strengthening*; *Organizational capacity*; and *Coordination*.

III. Capacity		
Indicator	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measured through
III.1 Capacity strengthening	III. a) Perception that L/NA are appropriately supported by partner/international organizations in advance of and during humanitarian response	Online survey Q. 33, 34
	L/NA receive appropriate, sufficient and targeted capacity strengthening support from international organizations.	Online survey Q. 35, 36
	Capacity strengthening/sharing plans are tailored to needs of the L/NA	Online survey Q. 37

	International actors and donors include/allow capacity strengthening and organizational development budget line(s) in all projects and partnership agreements.	Online survey Q. 38
III.2 Organizational capacity	Organizational development is a core objective of partnerships	Online survey Q. 39
	National and regional surge capacity and use of local over international expertise	Online survey Q. 40
	Perception that L/NA are able define their own organizational capacity needs	Online survey Q. 41
	Perception that international actors do not undermine capacity of national actors in emergency response	Online survey Q. 42, 43
III.3 Coordination	L/NA are playing leadership roles in coordination mechanisms (e.g. clusters or sectorial coordination meetings) where appropriate and/or are members of Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT) or relevant national humanitarian leadership forums	Online survey Q. 44
	The staff of national actors is not actively approached or invited to apply for vacancies with international agencies	Online survey Q. 45, 46

Table 7: Excerpt from the LMF for the Dimension *Capacity*. Own Elaboration.

#### 4.2.4 Policy and Leadership

In the past, L/NAs have been often regarded as implementers or subcontracts to INGOs and not been trusted to use and develop their own strategic decision-making (IASC, 2024: 5). This lack of expertise and leadership often led to the failing or underperformance of the operational activities, showing a clear need of including local participation in every phase of the activities – including the formulation of policies and the strengthening of local leadership (Derzsi-Horvath et. al., 2017). The dimension of Policy and Leadership will look at these issues.

The first aspect, *Policy*, will examine the extend of which L/NA feel that they have an influence in shaping the discourses and debates about humanitarian and development policies. These policies, which are most prominently developed by INGOs from the Global North, have a great impact on those who implement them. Furthermore, NEAR states that “it is critical to enable direct representation of Global South NGOs on an equitable basis in policy development process and reform processes“ (NEAR, 2023: 14). To analyze whether this holds true for the case of Colombia, the LMF includes two KPIs that analyze the perceived recognition of L/NAs as key stakeholders in debates about humanitarian policies and secondly if the perception of whether L/NA can influence donor priorities on how programmes are designed and implemented. These are covered by the indicator *Influence in policy and programmes*.

However, implementing these programmes also needs another very important factor: Leadership is an integral part of the GBA, that commits to “respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it“ (Robillard, 2021: 21). Proficient and strong local Leadership is crucial because it emphasizes contextual understanding and local

responsiveness. L/NAs have a far greater knowledge about their regional cultural, social and economic contexts which places them in a better leadership position to formulate, design and implement activities, thus making them more effective.

However, it is important to note that local leadership is not a remedy to all humanitarian or development challenges, nor is it always feasible or even logical to implement. Leadership requires extensive local capacities – which underscores the importance of capacity strengthening – but this may not be possible in every local context right away. Also, there can be severe humanitarian challenges that exceed the leadership capabilities of one or more local and national actors who otherwise are well established in this regard (Cohen et. al., 2016).

Therefore, the LMF does not understand leadership as the dichotomic difference between existence, or no existence of leadership. Much rather, it includes KPIs that ask for the perception of L/NAs whether they feel that INGOs support and strengthen local leadership, decision-making and if they are respected. In cases of shared leadership or international leadership entirely is necessary and requested by L/NAs, there should be no objection against it, if these are based on the principles of partnerships, as outlined in the previous dimension. The table below summarizes the indicators of the fourth and last dimension of the LMF.

IV. Policy and Leadership		
Indicator	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measured through
IV.1 Influence in policy and standard-setting	L/NA are recognized as key stakeholders in international debates about humanitarian policies that may have significant impact on them	Online survey Q. 47
	L/NA influence donor priorities in-country including programmed design and implementation	Online survey Q. 48
IV.2 Leadership	Perceptions that international actors support and strengthen national leadership	Online survey Q. 49
	Perception that L/NA lead response and dominate decision making	Online survey Q. 50
	Perception that there is investment in increasing local and national leadership	Online survey Q. 51
	Perceptions of local, national and international actors about respecting and working with in-country leadership structures and mechanisms	Online survey Q. 52

Table 8: Excerpt from the LMF for the Dimension Policy and Leadership. Own Elaboration.

### **4.3 Research Design, data collection and analysis**

The KPIs from the LMF are at the center of the research here, through their analysis the research questions can be answered. As the research method to gather the data, a quantitative research design in form of an online survey has been chosen.

Using an online survey is useful because of three main reasons (Evans & Mathur, 2018). First, it allows for the collection of large amounts of data efficiently and effectively, which is necessary due to the extent of the research question and the large amount of KPIs. Secondly, a wide range of respondents can take part in this method, which in this case are local and national organizations in Colombia. Lastly, online surveys have an advantage due to their accessibility and independence from the authors and respondents' location. Since it is intended to gather many local voices in Colombia, the resources would not allow to travel across the country and collect that much information.

The KPIs of the LMF are the basis for the questionnaire, ensuring coherence and alignment between the research objective and the collected data. The LMF table states which KPI is covered by the respective survey question (see Annex 1, column "measured through").

The questionnaire consists of 53 questions, divided into 6 blocks (see Annex 2 for the questionnaire). The first 10 questions cover basic information from the organization; following this are the section on Partnerships (10 questions); Funding (11 questions); Capacity (13 questions); and Policy and Leadership (4 questions). The survey is concluded by one final question.

The Localization Online Survey questionnaire was developed in English and then translated to Spanish, the language in which the survey was applied. The qualitative open-ended questions were translated back to English, cleaned, coded and analyzed.

The majority of survey questions are closed-ended questions, which are widely used in quantitative research and prove their value through the ability to produce quantifiable data that can easily be analyzed statistically (Fink, 2015). Likert scales which are 5-step responses ranging from strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree over to strongly disagree; were chosen for the majority of the response options of the questions, a "don't know or not applicable" option was also included. Likert scales are designed to capture the intensity of a respondent's opinion across a spectrum, offering more nuanced data, which can introduce biases if not carefully constructed. They are used widely in scientific research and one of the standard response types. Their advantage lies in the facilitation of translating qualitative judgements into quantitative data, which enhances the quality of the analysis (Boone & Boone, 2012).

The data collection process included several steps to ensure the validity and reliability of the method and the gathered data.

Before distribution, a pre-test of the survey was conducted to ensure a good workflow and understanding of the questions. Furthermore, pre-testing helped to identify errors in formulations, survey flow and to clarify questions. Based on the feedback, the survey got adjusted accordingly.

Qualtrics XM was selected as the technological platform to create and distribute the survey. Qualtrics is a comprehensive solution to online surveys recommended and licensed by the Catholic University Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. It offers advanced survey design capabilities, allowing for an easy usability and construction of a complex survey, and the usage of a wide-range of question types, which is necessary to capture the data for the different types of KPIs adequacy. Lastly, the platform's security features, including data encryption and compliance with various data protection regulations, ensure the confidentiality and integrity of the collected data (Qualtrics, 2023). These points make Qualtrics a suitable and effective tool for conducting high-quality online surveys in academic research.

Finally, the survey got distributed online through a diverse and geographically disperse group of organizations previously researched. Attention was paid to the work areas of the organizations and that these coincide with the focus area of this analysis. The invitations for the survey were sent via email, in some cases also through social media channels. These invitations included clear instructions and assurances of confidentiality of the personal data and responses. Upon completion of the data collection and the closing of the survey, the responses were downloaded and summarized in an excel sheet. There, the data was cleaned and thereafter evaluated. To facilitate the analysis of the data, graphs illustrating the results have been created. Many of them are used in the next chapter for the response of the research question.

### 5. Survey analysis: Key findings on localization in Colombia

This chapter will present the analysis of the survey data and lay the foundation to respond to the research question. The chapter is organized along the sections of the LMF, but first some information of the respondents and overall insights of the survey results are presented.

After closing the survey and the removal of the unfinished responses, 47 complete responses were left. Out of these, 4 responses to the survey were given by INGOs and therefore removed from the dataset as these organizations are not the focus of this research. Hence, 43 valid questions were included in the data set. Out of these 43, 14 organizations selected to be a local NGO (33%), 26 selected national NGO (60%), the remaining 3 selected “other”.<sup>5</sup> The vast majority of organizations (44%) are based in the capital of Colombia, Bogotá, followed by Valle del Cauca (16%) and Antioquia (7%). The table below gives an overview of the organizations that responded to the survey, sorted by their type and location of headquarters.

	Local NGO	National NGO	Other	Total
Bogotá D. C.	5	14	0	19 (44%)
Valle del Cauca	3	4	0	7 (16%)
Antioquia	1	2	0	3 (7%)
Santander	1	1	1	3 (7%)
Caldas	1	1	0	2 (5%)
La Guajira	0	2	0	2 (5%)
Nariño	1	0	1	2 (5%)
Arauca	0	1	0	1 (2%)
Magdalena	1	0	0	1 (2%)
Meta	0	1	0	1 (2%)
Norte de Santander	0	0	1	1 (2%)
Putumayo	1	0	0	1 (2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (33%)</b>	<b>26 (60%)</b>	<b>3 (7%)</b>	<b>43</b>

Table 9: Overview of the organizations that responded to the survey, sorted by their type and headquarters location. Source: Localization Online Survey.

As these organizations not only operate where they are located, the survey asked to indicate the areas where the respondents’ organizations are operationally active. Looking at the results, the survey could capture a very diverse range of organizations in terms of regional activities as all

<sup>5</sup> Out of the three organizations one is Consulting Firm, one an Afro-Colombian organization that shares information on scholarships at the national level, the last one didn’t specify its type.

the departments are covered. The heat map below illustrates this by showing the combined results for the departments of Colombia where the respondent organizations are active. Leading the list is the department of Cauca, where 47 percent of organizations responded to be active, followed by Valle del Cauca (42%), Antioquia (37%) and both Bogota and Santander at 35 percent. These results are encouraging and prove the legitimacy of the survey responses as these regions are the ones who are most affected by the different conflicts and humanitarian challenges, hence are home to many humanitarian activities (CODHES, 2023).

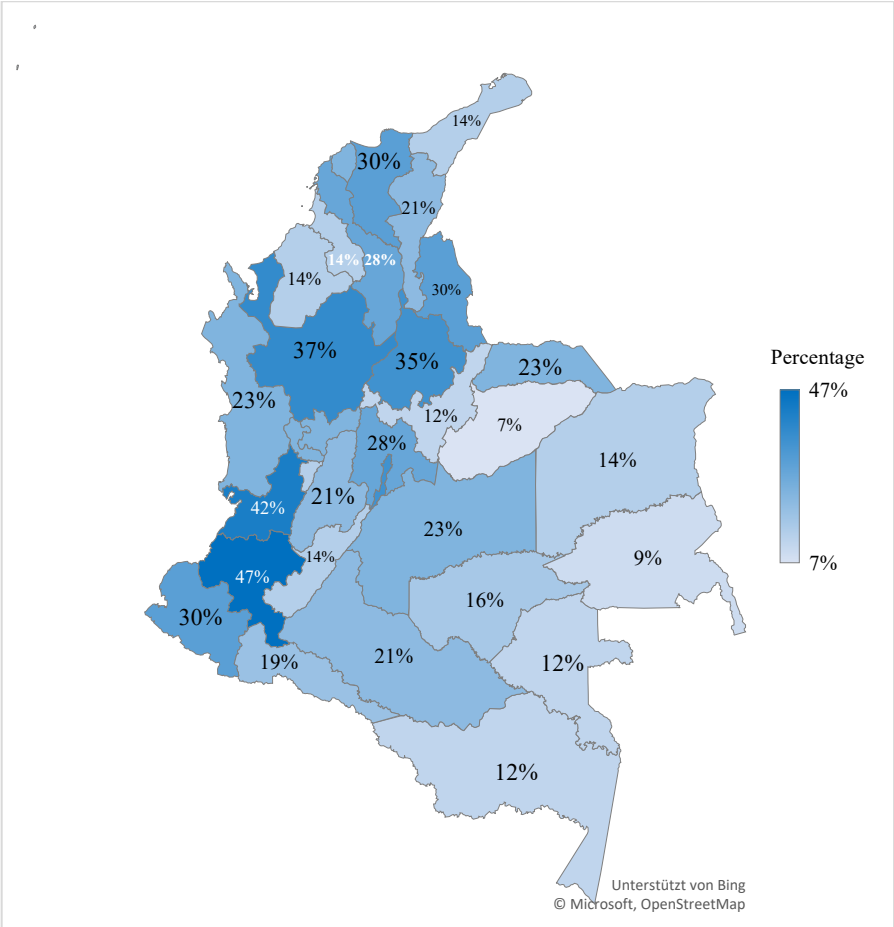


Figure 1: Heat Map of regions where surveyed Organizations operate. Source: Localization Online Survey.

Unsurprisingly, when comparing the operational regions of the organizations and their organizational type, it shows that local NGOs have a much smaller scope. On average local NGOs operate in 1,6 regions, with 2 out of 3 being active in only one department and only one local NGO active in three regions. In contrast, national NGOs operate on average in 2,6 regions, with one organization responding to be active in 11 departments. The respondents were also asked to indicate the main work area of their organization. The results underscore the complexity of the humanitarian situation in Colombia and the fact that the area of humanitarian, development and peace are closely intertwined. As shown in the figure, the vast majority of organizations are working across the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus (HDP) or in one of these three areas. Among those that selected “Other” were organizations in the field of Human Rights, Social Protection and Environmental protection.

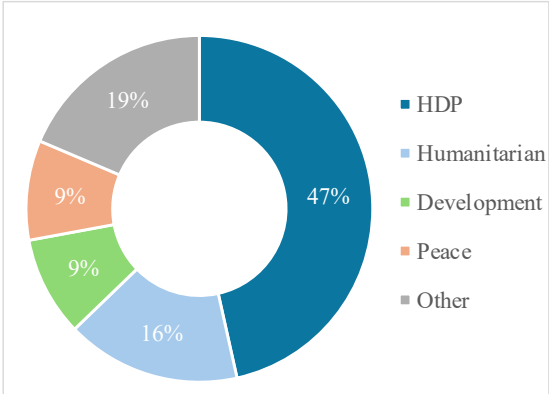


Figure 2: Work areas of responding organizations. Source: Localization Online Survey.

From all respondents, roughly more than one third (70%) indicated that they are aware about the concept of *localization* in the humanitarian field. However, the awareness changes with the type of organization: respondents from local NGOs report a lower awareness about this concept than their counterparts from national NGOs (see figure 3).

A similar trend can be seen for the issue of whether the respondents feel informed about the WHS and the GBA. Mostly feel “poorly informed” (35%), only 26 percent feel “informed” and a small percentage of 2 percent feel “very informed”. Again, national NGOs report higher awareness for this case too, what indicates that national NGOs have a closer proximity to international events and discourse of new concepts in this field.

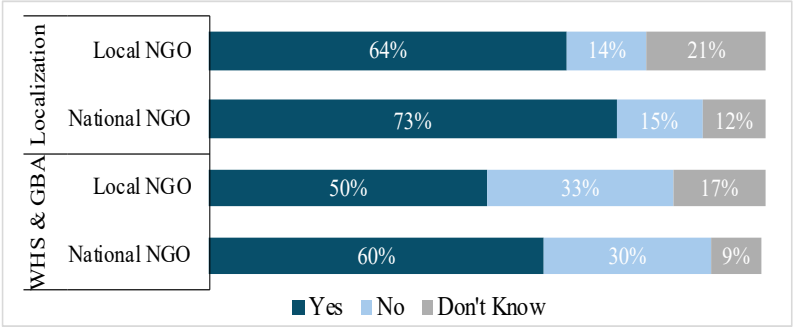


Figure 3: Respondents awareness about the concept of Localization, the WHS and the GBA. Source: Localization Online Survey.

The respondents were also asked what *localization* means to them and to specify that in once sentence. A qualitative content analysis of these responses revealed interesting insights in the understandings of the respondents, also in connection with the type of organizations.

Overall, the majority of responses addressed one or more of the aspects of *localization* as it is understood in the context of the present research. Improving humanitarian action and coordination of aid was mentioned the most, followed by the empowerment of L/NAs and their capacity building. Improved and increased resource allocation and its efficiency were also mentioned in some answers. Respondents from national NGOs tend to value the aspects of improving humanitarian action, aid and coordination the most. Capacity building of local organizations was also mentioned several times, for instance one respondent from a national NGO understands *localization* as the process of “increasingly decentralizing cooperation and building capacities so that local organizations are empowered to address humanitarian emergencies using their own capabilities.” (Respondent 39, national NGO, own translation).

Although less than the other factors, resource allocation was also and exclusively mentioned by respondents from national NGOs. All these responses reflect views that resemble the commitments of the GBA to localize funds i.e. transferring them directly to L/NAs, as one respondent said, “international cooperation resources should be directed to local entities to achieve better impacts with greater resource efficiency.” (Respondent 12, national NGO, own translation).

The focus on local empowerment and capacity building of local organizations, was much more emphasized by local NGOs, that also included stronger references to community building. Many of the responses from local NGOs indicate that they often see *localization* as closely connected to specific places or communities. For instance, the responses frequently highlighted the adaptation of initiatives to the unique needs of local populations and the importance of being situated within the communities they serve. As this respondent formulates it, *localization* is the “more inclusive and sustainable approach to humanitarian assistance, recognizing that local communities are often the first responders, and their knowledge and experience are crucial to an effective response.” (Respondent 22, local NGO, own translation).

It has to be acknowledged that these responses reflect the opinions and experiences of the individuals that answered the survey on behalf of their organization. It is important to note that while these individuals may hold significant roles within their organizations, this potential bias means that the interpretations of *localization* provided in the responses could vary if other representatives from the same organizations were consulted. Therefore, while the analysis offers valuable insights into how different types of organizations perceive *localization*, it should be considered within the context of individual respondent perspectives, rather than definitive organizational positions.

The observations are also reflected through the findings of the question where the respondents were asked to select the aspects of *localization* that they assess to be most important. Both groups, national and local NGOs, selected *Local Ownership and Leadership of L/NAs* as the most important aspect of *localization*, but Local NGOs place an even greater emphasis on it compared to the other aspects and compared to National NGOs (see the graph below).

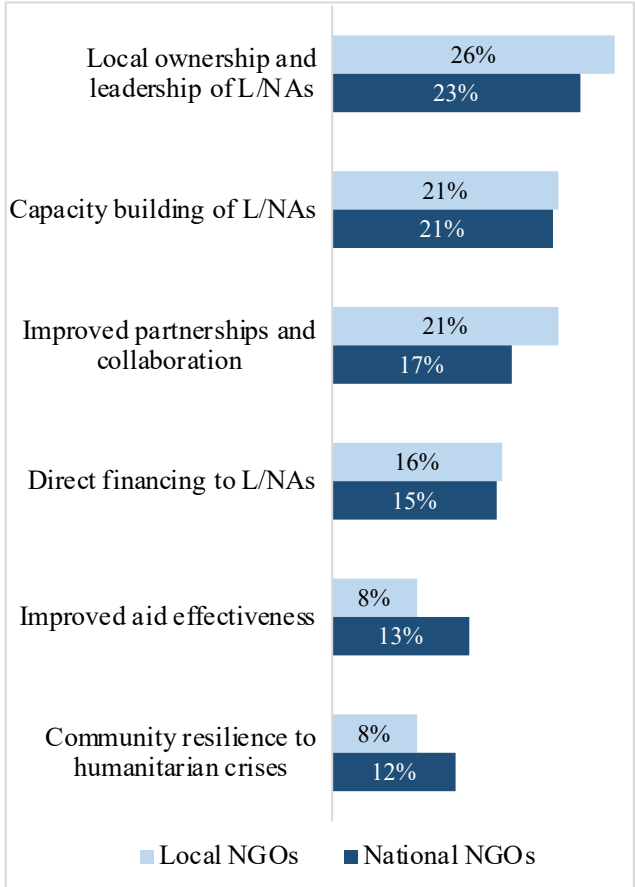


Figure 4: Most important aspects of Localization for the survey respondents. Calculated based on the different types of organizations. Source: Localization Online Survey.

*Capacity Building of local organizations* is equally important to both groups, with 21 percent from each group emphasizing it as a key factor. *Improved partnerships and collaboration between international and local organizations* also emerged as a significant priority, particularly for Local NGOs (21%) compared to National NGOs (17%). Conversely, factors such as *Community Resilience to Humanitarian Crises* and *Improved Aid Effectiveness* were ranked lower by both groups, with a slightly higher emphasis by National NGOs. *Direct Financing to L/NAs* was recognized as important by both, but it did not rank as high as leadership and capacity building. These findings indicate a strong focus of the L/NAs on empowering local leadership and building capacity in Colombia.

## 5.1 Partnerships

The principal analysis starts with the dimension of *Partnerships* and its indicators *Quality in Partnerships*, *Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships* and *Engagement of partners through the project cycle*. Partnerships between local, national and international organizations is one of the key aspects of *localization* and was subsequently included in the commitments of the Localization Workstream of the GBA. There, the signatories commit to “understand better and work to remove or reduce barriers that prevent organizations and donors from partnering with local and national responders in order to lessen their administrative burden.” (The Grand Bargain, 2016).

### 5.1.1 Assessing the quality: Are Partnerships based on equal footing?

As it was outlined in a previous chapter, the Principles of Partnerships (PoPs) were one of the first formal commitments to *localization*, focusing on Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach and Responsibility in partnerships between L/NAs and INGOs (ICVA, 2018).

The survey responses indicate a positive situation regarding the compliance of these principles between L/NAs and INGOs in Colombia. When asked whether their relationships with INGOs are guided by the PoPs, 26 percent the organizations answered “always”, but the majority said “sometimes” (35%) and “often” (30%). When counting the two together, 56 percent of respondents said that their partnerships are either always or often guided by the PoPs, a somewhat positive indication towards locally led development. In fact, compared to the other KPIs for this indicator, this question has received the best results, which indicates that the international and local partnerships in Colombia are executed on an equal partnership basis. But even though this a positive result, it also shows that there is some room left for improvements, as the 35 percent of respondents who only selected “sometimes”, have shown. Even more room for improvement is there for creating partnerships in which L/NAs and INGOs have equal power. The survey results show that there is a lot of discontent among the respondents regarding the equality between them and INGOs, as only 2 percent strongly agreed to this statement and most disagreed (37%). Among the indicators within the Partnership dimension, this topic shows the highest level of disagreement and discontent (see figure 5). Two notable responses that formulate this discontent were made in the survey, one expressed their discontent about the INGOs saying his organizations “own expertise and goals are not recognized, and work is done based on what international organizations prioritize” (Respondent 31, national NGO, own translation), and the other expressed their discontent about unequal partnerships, stating that these “Relationships are often not built horizontally between local and

national organizations and donors; they are hierarchical and tend to impose partnership criteria” (Respondent 39, national NGO, own translation).

This significant area of discontent reflects the broader critique that despite rhetorical commitments to *localization*, true power-sharing remains unfulfilled. According to the results of the consultations in Colombia in 2021 that were made to inform the GBA2, this imbalance in decision-making is a persistent issue, with local organizations often relegated to sub-contracting roles rather than being treated as equal partners (OCHA, 2021).

However, on the upside, the survey results also reveal that there is a minor improvement of these partnerships since 2016, the start of the localization agenda. When asked whether L/NAs perceive an increase in their decision-making power within the partnerships, 28 percent of respondents agreed to that statement and 5 percent strongly agreed. These results show positive developments since 2016, but on the other side also 30 percent disagreed to this statement. Overall, the results here are balanced across the different response options with 33 percent agreeing (including both “agree” and “strongly agree”), 39 percent disagreeing (including both “disagree” and “strongly disagree”), and 23 percent unsure about whether there have been any improvements since 2016.

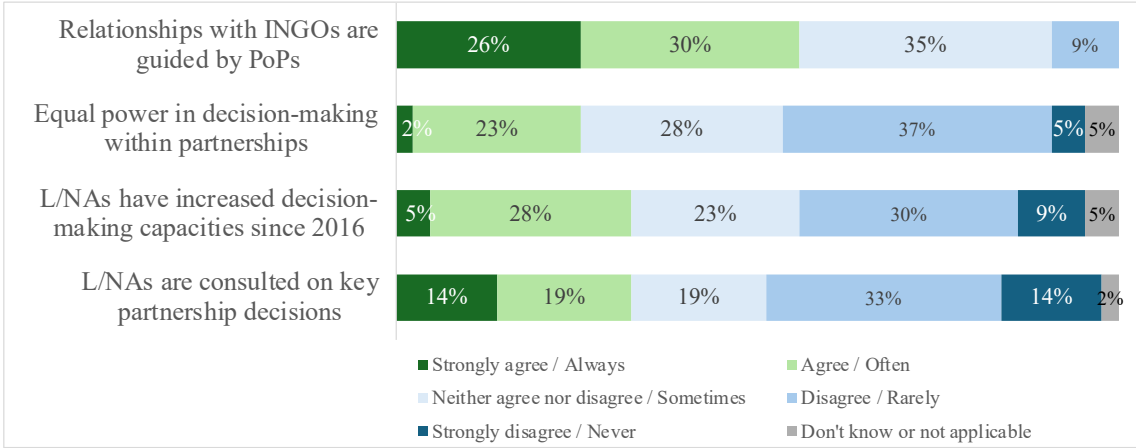


Figure 5: Survey responses for indicator Quality in Partnerships. Source: Localization Online Survey.

Lastly for the indicator of *Quality in Partnerships*, the organizations were asked whether there are mechanisms in their partnerships with INGOs by which issues of concerns can be raised and resolved. The results are mixed but slightly positive, as 47 percent of respondents said “yes, sometimes” and 44 percent said “yes, always”. In total this is the majority of respondents, which shows that there these mechanisms are often included in partnerships with international partner organizations.

To conclude the section of *Quality in Partnerships*, what stands out from this analysis is the observation that first, a majority of L/NAs don't feel adequately included in the key partnership decisions from their international partners and second, these organizations also don't feel that they hold the same power in these partnerships.

Although these are rather negative results in regard to achieving *localization* in Colombia, it can be said that since 2016 and the WHS, the situation has improved in the regard to the quality in partnerships and that they are increasingly guided by the PoPs.

### **5.1.2 Transitioning from project-based to strategic Partnerships**

The second indicator of the *Partnerships* dimension looks at the situation regarding a change in the practices and a shift towards strategic and long-term partnerships. This indicator encompasses three KPIs, with the first focusing on the presence of long-term strategic partnerships that aim to establish systems and processes aligned with the ambitions and goals of L/NAs. The findings reveal that such partnerships are not prevalent between L/NAs and their international counterparts in Colombia. The overall sentiment is one of disagreement, with 5 percent of respondents "strongly disagreeing" and 33 percent "disagreeing," making it the most common response.

However, positively, over 50 percent of respondents acknowledged a shift from project-based to strategic funding. Nonetheless, 35 percent disagreed, and 12 percent were unsure or found the question not applicable. Among national NGOs, the level of agreement is higher, highlighting that local organizations in Colombia continue to be underfunded and are constrained by project-based funding. The next chapter on funding will provide more insights into this topic.

This observation is also found in other literature on humanitarian partnerships. Stoddart and colleagues (2019) for instance analyzed that partnerships in high-risk environments in central African countries between international and local organizations are often formed out of necessity rather than strategic alignment. This necessity can be created through government regulations or security risks, resulting in INGOs asking L/NAs to fill the gaps, not necessarily because they view these partnerships as strategically aligned with their long-term goal but because they are a practical solution to an immediate problem. This often results in L/NAs being treated more as subcontractors than as equal partners, what limits their ability to develop independently (Stoddart et. al., 2019: 14-16).

Lastly for this indicator, there are also positive signs that INGOs in Colombia care and invest in the partnerships with L/NAs. When asked for their perception about this issue, 39 percent of respondents agreed their international partners care and invest in the partnerships, but 28

percent of respondents disagreed. The number of respondents who could neither agree nor disagree is also relatively high with 26 percent.

### **5.1.3 Inclusive Collaboration: Partner Engagement Across the Project Cycle**

The last indicator only includes one KPI which looks at whether projects and budgets of joint programs are designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated with L/NAs on an equal basis. The survey results indicate a positive situation here in this regard, as 44 percent of respondents agreed to this statement and 5 percent strongly agreed. 12 percent of respondents were unsure and combined 36 percent disagreed.

This partial success in engagement reflects broader findings in the literature, where the inclusion of local actors in the decision-making processes is often cited as a key determinant of successful localization. According to Appe et al. (2024), meaningful engagement throughout the project cycle not only enhances project outcomes but also strengthens the capacity and resilience of local organizations.

Summarizing the dimension of Partnerships and the KPIs, the results are mixed with a slight positive note. Four out of the eight KPIs from this dimension are classified as positive in the traffic light system of the LMF, one as neutral and three as negative (see Annex 1). However, when looking at the results in detail, the classification scores are very close together, indicating that even though one KPI is classified as positive (green), the status cannot be interpreted as overwhelmingly positive. What was found in other studies and confirmed here is the “prevalence of partnerships in a humanitarian response context [being] determined primarily by the INGOs’ individual programming orientations, risk assessments, and perception of local civil society capacity, rather than following general patterns by country“ (Stoddard et. al, 2019: 4).

On the positive side it can be concluded that a high majority of partnerships between L/NAs and INGOs are guided by the PoPs, many respondents also perceived a positive change towards more strategic funding of L/NAs (event though it is still too little) as well as the observation that joint programs are designed and implemented on an equal basis. Both results are important signs that indicate some positive development towards locally led development in Colombia. However, it must be noted that even though L/NA report higher decision-making power, the perception that INGOs are still dominating this decision is very strongly represented. Also, the responses about an increase of the decision-making power for L/NAs since 2016 are rather mixed. The same holds true for the observation of longer-term strategic partnerships that commit to build systems and processes that reflect the ambition and goals of L/NA.

## **5.2 Funding**

The importance of sufficient and adequate funding in quality and quantity was emphasized before. The findings of the localization survey in Colombia revealed interesting insights about the perceptions of L/NAs around this topic, starting with the indicator of *Quantity of Funding*.

### **5.2.1 Funding quantity: Analyzing the sufficiency of resources**

From the organizations that responded to the survey, nearly half of them indicate to receive localized funds, meaning funds that are either transferred directly or not through more than one intermediary organization to them. Among the different organizations, the percentage for national NGOs is significantly higher with 58 percent of them receiving localized funds compared to 36 percent for the local NGOs.

Given that the number of respondents to the survey from local NGOs is lower than the ones from national NGOs, the representativity of these numbers must be treated with caution. However, this result hints to the fact that local NGOs in Colombia statistically receive less localized funds, compared to national NGOs. This might be because the proximity of national NGOs to international donor organizations is closer, thus making it easier to apply for and access localized funds. This issue was in fact mentioned by one respondent from a local NGO that mentioned the inequality when accessing funds and who expressed his discontent about it, by saying:

“Within international cooperation, [INGOs] always choose national organizations and not many local ones. For example, USAID opens a call for proposals and the resources are managed by international organizations, which leads to high requirements for local organizations. These calls often end up being won by second-level organizations or those with connections. This should be eradicated.” (Respondent 25, local NGO, own translation).

Looking at the funding sources and their distribution, the survey results show that the majority of organizations have between one and four sources of funding. Interestingly, 21 percent of respondents indicated to have more than five funding sources for their organizations, which are all, except one, national NGOs.

The results reveal a strong correlation for national NGOs and the amount of funding sources (0,822), meaning that national NGOs report having more funding sources than others. In comparison, local NGOs have a moderate negative correlation (-0,366), indicating a slight decrease in their involvement as funding sources rise. In fact, out of the organizations who reported to have between three and four funding sources, the vast majority were national NGOs (see figure 6), same as for more than 5 funding sources.

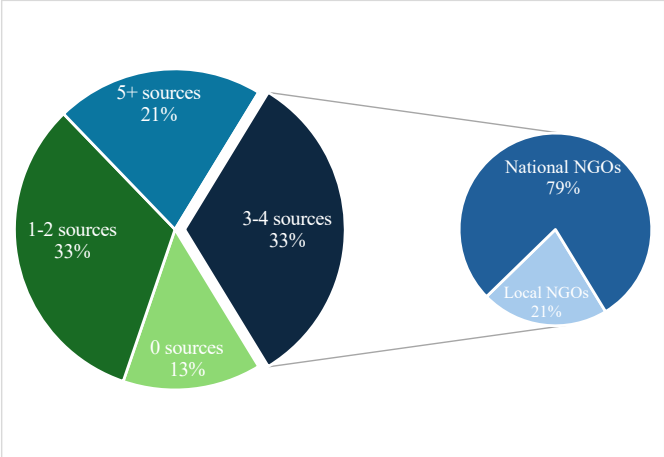


Figure 6: Distribution and amount of funding sources for L/NAs in Colombia. Source: Localization Online Survey.

The origin of the financial resources from the Colombian organizations are very diverse and range from individual donors, international organizations, UN entities, other governments or governmental entities. From the response options provided, 17 percent of organizations receive most of their funds from UN entities, followed by Governmental institutions of other countries (14%). In terms of individual organizations, USAID and the European Union stand out with both being selected 10 percent of the organizations. The “other” response option was selected by 40 percent of the organizations, revealing a very diverse landscape of funding sources. Responses here include private donations, international and private donor organizations, and specific donors like the Ford Foundation, the Swiss Development agency (COSUDE) and the UN Multidonor Trust Fund.

Regarding the quantity of funding that L/NAs receive in Colombia, the findings of the survey mirror what has been reported in the literature for years: Insufficient funding. The majority and 53 percent of respondents perceive the amount of funding their organizations receive as not adequate and insufficient.

However, more concerning is the fact that the same number of organizations (53%) also responded to not have received an increase of funding since 2016 and in line with the GBA commitments (see figure 7). At least, one third the organizations responded that they received “a little bit” of increased funding. However, given the importance of funding, these are severe results regarding the status of localization on Colombia.

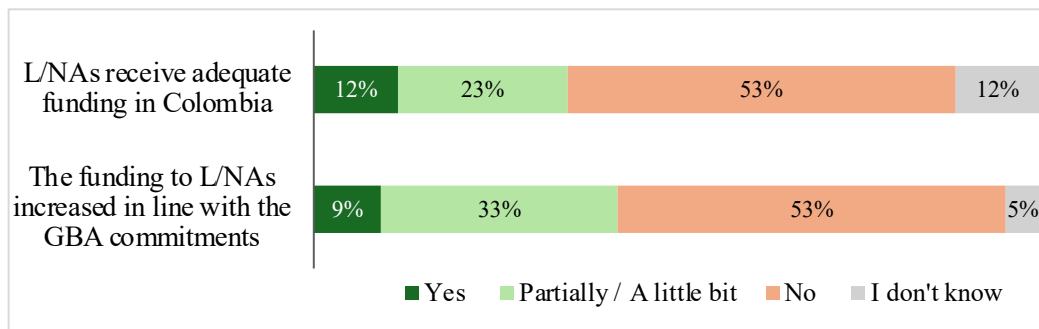


Figure 7: Survey respondents' perception about the quantity of funding. Source: Localization Online Survey.

This imbalance is particularly concerning in the context of the commitments made by international organizations to shift more resources to local actors. Appe et al. (2024) discuss the persistent challenges in achieving equitable funding distribution, noting that INGOs often retain control over financial resources, situation which perpetuates the power imbalances.

The scope of this thesis does not allow to further analyze and identify the funding modalities of each organization and the reasons behind these perceptions. One explanation for these rather negative results could be the influence of the overall impression that L/NAs don't receive adequate funding as expressed in the previous question. As the responses between these two questions are quite similar, it is likely that the impression influenced and carried over to the next question which led to these results. Furthermore, another factor to consider is that the overall discontent about the funding situation led to many respondents to also express their feeling in this question. It has to be acknowledged that the survey could have improved to counter these biases. However, these attempts to explain the survey results should not distract from the fact that the situation of funding is severe and perceived as insufficient and unequal in Colombia , especially for local organizations.

### 5.2.2 Ensuring funding effectiveness: A closer look at funding quality

The quality of funding is defined by type of funding that L/NAs receive , how direct these funds are accessible, to which extent L/NAs can manage these independently and whether they receive capacity strengthening support to manage funds. These aspects are reflected in four KPIs of the indicator *Quality of funding*, which are discussed next.

For different funding types that L/NAs receive in Colombia, there is a very strong dominance of funding allocated and tied to specific projects. The overall majority of organizations (77%), receive earmarked funds as their primary funding sources. With 16 percent, Voluntary Contributions and Donation are the second most selected funding type. And lastly, basic core funding, the most flexible and generally not tied to specific projects, is the main source of funding for only 2 percent of the L/Nas.

The heavy concentration on project-based funding surprises considering the importance of non-earmarked funds for the capacity of L/NAs and the effectivity of their operational activities. For instance, one respondent from a local NGO in Colombia specifically touched on the issue of sustainable and long-term projects, emphasizing that:

“International support is according to the project offered. Our experience is that we have had freedom in the execution of the resources. However, it is a support that does not allow us to sustain the projects over time and this challenges our organization to continue the projects with our own resources and give them continuity as we always see the positive results.” (Respondent 3, local NGO, own translation).

For L/NAs in the Global South, this reliance on project-based funding is consistent with the broader literature on humanitarian financing. Robillard et al. (2020) highlighted the limitations of project-based funding, arguing that it often fails to support the strategic development of local organizations, instead tying them to short-term goals and donor priorities, as it was reiterated by respondent 3. Furthermore, project-based funding also leads to a “decrease in capacity as local organizations cannot use this money to develop their own organisations of the skills of their employees” (Barbelet, 2018: 10). This highlights the scope of the problem and underscores the crucial link between sufficient, flexible funding and the operational capacity of the organizations, which ultimately affects their work and thus negatively impacts the effectivity of the humanitarian response.

These observations are shared by many survey respondents that mentioned consistent problems with earmarked funds. One respondent for instance touched on the institutional arrangements of INGOs and how they influence L/NAs by stating that:

“The financing provided by international actors is subject to their institutional work plans and local organizations must often adjust the proposal to meet the objectives of the funder” (Respondent 32, local NGO, own translation).

Another respondent emphasized the importance of flexible funding in cases where there is the need for “the execution of activities not foreseen in the projects [and] to respond to emerging needs” (Respondent 30, local NGO, own translation).

Furthermore, the survey data also reveals that 33 percent of organizations feel that they can use and manage these funds independently and without interference from INGOs. The same amount say that they can manage these funds partially and 28 percent of respondents said they cannot manage these funds independently and on their own capacity.

Considering these numbers and that a total of 66 percent of the organizations can either fully or partially manage their financial resources is a positive result in regard to the status of

localization in Colombia. However, this is only a snapshot of the situation today. An analysis of the development in this topic from 2016 until today would enrich the discussion about the progress of localization in Colombia and in which direction this progress is heading. Furthermore, even though this is a positive signal, it should be noted that the majority of these funds are still earmarked and even though they can be managed independently by the L/NAs, they cannot be used independently, as presented above.

The analysis between the type of organization and the capacity to manage the funds independently reveals a relatively even correlation, what indicates that the type of organization has no impact whether an organization can manage their funds autonomously or not.

On a somewhat positive note, 38 percent of respondents agree that international funding partners actively seek to strengthen their financial sustainability and independence. However, a considerable 21 percent neither agree nor disagree, and 19 percent actively disagree, indicating that efforts to enhance financial independence are inconsistent and not universally felt among L/NAs in Colombia.

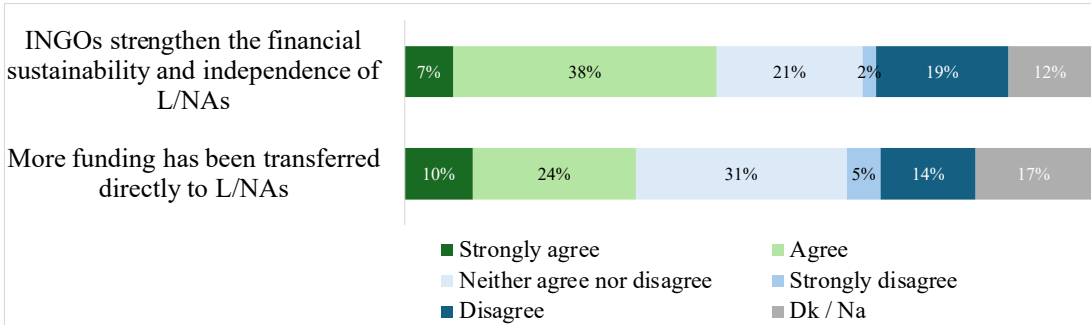


Figure 8: Survey respondents’ perceptions about the quality of funding. Source: Localization Online Survey.

A positive assessment for the situation of localization in Colombia and the fulfilment of the commitments made by INGOs is the perspective among L/NAs that the funding they receive is transferred to them as directly as possible. A majority of 70 percent of survey respondents agreed to this statement.

However, even though these are positive signals for the advancement of localization in the country, the funding modalities should not only include direct funding but also increased capacity and independence, as outlined above. Furthermore, a very slim majority also agreed to the fact that more funds have been transferred directly to L/NA in Colombia.

**5.2.3 Safeguarding resources: Financial management and risk mitigation strategies**

The analysis of the survey responses reveals interesting information about the awareness of L/NAs in Colombia in regard to their financial management and concerns about fraud and corruption with localized funds.

To reiterate, the existence of proper a financial management and strategies to mitigate fraud and corruption on the side of the L/NAs, is important for build trustworthy and sustainable partnerships, as INGOs value these factors as very important. Therefore, the KPI asks for the perception of L/NAs on their own organizational capabilities for this issue.

One third of the organizations in Colombia expressed concerns about the risk of fraud with funds, while the other two third did not. When explaining their responses, the majority of those who expressed concerns mentioned a lack of knowledge and/or capacity that might lead to misused funds. For example, one respondent mentioned that “if there is no clear knowledge and monitoring, funds can be misused” (Respondent 21, national NGO, own translation). This concern reflects what has been discussed in the literature too: the close connection of funding and capacity, which is discussed in detail in the next chapter. (Barbelet, 2018: 9).

Other subjects of concerns that were mentioned for this topic were transparency issues. Some respondents noted that inadequate transparency mechanisms increase the risk of fraud. For instance, one respond said that

“Misappropriation of funds can occur if there are no controls in place for the execution of expenses. In this regard, there should be support from the agency or fund not only in administrative matters but also on the ground, to ensure greater transparency in the processes.” (Respondent 19, local NGO, own translation).

Lastly, the situation with intermediary organizations were mentioned in this regard. Some responses mentioned that with the involvement of intermediary organizations, i.e. numerous money transfers, the risk of fraud and corruption increases.

However, the overall majority of 67 percent of respondents does not perceive a risk of fraud or corruption when using localized funds. The reasons for these responses are relatively similar and touched on the topics of strong organizational mechanisms, organizational integrity and experience. Exemplifying the strong mechanisms argument, one respondent said that “Local and national organizations are committed to transparency and have control mechanisms in place, and they also implement anti-fraud policies.” (Respondent 39, national NGO, own translation).

Another strain of arguments revolved around the commitments and promises of the organizations that impede any fraud. For instance,

“In our organization, there is a mission that mitigates the risks of fraud and corruption. We execute the resources in line with what is committed to ensure they reach the actors we want to influence.” (Respondent 26, national NGO, own translation).

Other respondents highlighted their effective transparency and control mechanisms; their team strength; and the existence of preventive measures.

Lastly, when assessing their own financial fraud and corruptions mechanisms to mitigate the risk of financial fraud and corruption, the overwhelming majority of respondents assess them as “somewhat positive” (49%) and “very positive” (40%). A small number of 5 percent said “neither positive nor negative”, and no respondent evaluated their own organization fraud mechanisms as negative. The combined results of “somewhat positive” and “very positive” is the highest agreement rate among all for the dimension of Funding. However, this is not surprising as the respondents are evaluating their own organization. Therefore, it is likely to assume that these evaluations are biased towards are more favorable assessment and can therefore not be taken as independent results.

The preliminary conclusion about the situation of localization for the dimension of *Funding* reveals a landscape of persistent challenges and unfulfilled commitments despite some areas of progress. As the literature has shown it before, sufficient quality and quantity of founding remains one of the persisting challenges that INGOs don’t seem to overcome. For the case of Colombia, it cannot be finally assessed here why these structures persist, but there is a robust chorus of literature that points to the power structures that are connected to the area of funding. On a more positive note, the analysis revealed that L/NAs observed an increase of the practice of localizing funds, even though the funds are still regarded as being too little and inadequate. Furthermore, examining the quality of funding it was shown that a significant proportion of organizations feel capable of managing their funds fully or partially independently. This indicates a degree of financial autonomy among L/NAs, which is a positive sign for the localization agenda. However, the chapter also pointed out inconsistencies in efforts by international partners to strengthen the financial sustainability and independence of these organizations.

### **5.3 Capacity**

The dimension of *Capacity* here is emphasized by the focus of the research question that looks at the impact of the localization agenda on the operational capacities of the L/NAs in Colombia. Capacity is an overarching dimension that affects all others and vice versa is affected by the other dimensions; hence the influence goes in both directions. Funding for instance, “cannot be uncoupled from capacity, especially as the level of funding links with and organization’s capacity to continue to operate and its ability to retain and attract staff” (Barbelet, 2018: 8). Furthermore, capacity strengthening exercises between INGOs, and L/NAs are executed through their partnerships, involving this dimension to a great extent as well as local leadership

as outlined in the next chapter on *Policy and Leadership*. But first, for the dimension of *Capacity*, the international support to strengthen national and local capacities is analyzed.

### **5.3.1 Evaluating international capacity strengthening support**

The first indicator of the capacity dimension in the LMF includes five KPIs that analyze the perceptions of L/NAs in Colombia on the international support for capacity strengthening.

The survey data reveals that an overwhelming majority of 80 percent of respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” (40% respectively) that their organization benefited from capacity strengthening efforts from INGOs in the past. This high level of agreement suggests a generally positive impact of capacity building. Furthermore, the survey data shows that resources for capacity building efforts are often included in the budgets that L/NAs receive in Colombia.

However, a closer look also reveals that the effectiveness of these efforts is not universally recognized: 51 percent of respondents rated the capacity-building efforts as “effective,” while 19 percent were neutral on this question. The remaining respondents either disagreed or did not have a strong opinion, highlighting that while there is a perceived benefit, it is not unequivocally effective across all organizations.

These results can be contextualized within broader discussions on *localization*, where it was shown that the intent to empower local actors often falls short in practice. For example, while international support is intended to build capacity, the actual effectiveness of this support depends on how well it aligns with the specific needs and contexts of the local organizations (Aoun et. al., 2022). This point – tailoring the capacity building efforts to the needs of the L/NAs – also still lacks progress in Colombia as the survey data shows: Most respondents (40%) believe that international organizations “sometimes” focus on areas of capacity strengthening that are aligned with their organization’s needs. A further 30 percent reported that these efforts were “rarely” aligned with their needs. This misalignment can dilute the impact of capacity-building initiatives, suggesting that international organizations may need to better tailor their support to the specific contexts and needs of local partners in Colombia.

To combine that with the other results, the analysis shows that international support is generally valued and perceived as effective, but does not always match the needs of the L/NAs. This assessment was also reported in other studies and identified as one of the critical bottlenecks to achieving locally led developments. One of the main barriers is outlined by Barbelet and colleagues stating that “past efforts at capacity strengthening have not necessarily resulted in more locally led humanitarian action, in part because they have tended to focus on making local organisations a better fit for partnerships, rather than better or more effective humanitarian actors in their own right” (Barbelet, 2018: 1).

### 5.3.2 Organizational development and autonomy

The survey responses on organizational development, i.e. for the organizational governance, decision-making and management structures, further underscore the complexities of international-local partnerships. When asked whether organizational development is a central objective in their partnerships with INGOs, 19 percent of the responding organizations “strongly agree” and 33 percent “agree”, suggesting that a significant portion of L/NAs in Colombia receive and benefit from organizational development efforts in their partnerships with INGOs.

Even though also 19 percent respondents were neutral in this regard, and a high percentage (21%) did not know, it can be said that the overall sentiment towards the organizational development and capacity of the L/NA in Colombia is positive.

This finding is interesting in the light of some literature pointing to the tendency of INGOs to favor organizational over operational capacity in their partnerships with L/NAs (Barbelet, 2018: 7). The reason for this tendency is to mitigate risk of fraud and corruption of funds and to ensure the longevity of the local or national organization’s existence, which is also in the interest of INGOs. In fact, the survey data confirms this assessment from the literature. When asked how the INGOs have supported the preparedness and response activities of the organizations, the overall majority of respondents mentioned aspects of *Technical and Capacity Building Support*. This includes mentoring, strengthening internal procedures, project formulation training, and transferring best practices, which are part of the operational capacity of an organization. For instance, a respondent from a local community organization answered that his organization received support in form of

“Strengthening the accounting and administrative system (human resources, hardware and software), and also in the design, training, and accompaniment to the implementation of the monitoring, follow-up, and evaluation system.” (Respondent 30, local NGO, own translation).

These aspects of organizational support are mentioned by 37 percent of the respondents, making it the highest category of responses (see the Table below). The other categories that can be used to classify the responses are *project-based engagement and support*, mentioned by 21 percent, *Financial support* (16%), the *general evaluation of the support received* (5%), and *other* (also 5%).

Looking at the different types of organizations and the themes mentioned, the data shows that both local and national NGOs touched on aspects of *Technical and Capacity Building Support* in their responses the most. For local NGOs, *Project-Based Engagement and Support* was

mentioned the second highest, meanwhile for National NGOs this topic together with *Funding and Financial Support* were mentioned equally as much.

Category	%	Examples
Technical and Capacity Building Support	37%	<p>“Training is provided for response preparedness through training and technical capacity building.” (Respondent 7, local NGO).</p> <p>“The United Nations supported and accompanied us in the establishment of the Corporation and in the generation of its organizational and operational capacity during the first 4 years.” (Respondent 38, national NGO, own translation).</p>
Project-Based Engagement and support	21%	<p>“We have worked together in identifying the needs of the communities and have been able to design the response. (Respondent 40, national NGO, own translation)</p> <p>“Capacity building emergency response particularly when there is a risk of child recruitment.” (Respondent 42, national NGO, own translation)</p>
Funding and Financial Support	16%	<p>“Financing of projects that allow the acquisition of inputs, relocation capacity, and staff support.” (National NGO, respondent 9, own translation).</p> <p>“[INGOs] have supported with resources for the financial and technical strengthening of the organization.” (Respondent 21, national NGO, own translation)</p>
General evaluation of the support	5%	<p>“We received the support timely with recognition of good performance” (Respondent 43, national NGO, own translation).</p>

Table 10: Survey responses about the capacity strengthening L/NAs received from INGOs. Source: Localization Online Survey.

The findings clearly show that INGOs primarily provide capacity strengthening support that aims at the organizational development of the L/NAs in Colombia. This support is important to sustain the organizational structures, procedures, management and accountability system.

However, local and national organizations are much more in favor of strengthening their operational capacities, compared to the organizational capacities. (Howe 2017; Barbelet, 2018: 8). And furthermore, the dominant focus on organizational capacities “have not resulted in a more local humanitarian action or addressed capacity gaps” (Barbelet, 2018: 6).

Another reason why L/NAs prefer capacity strengthening for their operational activities: they are generally the first responders to a humanitarian crisis, execute the development projects and feel a strong commitment or promise towards their community which makes them prioritize the effectivity of the operational activities over the organizational capacities.

This finding is supported by the survey data revealing that while some organizations enjoy a degree of autonomy, many feel constrained: most organizations report only having moderate

autonomy when defining their own capacity needs vis-à-vis their international partners (see table below).

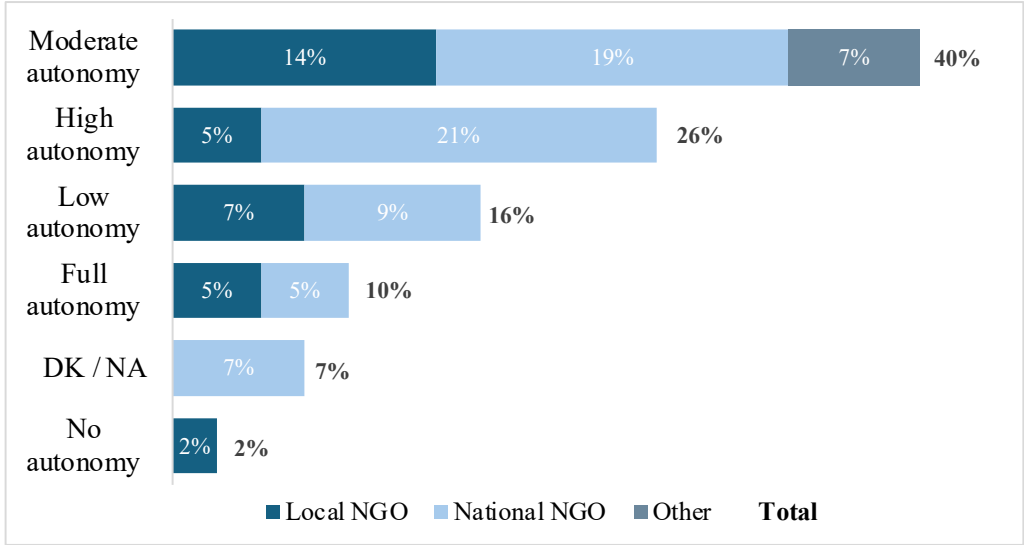


Figure 9: Survey respondents perception about the amount of autonomy they have in defining their own capacity needs vis-a-vis INGOs. Source: Localization Online Survey.

Only 10 percent of respondents indicated having “full autonomy,” suggesting that a significant majority of L/NAs perceive a limited autonomy when working with international partners and that these INGOs exert a strong influence on L/NAs in Colombia regarding the areas of capacity strengthening and organizational development. One respondent mentioned this issue, saying

“I do not consider that they [INGOs] provide support in the sense that we execute projects that are of mutual interest: they correspond to the call for bids that international organizations open, and we apply to be able to fulfill our mission.”

(Respondent 8, national NGO, own translation).

This aspect of localization is also strongly connected to funding, as it was emphasized by several survey respondents. Especially the fact that most funding to L/NAs in Colombia are earmarked for specific projects, presents a barrier to achieving locally led development. For instance, one respondent emphasized that:

“In general international organizations do not support preparedness and response actions or activities since the resources they work with come from specific projects.”

(Respondent 33, local NGO, own translation).

The perception of autonomy – or the lack thereof – also ties into the broader issue of power dynamics in international-local partnerships, as highlighted by studies on localization which argue that true empowerment requires not just resources but also the power to make decisions independently (Aoun et al., 2022). A respondent from a national NGO touched on this point,

saying that “our own expertise and goals are not recognized, and work is done based on what international organizations prioritize.” (Respondent 31, local NGO, own translation).

The topic that this respondent mentions does not only fit into the aspects of respectful partnerships, but it also connects to the issue of INGOs undermining the local and national capacities for their own purposes. This is an issue that stands in stark opposition to the concept of localization and locally led development.

As the survey data shows, 19 percent of organizations report being “often” undermined in their capacities by international actors during emergency response situations and 42 percent responded “sometimes”. In sum that makes more than half of the organizations being either often or sometimes undermined by INGOs in emergency response situations.

When asked for what that means for the organizations in practice, many respondents expressed concerns about how international actors have interfered with their ability to define their own capacity needs and range of issues related to external control, misalignment of priorities, and restrictive conditions imposed by international partners were also mentioned. One such issue concerns how international actors exert excessive control over local processes. For example, one response noted undermining action through

“excessive training and interference when there are international intermediary actors in emergency and humanitarian situations. Regional intermediaries often undermine and overreach to local and national organizations, while often receiving larger budget allocations” (Respondent 1, national NGO, own translation).

This highlights a common concern that international actors and intermediary organizations like in this case can dominate or overshadow local expertise and priorities. Another respondent emphasized the importance of effective coordination, saying that undermining actions take place

“when [INGOs] ignore the processes that have already been generated and/or strive to inject large sums of money to processes that will not be sustainable over time or that instrumentalizes the impacted population.” (Respondent 19, local NGO, own translation).

Other responses mentioned the issue of overtaking local projects that were designed and planned by L/NAs, which heavily corrupts the Principles of Partnerships. A respondent explained this by saying that:

“when an analysis of the context is made, needs and strategies are defined and, in the end, they enter the areas with national partners and foreign field teams”  
(Respondent 33, Local NGO, own translation).

**5.3.3 Coordinating Efforts: Local and National Leadership in Humanitarian Responses**

Another critical area explored in the survey is the role of L/NAs in leadership and decision-making within humanitarian coordination mechanisms. The data shows that 33 percent of respondents reported that L/NAs are “often” involved in leadership roles, while 30 percent said this occurs “sometimes”, highlighting a gap in the intended shift toward localized leadership. Similarly, when asked about the prioritization of local over national and regional surge capacity, 37 percent of respondents said this happens “Sometimes,” and 30 percent said “Often.” This indicates that while there are efforts to prioritize local capacities, these efforts are inconsistent, potentially limiting the effectiveness of localization efforts.

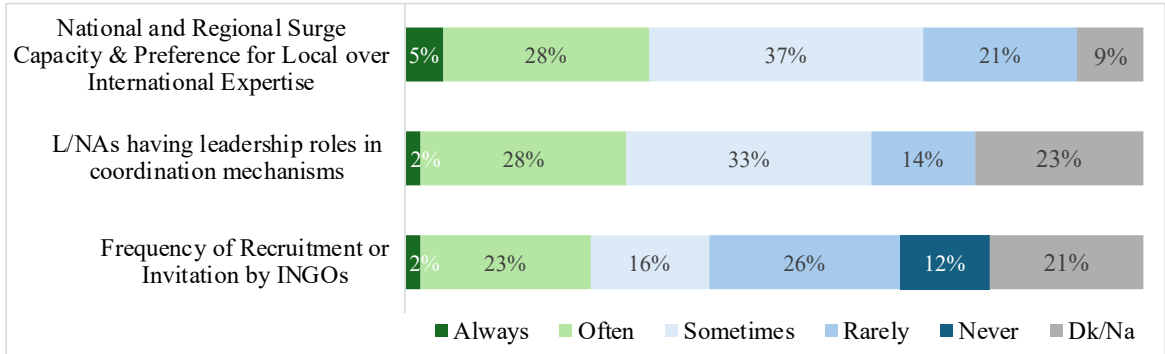


Figure 10: Combined survey results about local leadership. Source: Localization Online Survey.

As this figure shows, 23 percent of the respondents indicate that INGOs “often” recruit or invite local and national staff to apply for positions at the international organization, 16 percent say that this practice happens “sometimes”, 26 percent rarely and 12 percent never. In regard to achieving locally led development, it is important for L/NAs to not lose their experienced and professional staff to INGOs since the organizational and operational capacities of the L/NA can suffer under these losses. Looking at the survey data, this practice seems to happen by times in Colombia, as 16 percent say that this happens sometimes, but a total of 38 percent indicated that this rarely or never happens. However, one of the respondents confirmed that this can be the case because the jobs at INGOs “generally come with higher salaries, which makes the employees of the local organization prefer to go to work with an international one.” (Respondent 14, national NGO, own translation).

As we transition from the discussion on coordination to the critical topics of policy and leadership, it's evident that while coordination efforts are crucial, they are often undermined by deeper structural issues. The tendency L/NAs to lose skilled staff to INGOs due to disparities in salaries can severely weaken their capacities. This challenge underscores the broader policy and leadership gaps where the "lack of capacity strengthening and dedicated funding means

that local humanitarian actors often struggle to play a lead role in humanitarian response during crises" (Barbelet, 2018: 6).

### 5.4 Policy & Leadership

This final chapter of the analysis touches on the inclusion of L/NAs in the policy debates on localization, to what extent local leadership is strengthened and supported in humanitarian responses.

#### 5.4.1 From Policy to Practice: Local engagement in advocacy and standard-setting

This indicator assesses whether organizations perceive themselves as recognized key stakeholders in international debates about humanitarian and development policies. As the survey data shows, the overall majority of organizations (96%) either strongly agree or agree that they are recognized as key stakeholders in these debates. When examining the responses in conjunction with the type of organization, the data shows that national NGOs perceive the highest level of recognition. Specifically, 96 percent of National NGOs either strongly agree or agree that they are recognized as key stakeholders. For local NGOs however, the numbers are very similar (see table below).

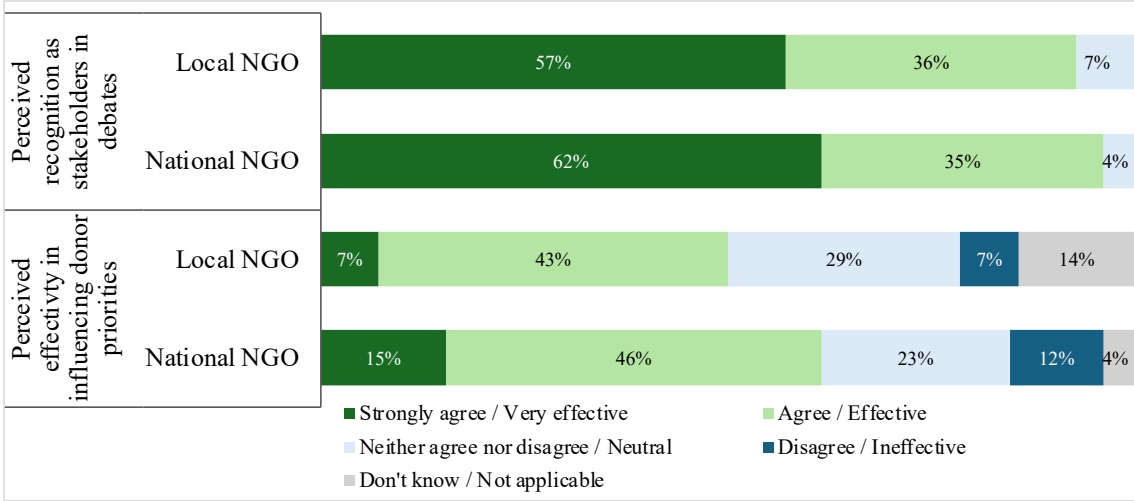


Figure 11: Organizations perceptions about being recognized as key stakeholders in international debates about humanitarian and development policies. Source: Localization Online Survey.

The second KPI of this indicator looks at the perceived effectiveness of these organizations in influencing donor priorities, including program design and implementation. Overall, about 56 percent of respondents feel their organizations are either effective or very effective in influencing donor priorities. However, a notable portion (35%) is either neutral or finds their influence ineffective, indicating room for improvement in this area. Here again, national NGOs

lead, with 62 percent of the respondents considering themselves effective (46%) or very effective (15%). Local NGOs, while somewhat effective, show more variability in their responses. The overall agreement is a slightly lower, while the level of uncertainty is somewhat higher, as indicated in the graph above.

This data highlights the stronger perceived influence of National NGOs compared to Local NGOs and other organizations, both in terms of recognition in international policy debates and effectiveness in influencing donor priorities, although these numbers are still very similar among these two groups of organizations in Colombia. Lastly, it can be said that in this regard, the situation of localization in Colombia can be assessed positively. Both indicators received solid and positive responses and are therefore marked as green (positive) in the LMF.

#### **5.4.2 Empowering Local Leadership: Evaluating the Support from International Actors**

The final indicator relates to the aspect of *Local Leadership*. This issue has already been mentioned a few times in the analysis because of its connection to other aspects but is examined here in more detail through the analysis of four KPIs that reflect the current state of local leadership in Colombia as perceived by L/NAs.

The literature on localization provides additional insights into these dynamics. For example, Aoun et al. (2022) highlight how the promise of aid localization often remains unfulfilled, with local actors in countries such as Jordan and Lebanon expressing disappointment over the limited extent to which they are empowered by international donors. Similarly, findings from Yemen illustrate that despite the active presence of local organizations, significant barriers prevent them from leading humanitarian responses effectively (ICVA, 2022). These challenges include a lack of direct funding, minimal involvement in decision-making, and an overreliance on international actors. A similar dynamic is evident in Colombia, where local actors often feel that international organizations do not fully respect or utilize their expertise, instead imposing external agendas that do not always align with local needs, as presented in the previous chapters. For the case of *Local Leadership*, the survey data provide a quantitative snapshot of the L/NAs perceptions in Colombia surrounding the support for local leadership by international actors. The responses reveal mixed perceptions about the extent to which international organizations support and strengthen national leadership. Overall, there is a noticeable divide in how local actors perceive the support from INGOs. Only 5 percent of respondents felt that there is “very firm support” for local leadership, while 33 percent perceive “strong support”, and the majority (37%) felt that the support is “moderate”. Additionally, 14 percent of respondents indicated that the support is “light,” and 5 percent feel there was no support at all. This distribution shows

that while there is some level of support, a significant proportion of local actors feel that it is insufficient and moderate.

This mirrors the situation in Yemen, where minimal evidence was found to suggest that international actors support and promote national leadership (ICVA, 2022: 26). This lack of robust support often leaves local actors without the necessary authority or resources to lead effectively.

When asked about the consistency of support for local leadership, only 2 percent of respondents indicated that international actors “always” supported local leadership structures, while 37 percent indicated that this support was provided “often.” However, a significant portion (33%) stated that support was only provided “sometimes,” and 28 percent noted that it was “rarely” provided.

These findings suggest that while there is some recognition of the importance of local leadership by international actors, the level and consistency of support are perceived as inadequate by a significant proportion of local actors.

When the type of organization is taken into account, national NGOs report higher satisfaction with both aspects, although the differences can be described as slight (see the table below). One explanation for the difference could be due the different proximity of the actors to the local level and the impact of the decision-making processes. It could be argued that national NGOs which are mainly based in the capital, are less affected by the results and support of the decision-making processes and therefore rate them somewhat more positively. The response that mentioned the accessing funding for local NGOs (see chapter 5.2.1), supports the observation that there are also differences between the local and national levels.

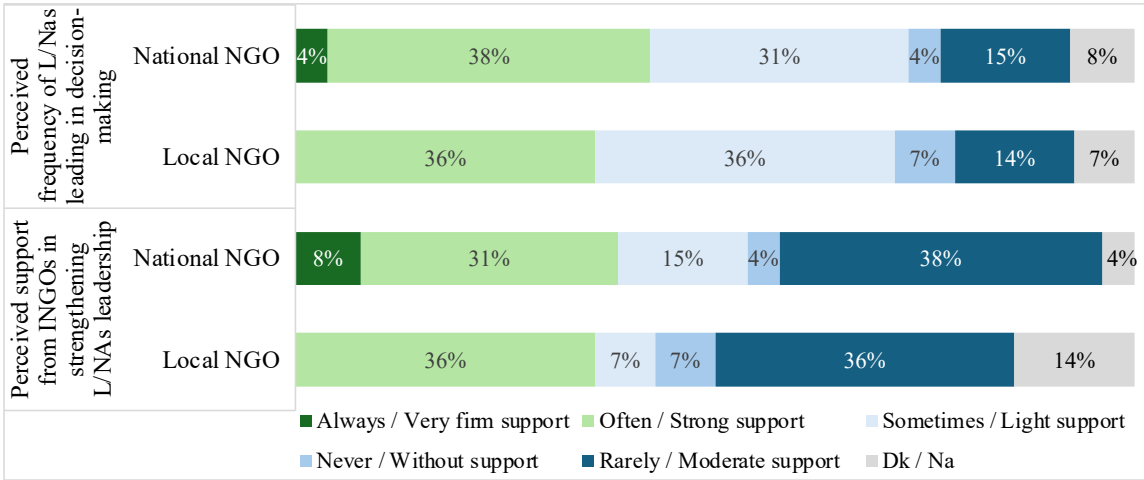


Figure 12: Survey respondents answers about the received support to strengthen local Leadership. Sorted by the type of Organization. Source: Localization Online Survey.

The qualitative responses provide deeper insights into specific experiences where local leadership structures were either respected or disregarded by INGOs. These narratives highlight the complexity of local-international dynamics and the impact of these interactions on the ground. Strong support, and respect for local leadership was mentioned, as well as the lack of this support.

For instance, one respondent shared an experience of the missing respect towards local leadership and where international actors imposed their agendas without adequate consultation of the local community. He stated that:

“International actors impose their own agendas without considering local needs and perspectives, which can undermine existing leadership structures. It is essential to seek equitable and respectful partnerships to ensure a positive and sustainable impact on local development and leadership.” (Respondent 24, national NGO, own translation).

This experience underscores a common problem: INGOs, driven by their own priorities or donor requirements, may overlook or undervalue local expertise and context and uneven partnerships hinder effective humanitarian responses.

Some UN agencies were mentioned in these responses, once in a negative way but also twice in positive examples. One respondent highlighted the positive relationship with the UNHCR, saying that:

“the UNHCR tends to invite us to build together the best form of territorial intervention and support for the strengthening of local and national organizational capacities.” (Respondent 17, national NGO).

But, as previously mentioned, another response also criticized the UN in Colombia, by saying:

“I feel that some UN agencies are not very clear about what action without harm means; they use local and grassroots organizations at their convenience without giving them the opportunity to develop. Many end up closing due to lack of support.”

(Respondent 41, national NGO)

Conversely, there were some responses that reported positive examples of local leadership support and strengthening. Three of these are shown in the table below.

“In the context of the migratory emergency, the successful experiences of our organization and the capacities to lead attention strategies have been recognized.”  
(Respondent 12, national NGO, own translation)

“International actors have respected and supported our leadership, to the extent that they have given us national and international awards.”  
(Respondent 23, national NGO, own translation)

“INGOs respect the philosophical principles of the organization and do not impose their criteria, they do seek to establish agreements and consensus, for example to strengthen social advocacy in the territories.”

(Respondent 30, national NGO, own translation)

Table 11: Positive examples of local leadership support and strengthening by INGOs. Source: Localization Online Survey.

Looking at the *Local Leadership* indicator as a whole, it can be concluded that many L/NAs, and especially local organizations, in Colombia still do not feel included in the leadership and decision-making processes vis-à-vis the INGOs. This observation mirrors the findings of the *Partnership* dimension, which produced similar results.

Perceptions of INGO support for greater local leadership indicates a somewhat positive situation in Colombia, and some responses confirm these positive examples. However, it also shows that positive examples may be the result of a good partnership relationship that an L/NA has with an INGO and which does not represent the totality of organization.

## 6. Discussion of the results

The preceding analysis presented a very complex and multifaceted landscape of localization in Colombia, highlighting both challenges and slight advancements. The comprehensive list of indicators and KPIs have shed light into the variety of the aspects that are part of the new concept of localization and how they impacted the local and national organizations in Colombia. And thanks to the comprehensive nature of the LMF, the findings of this analysis provide a detailed and nuanced understanding of the status of localization in Colombia.

For the dimension of *Partnerships*, modest improvements since the GBA was initiated in 2016 can be observed. The results indicate that while there is an increased awareness and adherence to the Principles of Partnerships, there remains significant room for improvement. The survey findings highlight that most L/NAs perceive their partnerships with INGOs as unequal, with INGOs often dominating the decision-making processes. This imbalance is a significant barrier to genuine localization, as L/NAs feel that their expertise and goals are not adequately recognized or prioritized by their international partners. Despite these challenges, there are some positive developments, particularly in the establishment of strategic partnerships that focus on longer-term goals.

Looking at the dimension of *Funding*, many obstacles and severe issues were observed as well, especially with the quantity and quality of funding received by L/NAs in Colombia. The overwhelming reliance on project-based funding constrains L/NAs' ability to engage in sustainable, long-term planning and capacity building. On a positive note, the practice of transferring funds directly to L/NAs in Colombia is slightly increasing, even though the funding amount is still insufficient. The data shows that local NGOs, in particular, struggle more than national NGOs to access direct and sufficient funding, highlighting a disparity within the localization process itself. As the analysis has shown and as it is also supported by the literature, this lack of adequate funding significantly reduces the operational effectiveness and capacities of these organizations, their ability to lead humanitarian responses autonomously and to respond to quickly to unforeseen challenges, thus helping people in need of humanitarian assistance. One respondent highlighted the issue of fast changing environments by saying:

“International partners must understand that the indicators on which they base their decisions should be reviewed and validated in shorter periods, as the reality of a community or nation is extremely changeable. For example, the indices that measure the level of violence are no longer a reference for a real situation at the local level” (Respondent 29, national NGO, own translation).

Furthermore, the results for the dimension of *Capacity Building* indicate that while capacity-strengthening initiatives have been implemented and L/NAs report having benefited from them, these efforts do not always align with the specific needs of L/NAs. Also, most L/NAs report only having a moderate autonomy in defining their own capacity needs and that capacity-building efforts by INGOs tend to focus on organizational aspects rather than operational capacities, which are more critical for their immediate effectiveness in crisis situations. This misalignment further entrenches the dependency of L/NAs on INGOs, undermining the core objective of localization, which is to empower local actors to take the lead in humanitarian and development efforts.

The *Leadership and policy influence* dimension reveals mixed outcomes. On the one hand, there is evidence of increased engagement of L/NAs in advocacy and policy discussions, indicating some progress toward more inclusive decision-making policy processes. On the other hand, the dominance of INGOs in these areas remains a significant challenge, with many L/NAs feeling that their contributions are not given equal weight in these discussions.

Overall, the findings suggest that while the localization agenda has led to some positive changes, particularly in raising awareness and initiating discussions around power dynamics, the practical implementation of these commitments in Colombia remains inconsistent and insufficient. The impacts on the organizational capacities of L/NAs are mixed, with some organizations benefiting from increased autonomy and capacity, while many others continue to face significant barriers due to insufficient funding, misaligned capacity-building efforts, and limited leadership opportunities.

Throughout the analysis, this case was overserved especially for local organizations in Colombia, which perspectives differ significantly in some cases from national organizations. The common practice in the literature is to consider all organizations uniformly (local, national, community-based for example) when analyzing localization in a specific area. The same was done in the present research, as the main question focuses on the localization experiences of all organizations in Colombia. However, the analysis has clearly shown that significant differences exist between these different Colombian organizations, with the result that local NGOs are even further disadvantaged and that face more pronounced challenges: They are less likely to receive adequate funding or strategic support, perceive less meaningful inclusion in decision-making processes and a stronger perception of being undermined by INGOs. This highlights a critical gap between the rhetoric of localization and its implementation, particularly in empowering the most grassroots actors. It also proves the point, that further differentiations between affected organizations are necessary and important as it sheds light on the disadvantages that local

organizations (or others) perceive and therefore brings awareness to the needed improvements that should especially be awarded to local organizations.

## **7. Limitations of the study**

This research, while providing valuable insights into the status of localization of humanitarian and development aid in Colombia, is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results. Therefore, before concluding this thesis, a few remarks about methodological and contextual limitations will be discussed.

One significant limitation is the temporal scope of the study. As explained in the methodology chapter, this research aimed to capture a snapshot of the current situation of localization and how far it progresses on the journey to locally led development in Colombia. Due to this focus, this thesis does not capture the dynamics, processes and developments of the humanitarian and development work, where the circumstances can rapidly change due to political, social or environmental factors. As discussed in the literature review, rapid upcoming events like the Covid-19 Pandemic can have significant (in this case positive) impacts on the organizations and the sector as a whole (Australian Red Cross, 2022). In a globalized world that is characterized by multifaceted crises, these events can happen anytime and impact everyone. As a result, the findings do not fully capture the ongoing evolution of localization efforts in Colombia. Also, this study could not analyze the trajectory of localization in the past, meaning to investigate the questions of whether the localization developments happened soon after 2016 but stagnated since then or if they happened just recently. Looking into the exact progress of localization and when INGOs started to implement their commitments, says a lot about the overall progress and situation of Localization in a region.

Another limitation of this study is the range and representativeness of the data gathered. While the survey responses offer valuable insights, they may not fully reflect the diverse experiences and viewpoints of all L/NAs in Colombia. Given the overall small sample size and the wide variety of actors and organizations in Colombia, the representativity of the findings have to be treated with caution. Also, as discussed above, the experiences of the different types of organizations that are involved in localization make it worth to tailor future studies on one group of actors or organizations only, so their experiences can be adequately and comprehensibly assessed. Furthermore, the survey's dependence on self-reported data raises the possibility of bias, as respondents might have given answers that portray their organizations in a favorable light or align with their expectations rather than reflecting the objective reality. In addition to taking the type of organizations more into account, it has to be acknowledged, that other important actors, such as the government or private sector actors were left out of the

equation of this research here. Especially to mention is the government, with its national and local institutions. As the concept of localization primarily aims to improve the relationship between INGOs and L/NAs, the Colombian government was not included here. However, naturally, the state has a responsibility to act and respond to humanitarian crises, to protect its people and distribute funding to L/NAs. This makes it worth to also study the role of the state in the process of localization. In fact, some respondents also mentioned the important role and responsibility of the state. One respondent for example said:

“Local, regional, and national governments need to contribute to the execution of projects by establishing enabling conditions, such as opening up their institutions to facilitate participants’ access to their rights, co-financing the projects, or at least recognizing the contribution of organizations and partners to local development (Respondent 30, national NGO, own translation).

Finally, some contextual limitations of the study must be acknowledged as well. Colombia’s unique socio-political environment, marked by decades of conflict and ongoing peacebuilding efforts, may not be representative of other contexts where localization efforts are being implemented. Although this context makes Colombia a very suitable area to research in this regard, the findings of this study may not be directly applicable to other countries or regions with different challenges and dynamics.

## **8. Conclusion**

Finally, in response to the research question - *What is the status of localization in Colombia and what are the impacts on the operational capacities of the local and national organizations?*- it can be concluded that the status localization in Colombia is very much characterized by partly fulfilled commitments, slight progress but many challenges. The findings reveal that while there have been efforts to advance localization, significant obstacles remain that hinder its full realization. The impacts on the operational capacities of local and national organizations are mixed; while some organizations have benefited from increased autonomy and capacity, many still struggle with dependency on international partners, limited influence in decision-making, and inadequate funding structures. The operational capacities of L/NAs are especially weakened through the project-tied and earmarked funds; the focus from INGOs on organizational development; and the lack of local leadership in decision-making processes that could enforce an operational approach which is suitable to the local contexts and needs.

In conclusion, the thesis highlights the need for a more committed and genuine effort from international actors to fulfill the promises of the localization agenda, the Grand Bargain

Agreements and put them into practice. Addressing the systemic issues of power imbalance, funding challenges, and misaligned capacity-building efforts is essential for creating a more equitable and locally led humanitarian system in Colombia and to serve the people who are most in need.

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## Annex 1 - Localization Measurement Framework:<sup>6</sup>

Localization Measurement Framework								
Analysis of	Indicator	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Data collection	Survey result (Frequency distribution)	I. Mean II. Mode	Assessment		
						Positive	Neutral	Negative
<b>I. Partnerships</b>								
<b>State of localization in Colombia</b>	I.1 Quality in relationships	Relationships with L/NA are guided by the Principles of Partnership (PoP) (equality, transparency, results-oriented approach, responsibility and complementarity) and are periodically reviewed	Online survey Q. 11	Always: 26% Often: 30% Sometimes: 35% Rarely: 9% Never: 0%	I. 2.28 II. Sometimes	56%	35%	9%
		L/NA have power in partnerships and are equal to international actors (e.g., decisions on changing the geographic focus of a project or decisions on budget reallocations)?	Online survey Q. 12, 13	Strongly Agree: 2% Agree: 23% Neither Agree nor Disagree: 28% Disagree: 37% Strongly Disagree: 5% DK/NA: 5%	I. 3.2 II. Disagree	25%	28%	42%

<sup>6</sup> For a better accessibility, the LMF is available as an online Excel file here: [https://ured-my.sharepoint.com/:x/g/personal/maximilian\\_schulze\\_urosario\\_edu\\_co/EcxXJvd16JpAkazNSsj82C8B9vZqc9OZJ0lxt5mLRuEeTg?rttime=VncXfE\\_H3Eg](https://ured-my.sharepoint.com/:x/g/personal/maximilian_schulze_urosario_edu_co/EcxXJvd16JpAkazNSsj82C8B9vZqc9OZJ0lxt5mLRuEeTg?rttime=VncXfE_H3Eg)

	Perceptions of L/NA that they have increased decision making power since 2016	Online survey Q. 14	Strongly Agree: 5% Agree: 28% Neither Agree nor Disagree: 23% Disagree: 30% Strongly Disagree: 9% DK/NA: 5%	I. 3.11 II. Disagree	33%	23%	39%	
	Partnerships have a mechanism by which issues of concern can be raised and resolved	Online survey Q. 15	Yes, sometimes: 47% Yes, always: 44% No, not at all: 5% Dk/Na: 5%	I. 1.59 II. Yes, sometimes	44%	47%	5%	
	I.2 Shift from project-based to strategic partnerships	Existence of longer-term strategic partnerships that commit to build systems and processes that reflect the ambition and goals of L/NA	Online survey Q. 16	Strongly agree: 7% Agree: 28% Neither agree nor disagree: 21% Disagree: 33% Strongly disagree: 5% Dk/Na: 7%	I. 3.08 II. Disagree	35%	21%	38%
		Perception of L/NAs of a shift from project-based to strategic funding and partnerships	Online survey Q. 17	Yes: 53% No: 35% Dk/Na: 12%	I. nan II. N/A	53%	12%	35%

		Perception of the extent to which international partners care and invest in long-term partnerships and processes with your organization.	Online survey Q. 18 (22)	Strongly agree : 9% Agree: 30% Neither agree nor disagree: 26% Disagree: 19% Strongly disagree: 9% Dk/Na: 7%	I. 2.9 II. Agree	39%	36%	28%
	I.3 Engagement of partners through the project cycle	Projects and budgets are co-designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated with L/NA on an equal basis	Online survey Q. 19, 20	Strongly agree: 5% Agree: 44% Neither agree nor disagree: 12% Disagree: 26% Strongly disagree: 2% Dk/Na: 12%	I. 2.74 II. Agree	49%	12%	28%
<b>II. Funding</b>								
<b>Status Localization in Colombia</b>	II.1 Quantity of funding	Type and source of funding	Online survey Q. 21, 22, 25, 26					
		Perception of local and national actors receiving appropriate amounts of funding	Online survey Q. 23	Yes: 12% Partially: 23% No: 53% Dk/Na: 12%	I. N/A II. None	12%	23%	53%

II.2 Quality of funding	The amount of funding to L/NA increases in line with Grand Bargain and Charter for Change commitments	Online survey Q. 24	Yes, a lot: 9% Yes, a little bit: 33% No: 53% Dk/Na: 5%	I. N/A II. None	9%	33%	53%
	L/NA can manage and use the funding on their own capacity and decisions	Online survey Q. 27	Yes: 33% Partially: 33% No: 28% Dk /Na: 7%	I. N/A II. None	33%	33%	28%
	INGO/UN actively seek to strengthen the financial sustainability and independence of L/NA partners	Online survey Q. 28	Strongly agree: 7% Agree: 38% Neither agree nor disagree: 21% Disagree: 19% Strongly disagree: 2% Dk/Na: 12%	I. 2.67 II. Agree	45%	21%	21%
	L/NA can access funding 'as directly as possible' (e.g. funding channeled through a pooled/national funds that are directly accessible to L/NA)	Online survey Q. 29	Yes: 70% No: 16% Dk: 14%	I. N/A II. None	70%	0%	16%

		Level of agreement that, over the last years, more funding has been transferred directly to local and national organizations in Colombia.	Online survey Q. 30	Strongly Agree: 10% Agree: 24% Neither agree nor disagree: 31% Disagree: 14% Strongly Disagree: 5% Don't know: 17%	I. 2.62 II. Neither agree nor disagree	34%	31%	19%
	II.3 Financial management and risk mitigation	Perceived Risk of Fraud and Corruption in Localized Funding	Online survey Q. 31	Existence of risk related to fraud and corruption: No: 67% Yes: 33%	I. 3.00 II. Neither agree nor disagree	67%	0%	33%
		L/NAs rating about their organizational financial mechanisms to mitigate the risks of fraud and corruption	Online survey Q. 32	Very positive: 40% Somewhat positive: 49% Neither positive nor negative: 5% Dk/Na: 7%	I. N/A II. None	89%	5%	0%
<b>III. Capacity</b>								

<b>Operational Capacities of Colombian L/NAs</b>	III.1 Capacity strengthening	Rating of the support provided by international/partner organizations to L/NAs before and during a humanitarian response.	Online survey Q. 33, 34	Very good: 19% Something good: 44% Neither good nor bad: 16% Very bad: 2% Dk/Na: 19%	I. 2.01 II. Something good	63%	16%	2%
		Level of agreement that the capacity of L/NAs have been strengthened by international support	Online survey Q. 35	Strongly agree: 40% Agree: 40% Neither agree nor disagree: 7% Disagree: 5% Dk/Na: 9%	I. 2.22 II. Agree	80%	7%	5%
		Rating of the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts received by the L/NA from international partner organizations	Online survey Q. 36	Highly effective: 12% Effective: 51% Neutral: 19% Ineffective: 5% Dk/Na: 14%	I. 2.19 II. Effective	63%	19%	5%
		Capacity strengthening/sharing plans are tailored to needs of the L/NA	Online survey Q. 37 (43)	Always: 7% Often: 26% Sometimes: 40% Rarely: 9% Never: 0% Dk/Na: 19%	I. 2.62 II. Sometimes	33%	40%	9%

III.2 Organizational capacity	International actors and donors include/allow capacity strengthening and organisational development budget line(s) in all projects and partnership agreements.	Online survey Q. 38	Always: 12% Often: 23% Sometimes: 30% Rarely: 14% Never: 2% Dk/Na: 19%	I. 2.64 II. Sometimes	35%	30%	16%
	Organizational development is a core objective of partnerships	Online survey Q. 39	Strongly agree: 19% Agree: 33% Neither agree nor disagree: 19% Disagree: 7% Strongly disagree: 2% Dk/Na: 21%	I. 2.35 II. Agree	52%	19%	9%
	National and regional surge capacity and use of local over international expertise	Online survey Q. 40	Always: 5% Sometimes: 37% Often: 28% Rarely: 21% Never: 0% Dk/Na: 9%	I. 2.81 II. Sometimes	33%	37%	21%

	Perception that L/NA are able to define their own organizational capacity needs	Online survey Q. 41	Full autonomy: 9% High autonomy: 26% Moderate autonomy: 40% Low autonomy: 16% No autonomy: 2% Dk/Na: 7%	I. 2.74 II. Moderate autonomy	35%	40%	18%
	Perception that international actors do not undermine capacity of national actors in emergency response (Frequency of perceived instances where international actors undermine the capacity of national actors in emergency response situations)	Online survey Q. 42, 43	Always: 2% Often: 14% Sometimes: 30% Rarely: 19% Never: 7% Dk/Na: 28%	I. 3.20 II. Sometimes	16%	30%	26%
	III.3 Coordination L/NA are playing leadership roles in coordination mechanisms (e.g. clusters or sectorial coordination meetings) where appropriate and/or are members of Humanitarian Country Teams (HCT) or relevant	Online survey Q. 44	Always: 2% Often: 33% Sometimes: 28% Rarely: 14% Never: 0% Dk/Na: 23%	I. 2.70 II. Often	35%	28%	14%

		national humanitarian leadership forums						
		The staff of national actors is not actively approached or invited to apply for vacancies with international agencies (Frequency with which national actors' staff are actively approached or invited to apply for vacancies with international agencies )	Online survey Q. 45, 46	Always: 2% Often: 16% Sometimes: 23% Rarely: 26% Never: 12% Dk/Na: 21%	I. 3.37 II. Rarely	18%	23%	38%
<b>IV. Policy and Leadership</b>								
<b>Status Localization in Colombia</b>	IV.1 Influence in policy, advocacy and standard-setting	L/NA are recognized as key stakeholders in international debates about humanitarian policies that may have significant impact on them	Online survey Q. 47	Strongly agree: 60% Agree: 35% Neither agree nor disagree: 5% Disagree: 0% Strongly disagree: 0% Dk/Na: 0%	I. 1.45 II. Strongly agree	95%	5%	0%

		L/NA influence donor priorities in-country including programmed design and implementation	Online survey Q. 48	Very effective: 12% Effective: 44% Neutral: 26% Ineffective: 9% Very ineffective: 0% Dk/Na: 9%	I. 2.35 II. Effective	56%	26%	9%
	IV.2 Leadership	Perceptions that international actors support and strengthen national leadership	Online survey Q. 49	Very firm support: 5% Strong support: 33% Moderate support: 37% Light support: 14% Without support: 5% Dk/Na: 7%	I. 2.80 II. Moderate support	38%	37%	19%
		Perception that L/NA lead response and dominate decision making	Online survey Q. 50	Always: 2% Often: 37% Sometimes: 33% Rarely: 16% Never: 5% Dk/Na: 7%	I. 2.84 II. Often	39%	33%	21%

	Perception that there is investment in increasing local and national leadership	Online survey Q. 51	Strongly agree:2% Agree: 56% Neither agree nor disagree: 28% Disagree: 7% Strongly disagree: 5% Don't know or not applicable: 2%	I. 2.56 II. Agree	58%	28%	12%
	Perceptions of L/NAs about International Organizations respecting and working with in-country leadership structures and mechanisms	Online survey Q. 52	Open question				

## **Annex 2 – Localization Online Survey Questionnaire**

### **I. Introducción:**

Estimados participantes,

Les agradezco por tomar el tiempo para participar en esta encuesta, la cual forma parte de mi tesis de Máster en el programa de Conflicto, Memoria y Paz de la Universidad del Rosario en Bogotá, Colombia. Por favor, lea cuidadosamente la información que a continuación se describe sobre el estudio de investigación. Siéntase en completa libertad de preguntar al personal del estudio todo aquello que no entienda. Una vez haya comprendido la información, se le preguntará si desea participar del estudio. Si decide hacerlo, deberá firmar este documento y recibirá una copia. Si decide no participar, su información no será tenida en cuenta para la realización del estudio. Recuerde que su participación es voluntaria y en cualquier momento podrá retirarse y retirar sus datos del proyecto si así lo desea.

El objetivo de este cuestionario es recopilar experiencias y opiniones sobre la localización en la ayuda humanitaria y el desarrollo. Su participación es crucial, ya que sus valiosas aportaciones contribuirán significativamente a la preparación y profundidad de mi investigación.

Su participación en esta encuesta es completamente voluntaria. Usted tiene el derecho de retirarse en cualquier momento, sin necesidad de dar una explicación y sin que esto tenga consecuencias negativas. Todas las respuestas proporcionadas serán tratadas con estricta confidencialidad. Los datos serán almacenados de manera segura y solo se utilizarán con fines de investigación.

La encuesta está dirigida a organizaciones locales y nacionales en Colombia que operan en los sectores de ayuda humanitaria, desarrollo y paz. Se divide en cinco secciones: 1. Preguntas introductorias, 2. Asociaciones, 3. Financiación, 4. Capacidad, 5. Política y liderazgo. Completar la encuesta lleva aproximadamente 15 minutos.

Su participación es esencial, ya que sus experiencias y opiniones ofrecerán una perspectiva clave para comprender y mejorar la efectividad de la localización en estos sectores. Por medio de este consentimiento informado aseguro a los participantes que todos los datos proporcionados serán manejados de manera confidencial y se utilizarán exclusivamente con fines académicos. Su privacidad y la seguridad de su información son mis prioridades.

Los datos sólo se utilizan de forma anónima y no hay forma de reconocer la identidad del individuo en el uso de los resultados. Los datos no se compartirán con otras personas y sólo serán accesibles para el investigador de este estudio. Los datos se almacenarán con fines de análisis hasta que se presente el trabajo de investigación y, a continuación, se eliminarán.

Le informaremos de los resultados obtenidos en el estudio. También podrá contactar al personal del estudio e informarnos cualquier situación anormal o inesperada en cualquier momento.

Participar en el estudio no tiene ningún costo. Ni usted, ni otra persona involucrada en el estudio, recibirá beneficios políticos, económicos o laborales como compensación por su participación.

Por medio del presente expreso que he leído o me ha sido leído completamente el documento de consentimiento informado, se me han aclarado las dudas y acepto participar voluntariamente

en la investigación. Entiendo que tengo el derecho de retirarme de la investigación en cualquier momento sin que afecte de ninguna manera mi cuidado médico o mi relación con el equipo investigador.

Al hacer clic en “Aceptar” y proceder con la encuesta, usted confirma que ha leído y comprendido la información anterior, y que acepta participar voluntariamente en esta encuesta.

### **[Botón de Aceptar]**

Si tiene alguna pregunta o inquietud antes de participar, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo: [Maximilian.schulze@urosario.edu.co](mailto:Maximilian.schulze@urosario.edu.co)

Atentamente,  
Maximilian Schulze

## **II. Preguntas generales / Información general**

1. ¿Cuál es el nombre de su organización?
  - Pregunta abierta
2. Por favor, proporcione sus datos de contacto para esta respuesta de la encuesta para facilitar la validación de la encuesta o cualquier problema técnico con la respuesta:
  - Nombre y Apellido
  - Correo electrónico
3. ¿Cuál es la ubicación de su organización / sede?
  - Por favor seleccione la región – menú desplegable
4. ¿En qué regiones o áreas opera principalmente su organización?
  - Por favor seleccione la región – menú desplegable
5. ¿Qué tipo de organización es la suya?
  - ONG local (registrada con sede y que opera en un departamento)
  - ONG nacional (registrada con sede y que opera en más de una provincia)
  - Cruz Roja/Media Luna Roja (Sección local de las Sociedades de la Cruz Roja/Media Luna Roja)
  - Organización comunitaria local (organizaciones formales e informales con sede y que operan en una comunidad)
  - Organización religiosa
  - Gobierno local
  - Otro (por favor especifique)
6. ¿Cuál es el área de trabajo principal de su organización?
  - Humanitaria
  - Desarrollo
  - Paz
  - Todas las anteriores
  - Otro (por favor especifique)
7. ¿Está al tanto del concepto de Localización en el campo humanitario y de desarrollo?

- Sí
  - No
  - No lo sé
8. ¿Qué tan informado se siente sobre la Cumbre Humanitaria Mundial en 2016 y sus resultados, el Acuerdo del Gran Pacto?
- Muy informado
  - Informado
  - Poco informado
  - Muy poco informado
  - Nada informado
9. En una oración, ¿qué significa la localización para usted?
- Pregunta abierta
10. ¿Cuáles son los factores más importantes de la localización para usted? (Seleccione los 3 primeros que correspondan).
- Apropiación local y liderazgo de las organizaciones locales.
  - Desarrollo de las capacidades de las organizaciones locales
  - Financiación directa de las organizaciones locales.
  - Mejores asociaciones y colaboración entre organizaciones internacionales y locales.
  - Empoderamiento de las comunidades y organizaciones locales para decidir sobre sus propias capacidades.
  - Mejora de la eficacia de los proyectos humanitarios y de desarrollo.
  - Aumento de la capacidad de las comunidades locales para resistir y recuperarse de las crisis humanitarias.

### **III. Asociaciones**

11. Según su experiencia, ¿las relaciones con organizaciones internacionales están guiadas por los Principios de Asociación (igualdad, transparencia, enfoque orientado a resultados, responsabilidad y complementariedad)?
- Siempre
  - A menudo
  - A veces
  - Raramente
  - Nunca
12. ¿Qué tan de acuerdo está en que los actores locales y nacionales tienen igual poder en la toma de decisiones dentro de las asociaciones?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
13. ¿Qué tan frecuentemente se consulta a su organización en decisiones clave de asociación? (por ejemplo, decisiones sobre el cambio de enfoque geográfico de un proyecto o decisiones sobre reasignaciones presupuestarias)

- Siempre
  - A menudo
  - A veces
  - Raramente
  - Nunca
14. ¿Siente que desde 2016 su organización ha incrementado las capacidades en la toma de decisiones frente a las organizaciones internacionales?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
15. Cuando trabaja con organizaciones internacionales, ¿tiene mecanismos por los cuales se pueden plantear y resolver problemas?
- Sí, siempre
  - Sí, a veces
  - No, en absoluto
  - No lo sé
  - No aplicable
16. Las asociaciones estratégicas que su organización mantiene con organizaciones internacionales, ¿se centran en objetivos y proyectos a largo plazo más que en proyectos a corto plazo?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
17. ¿Ha habido un cambio de financiamiento basado en proyectos a financiamiento estratégico (es decir, menos financiamiento basado en proyectos) en su organización?
- Sí
  - No
  - No lo sé
18. ¿Siente que sus socios internacionales se preocupan e invierten en asociaciones y procesos a largo plazo de su organización?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
19. ¿Siente que los proyectos que su organización está ejecutando con socios internacionales están co-diseñados, implementados y evaluados en igualdad de condiciones?

- Totalmente de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Totalmente en desacuerdo
- No lo sé

20. ¿Cómo calificaría el nivel de colaboración y aporte de sus socios internacionales en la supervisión y evaluación de proyectos?

- Muy alto
- Alto
- Moderado
- Bajo
- Muy bajo
- No lo sé

#### **IV. Financiación**

21. ¿Recibe su organización fondos localizados? Es decir, fondos que le transfieren directamente una organización internacional o fondos comunes.

- Sí
- No
- No lo sé

22. Aproximadamente, ¿cuántas fuentes de financiación diferentes tiene su organización?

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5+

23. ¿Considera que recibe una proporción justa de financiación en comparación con los actores internacionales de la respuesta humanitaria?

- Sí
- No
- Parcialmente
- No lo sé

24. ¿Ha aumentado en los últimos años la cantidad de fondos que su organización recibe directamente de organizaciones internacionales?

- Sí, mucho.
- Sí, un poco.
- No
- No lo sé

25. ¿Qué tipo de fondos recibe más su organización?

- Fondos asignados a proyectos específicos
- Financiación básica
- Financiación complementaria
- Contribuciones voluntarias / Donaciones
- Otros (especifique)

26. ¿De qué entidad proceden principalmente estos fondos?
- USAID
  - Organizaciones de la ONU
  - Fondos comunes
  - Unión Europea
  - Gobiernos / instituciones gubernamentales de países
  - Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Medialuna Roja (FICR)
  - Banco Mundial
  - Otros (especifique)
27. ¿Puede su organización gestionar y utilizar estos fondos por sí misma? Es decir, sin interferencias de organizaciones internacionales.
- Sí
  - No
  - Parcialmente
  - No lo sé
28. ¿Está de acuerdo en que sus socios de financiación internacional tratan activamente de reforzar su sostenibilidad financiera e independencia?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
29. ¿Está de acuerdo en que la financiación que recibe su organización se le transfiere "lo más directamente posible"?
- Sí
  - No
  - No lo sé
30. ¿Está de acuerdo en que en los últimos años se han transferido más fondos directamente a organizaciones locales y nacionales en Colombia?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
31. Desde su punto de vista, ¿existen riesgos de fraude y corrupción al recibir fondos localizados?
- Sí, especifique por favor
  - No, especifique por favor
32. ¿Cómo evalúa sus mecanismos contra el fraude financiero y la corrupción para mitigar los riesgos de fraude financiero y corrupción?
- Extremadamente positivamente
  - Algo positivo

- Ni positivo ni negativo
- Algo negativo
- Extremadamente negativo
- No lo sé

## **V. Capacidad**

33. ¿Cómo calificaría el apoyo prestado por las organizaciones asociadas/ internacionales a su organización antes y durante la respuesta humanitaria?
- Muy bueno
  - Algo bueno
  - Ni bueno ni malo
  - Algo malo
  - Extremadamente malo
  - No lo sé
34. ¿De qué manera las organizaciones internacionales han apoyado o no las actividades de preparación y respuesta de su organización?
- Pregunta abierta
35. ¿Está de acuerdo en que la capacidad de su organización se ve reforzada por el apoyo internacional?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
36. ¿Cómo calificaría los esfuerzos de capacitación que recibe su organización?
- Muy eficaz
  - Eficaz
  - Neutro
  - Ineficaz
  - Muy ineficaz
  - No lo sé
37. ¿Se centran las organizaciones internacionales en las áreas de refuerzo de capacidades que usted desea?
- Siempre
  - A menudo
  - A veces
  - Raramente
  - Nunca
  - No lo sé
38. ¿El refuerzo de las capacidades y el desarrollo organizativo están permitidos y forman parte del presupuesto que reciben de las organizaciones donantes internacionales?
- Siempre
  - A menudo
  - A veces

- Raramente
  - Nunca
  - No lo sé
39. ¿Considera que el desarrollo organizativo es un objetivo central en sus asociaciones con organizaciones internacionales?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
40. ¿Con qué frecuencia dan prioridad las organizaciones internacionales al uso de la capacidad local frente a la nacional y regional?
- Siempre
  - A menudo
  - A veces
  - Raramente
  - Nunca
  - No lo sé
41. ¿Cuánta autonomía tiene su organización para definir sus propias necesidades de capacidad cuando trabaja con ONG internacionales/organismos de la ONU?
- Plena autonomía
  - Gran autonomía
  - Autonomía moderada
  - Autonomía baja
  - Sin autonomía
  - No lo sé
42. ¿Con qué frecuencia percibe que los actores internacionales socavan la capacidad de los actores nacionales en situaciones de respuesta de emergencia?
- Siempre
  - A menudo
  - A veces
  - Raramente
  - Nunca
  - No lo sé
43. ¿De qué manera los actores internacionales han respetado o socavado la capacidad de su organización para definir sus propias necesidades de capacidad?
- Pregunta abierta
44. ¿En qué medida participan los actores locales/nacionales en funciones de liderazgo en los mecanismos de coordinación humanitaria a nivel nacional? (por ejemplo, Equipos Humanitarios de País (HCT), agrupaciones (clusters) o reuniones de coordinación sectorial)?
- Siempre
  - A menudo
  - A veces

- Raramente
  - Nunca
  - No lo sé
45. ¿Con qué frecuencia cree que se contacta activamente con el personal de los agentes nacionales o se les invita a solicitar puestos vacantes en organismos internacionales?
- Siempre
  - A menudo
  - A veces
  - Raramente
  - Nunca
  - No lo sé
46. ¿Cómo han influido las prácticas de contratación de las agencias internacionales en la dotación de personal y la capacidad de su organización?
- Pregunta abierta

## **VI. Política y liderazgo**

47. ¿Está de acuerdo en que se reconozca a su organización como parte interesada clave en los debates internacionales sobre políticas humanitarias y/o de desarrollo?
- Totalmente de acuerdo
  - De acuerdo
  - Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
  - En desacuerdo
  - Totalmente en desacuerdo
  - No lo sé
48. ¿Hasta qué punto es eficaz su organización a la hora de influir en las prioridades de los donantes en el país, incluido el diseño y la ejecución de los programas?
- Muy eficaz
  - Eficaz
  - Neutro
  - Ineficaz
  - Muy ineficaz
49. ¿Cómo percibe el apoyo de los actores internacionales al fortalecimiento del liderazgo nacional?
- Apoyo muy firme
  - Fuerte apoyo
  - Apoyo moderado
  - Ligero apoyo
  - Sin apoyo
  - No lo sé
50. ¿Con qué frecuencia cree que las organizaciones locales y nacionales lideran la toma de decisiones en contextos humanitarios, de desarrollo y de paz en su país?
- Siempre
  - A menudo

- A veces
- Raramente
- Nunca
- No lo sé

51. ¿Cree que los actores internacionales respetan las estructuras y mecanismos de liderazgo locales y nacional e invierten en ellos?

- Totalmente de acuerdo
- De acuerdo
- Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo
- En desacuerdo
- Totalmente en desacuerdo
- No lo sé

52. Por favor, comparta cualquier experiencia en la que haya habido respeto o falta de respeto hacia las estructuras de liderazgo en el país por parte de los actores internacionales. (Optativo)

- Pregunta abierta

## **VII. Pregunta final**

53. ¿Hay algo que le gustaría añadir o compartir de su experiencia en relación con la localización de la ayuda humanitaria y al desarrollo?

## **Declaration of authorship**

I hereby declare that I have authored this thesis independently, that I have not used other than the declared sources/resources, and that I have explicitly marked all material which has been quoted either literally or by content from the used sources. Furthermore, I declare that this work has never before been submitted by me or somebody else at this or any other university. I am aware that noncompliance with this declaration as well as an attempted fraud may result in the Master's Thesis being considered a "fail". Repeated or particularly severe attempts of deception, might ensue the Removal from the Register of Graduate Students.

Place, Date

Signature

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Lugar, Fecha

Firma