

THE STATUS OF **LOCALLY** **LED DEVELOPMENT** IN **UGANDA**

Voices of **Local & National**
Actors Visible & Valued in
Locally Led Development





A Position Paper

The status of Locally Led Development in Uganda: Voices of local and National Actors Visible & Valued in Locally Led Development

MAY, 2025

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TABLE OF CONTENT

| | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 03 | Executive summary | 03 | Locally led development in civic space |
| 03 | Acknowledgement | | |
| 03 | The Position Paper on Locally Led Development | 03 | Findings from regional consultations on locally led development: A synthesis of emerging issues and gaps by CSOs, civic networks, district and local leaders Understanding funding quality, donor -partner relationship, local challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations |
| 03 | Methodology | | |
| 03 | Enabling Legal & Policy national Frameworks for locally led development. | | |
| 03 | The evolution of Locally Led Development | 12 | Regional specific context on locally led development Karamoja sub region Northern sub region Eastern Sub region Southwest region Western Uganda West Nile sub region Central region Marginalized Groups |
| 12 | A case for Locally led development. | | |
| 12 | Dimensions of quality funding for Locally Led Development | | |
| 12 | The Downside of Locally led development | 12 | Recommendations |
| 12 | Deeper analysis and focus of the position paper | 12 | Conclusion |



| | |
|----------|---|
| CBO | Community Based Organization |
| CSO | Civil Society Organization |
| CRS | Catholic Relief Services |
| C4C | Charter for Change |
| DCA | Dan Church Aid |
| DNMC | District Non-Governmental Organization Monitoring Committee |
| DCDO | District Community Development Officer |
| HRD | Human Rights Defender |
| IFRC | International Federation of Red Cross |
| INGO | International Non-Government Organization |
| LED | Local Economic Development |
| LLL | Local Leadership Lab |
| LNA | Local and National Actors |
| NGO | Non-Government Organization |
| NRG | National Reference Group |
| OCHA | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| PDM | Parish Development Model |
| PWD | People with Disability |
| RDE | Royal Danish Embassy |
| 8UNDP | United Nation Development Fund |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCR | United Nations Human Rights Council |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Emergency Fund |
| UNNGOF | Uganda National NGO Forum |
| WECISNET | West Nile Civil Society Network |
| WFP | World Food Program |

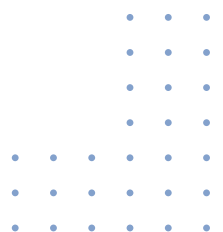


List of Tables

Table 1: Highlights a synthesis of major six (6) emerging issues across the seven sub-regions
Table 2: Key emerging issues from the Marginalized groups

List of Figures

Figure 1: A map of Uganda showing regions covered during LLL project consultations
Figure 2: Showing an analysis of funding mechanisms across the seven regions and the marginalized groups
Figure 3: Showing the analysis of Internal Cost recovery.
Figure 4: Showing the analysis of Overhead Cost
Figure 5: Showing an analysis of Donor relationships.
Figure 6: Showing funding mechanism in Karamojja sub region.
Figure 7: Showing internal cost recovery in Karamojja sub region
Figure 8: Showing overhead and operation costs in Karamojja
Figure 9: Showing status of funding mechanism for Northern Uganda
Figure 10: Showing internal cost recovery for Northern Uganda
Figure 11: Showing the status of overhead and operational costs for Northern Uganda
Figure 12: Highlighting funding mechanism distribution in Eastern region
Figure 13: Showing internal cost recovery in Eastern Uganda
Figure 14: Showing overhead and operational costs for Eastern Uganda
Figure 15: Showing funding mechanism in Southwest region
Figure 16: Shows overhead and operational costs for southwest region
Figure 17: Shows status of internal cost recovery in Southwest Region
Figure 18: Showing quality mechanism for Western region
Figure 19: Shows the status of overhead and operational costs for Western region
Figure 20: Shows the status of internal cost recovery in Western region
Figure 21: Shows funding mechanism for West Nile region
Figure 22: Shows status of overhead and operational costs in West Nile region
Figure 23: Shows the status of internal cost recovery in West Nile
Figure 24: Shows the funding mechanism for central region
Figure 25: Shows the overhead and operational costs for central region
Figure 26: Shows the internal cost recovery for central region
Figure 27: Highlights funding mechanism for Marginalized groups
Figure 28: Shows donor – local actor's relationship
Figure 29: Status of overhead and operational costs for key population
Figure 30: Status of internal cost recovery for key population



Executive Summary



CAPAIDS Uganda initiated the **Local Leadership Lab (LLL)** project which aimed to foster sustainable, Local Led Development in collaboration with global civil society networks like CIVICUS. The project focus is on empowering diverse civil society actors across the global south to address socio-economic inequalities in their communities through content-specific solutions and key values such as power – building, inclusivity, systems thinking and accountability.

Through this initiative, CAPAIDS Uganda created context-specific spaces where civil society actors, religious and cultural institutions, district local governments, the media and private sector learned from each other, built mutual understanding and respect, developed cross-sectoral relationships and co-create solutions to barriers to local leadership. Through a synthesis of comprehensive literature and extensive consultations of local actors, local governments and marginalized groups across the **7 sub-regions** covering **over 50 districts of Uganda**, the position paper on locally led development attempts to offer unique insights by amplifying voices of local and national actors into how locally driven, locally led and locally owned development can be realized. It also points out the challenges, opportunities and recommendations faced while operating in the development space.

“
LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT IS ABOUT **COMMUNITIES DRIVING THEIR OWN SOLUTIONS.**”

Locally Led Development centers on empowering local stakeholders, individuals, communities, and governments, to set priorities, devise solutions, and mobilize resources for sustainable outcomes. While donors acknowledge the importance of integrating impact into local systems, current practices often fall short of fully transferring decision-making authority to local actors.

This position paper summarizes key findings in the literature on the status of Local Led Development and localization – in the seven sub regions of Uganda namely, Karamoja, Eastern, Central, Southwestern, western, Acholi / Lango and West Nile. The consultations targeted local and national actors such as CBOs, NGOs, private sector and local government revealing critical regional context specific realities on Locally Led Development.





The Ugandan government promotes Locally Led development through its National Local Economic Development (LED) policy, emphasizing partnerships between local governments, the private sector, and communities to mobilize resources and drive economic growth, while also aligning with national development plans.

Despite successes in these areas, challenges persist, including the dominance of international actors and inconsistent policy implementation. Addressing these challenges demands robust dialogue, equitable partnerships and effective management of fiduciary and regulatory concerns. At the community level, increased direct local funding has strengthened community-led efforts, yet issues such as compliance risks and inadequate cost recovery remain significant hurdles. The paper highlights those dispelling myths about local capacity, involving local input and moving away from top-down transactional methods that show measurable impacts and building resilient local entities.

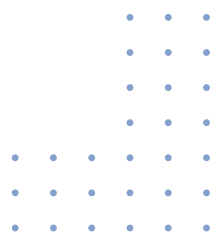
This review finds that major donors such as Royal Danish Embassy (RDE) and their European counterparts, INGOs such as Oxfam, CARE international, Save the children, World Vision, Plan International, Action Aid, Caritas, Street Child, Catholic relief services are increasingly aligning their policies with localization goals, focusing on capacity-enhancement, flexible funding mechanisms, and empowering local decision-making. In examining the landscape of Local Led Development, several key successes and challenges have emerged. Successful initiatives underscore enabling donor resources to enhance the effectiveness of local actors, leadership and networks in achieving development outcomes. Overcoming persistent challenges, such as the retention of donor-centric power dynamics and thematic priorities, coordination issues among multiple donors signify the need to shift towards more balanced donor priorities that align with local needs and capacities.

Evidence Base: This paper offers an overview of the available evidence, with a focus on funding mechanisms (flexible, multi-year, access, timely and direct funding), exploring internal recovery costs, overhead and operational cost dynamics, partnership arrangements between donors and local actors, existing opportunities, emerging issues on localization and regional specific donor asks.

Before consultations commenced, the initiative mapped out a wide range of local actors, identifying: 128 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), 87 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), 4 Private Sector Organizations.

During regional consultation meetings, Karamoja was represented by 22 actors, Eastern and central sub region were represented by 29 actors, 20 actors represented South western sub region, Western subregion was represented by 17 local actors, Northern sub region represented by 22 local actors, West Nile sub region represented by 23 local actors and key populations were represented by 21 local actors from refugee women -led organization, women-led, faith-based organization, women's rights, disability-led, youth-led, private sector and cultural institutions.

Key emerging issues explored were the nature of funding, capacity enhancement opportunities, compliance requirements and shrinking civic space, issues of transparency and accountability of local and national actors, trust by donors and donor practices.





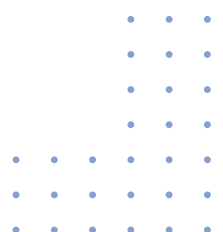
In exploring funding mechanisms, the findings show that 43 per cent of funding is activity based, while 30 percent funding is annual. In the West Nile sub region where humanitarian assistance and refugee influx has been on a rise, we observed 2 percent funding of one-offs / short term and 2 per cent in-kind was realized in Karamojja and central sub regions. This kind of funding, which is activity based, and annual funding falls short of parameters of quality funding which is flexible, multiyear and direct funding to LNAs. It is worth noting that 23 percent of LNA received multi-year funding, which is a positive trajectory by donors towards LLD. Northern sub region is the worst performing with 6 out of 30 (20%) local actor organizations receive activity-based funding while only 1 (3%) receive annual funding. However, none received multi-year funding, in kind or short-term funding

On internal cost recovery, from the findings, 68 percent of local actors did not receive internal cost recovery or institutional support from donors, 26 percent received between 1-15 percent, 6 percent received internal cost recovery between 16-30 percent while 1 percent received above 30 percent. The worst region is the Northern sub region where only 1 organization out of 30 received ICR between 1-15%, followed by Karamojja sub region out of 37 donors 27 don't provide any of these costs, followed by West Nile, central and southwest.

Overhead and operational cost: The findings show that 42 percent of local and national actors receive overhead costs ranging from 1-10 percent, 17 percent receive overhead costs 11-20 percent, while 9 percent receive overhead costs between 21-30 percent and 3% receive above 30 percent. It's worth noting that 28 percent of the actors do not receive any overhead costs. These findings mean that while the majority of the donors are meeting the operational costs below 10 percent to enable the execution of activities it is low to maintain the organization afloat. In the Northern sub region, 6 local actors receive 1-10% operational costs, 1 local actor did not receive any overhead costs while 23 local actors could not disclose their situation. On the other hand, there is a positive trajectory in Southwest Uganda where 45% local actors receive between 1-10% of overhead costs, 8% receive between 11- 20%, 13% local actors receive 21-30% and 1 receives above 30%. This region illustrates a positive trajectory in realizing locally led development. However, 29% of local actors still do not receive any operational costs.

Partnership with donors: Findings show that 74 percent of donor - LNAs relationships are partnerships and local actors feel respected, while 16 percent relationships are master-servant relationships where the donors impose terms and conditions for local actors. 10% of local actors could not disclose their relationship due to fear. This shows the inferiority complex they have and their inability to engage with their donors.

The unique value-add of this paper is that having observed the principle of locally owned and locally led approaches which focused on solutions that are context specific, this paper provides a set of unique lance of findings and recommendations that will stimulate progressive and proactive thinking across donors, intermediaries in supporting local actors towards realizing locally led development. The paper will be a reference as an advocacy tool for policy and strategic engagements between donors and local actors during negotiations for quality and multi- year funding. The paper challenges LNAs to be fit for purpose and comply with regulatory frameworks as stipulated in legal frameworks. They should be Findable and Fundable! The paper also adds on the pool of knowledge on locally led development for researchers and academicians



There are three major asks from a synthesis of issues generated throughout this paper in seven regions on locally led development to succeed in Uganda and these are: i) Quality funding and equitable partnerships, ii) Capacity enhancement of local and national actors, iii) Documentation and investment in existing local philanthropy.

Recommendations

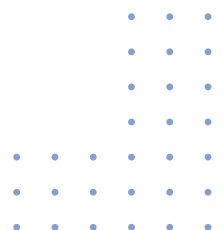
Enable better quality funding: One of the major aims of the Grand Bargain was to secure better-quality funding to support more efficient and effective operations. There remain substantial political challenges to increasing the volume or proportion of international funding that is flexible and predictable. Adopting a pragmatic approach, the signatories need to adopt actions that reduce or navigate some of these challenges, providing funding options that enable varying degrees of control by donors and grant-giving aid organizations over how funds are spent, while also enhancing the flexibility and predictability necessary to ensure more effective and efficient Local Led Development

Address power imbalances by encouraging mutually beneficial partnerships with local actors and committing to principles of equitable partnership, which emphasize fairness, mutual respect, trust and co-creation. For instance, through working with local actors as co-creators, not subcontractors and adapting proposal processes and reporting mechanisms to enable local actors to contribute effectively without being strained by overcomplicated templates.

Increase support for local Actors: The expectations generated by the Grand Bargain go beyond the language of the commitments on localization. Recognizing this, the signatories should now elevate the original ambition and focus on securing a fairer and more appropriate distribution of leadership and decision-making authority, as well as access to funding between international and local actors.

Realize the participation revolution: In the new enabling priorities, participation of affected populations appears to be more of an 'add-on' than an integrated approach to achieving the Local Led Development outcomes envisaged. Now is the moment for signatories to pause and reflect in a more considered way on how they can move to a more demand-driven response, developing an objective more akin to the original ambition of a participation 'revolution'. In support of this, the following measures should be implemented by signatories with immediate effect:

- **Increase outreach to local governmental and non-governmental actors:** donors should engage more consistently at a political level with local actors including through expanding the current concept of country-level dialogues. Developing and implementing a strategy for engagement with affected states at regional and global levels using existing bilateral channels and multilateral mechanisms.
- **Develop methodologies to identify, code and use locally existing knowledge** and experience to determine the needs of crisis-affected populations through their lens. International partners are encouraged to recognize that local communities have a better understanding of their realities and can therefore contribute to developing sustainable solutions.





Acknowledgement:

The production of this paper was made possible through the generous support of the CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen participation during the discovery stage. CAPAIDS and Ronald Matanda – (the lead consultant) who extend their deepest gratitude to the numerous local and national organizations and individuals who contributed their valuable time and insights to this research. We acknowledge the key stakeholders who participated in regional consultations and National validation exercise and shared their experiences, perspectives, and expertise, without which this paper would not have been possible. Their openness and willingness to engage have significantly enriched the findings and analysis presented herein.



Introduction

CAPAIDS Uganda initiated the Local Leadership Lab (LLL) project which aimed to foster sustainable, Local Led Development in collaboration with global civil society networks like CIVICUS. The project focus is on empowering diverse civil society actors across the global south to address socio-economic inequalities in their communities through content -specific solutions and key values such as power – building, inclusivity, systems thinking and accountability.

Through this initiative, CAPAIDS Uganda created context-specific spaces where civil society actors, religious and cultural institutions, district local governments, the media and private sector learned from each other, built mutual understanding and respect, developed cross-sectoral relationships, and co-create solutions to barriers to local leadership.

The **Theory of Change** underpinning the LLL is based on the principle that the initiative is locally-owned and locally-led, and focusing on solutions that are context specific, building on what we know about practicing constituency accountability, creating safe and inclusive dialogue spaces, and facilitating locally-led and co-created processes.

The initiative is being implemented in three stages, namely:

- a. Discovery: demand articulation, stakeholder identification, sense-checking/ co-creating with target groups and other actors in the ecosystem
- b. Ideation: local co-design exercises, curation of trust-building spaces, dialogues on policy issues
- c. Action: implementation and iteration of solutions, reflecting and sharing key insights



The Position Paper on Locally Led Development



The global development landscape has recently witnessed the paradigm shift towards the Local Led Development agenda, a movement towards strengthening local ownership of development initiatives. In this discourse, locally led development infers shifting power to local organizations by building their capacity to drive community development. It emphasizes equitable partnerships with the local organizations going beyond prepackaged “best -fit” solutions to promoting sustainable practices rooted in the local wisdom and expertise.

The paper seeks to explore the meaning of Locally Led Development, its implication and application for local and national actors, understanding the existing opportunities, challenges and recommendations, capture voices from local actors on key emerging issues and gaps in relation to locally led development as well as major asks to donors in realizing locally led development agenda.

Through a synthesis of comprehensive literature and extensive consultations of local actors, local governments and marginalized groups across the 7 sub-regions covering over 50 districts of Uganda, the paper offers unique insights by amplifying voices of local and national actors into how locally driven, locally led and locally owned development can be realized. It also points out the challenges, opportunities and recommendations faced while operating in the development space.

Overall, the importance of this paper lies in its critical analysis of the prevailing practices on locally led development in Uganda. It challenges the existing donor practices that hinder the success of locally led development, elevates the role of local government in promoting locally led development and identifies opportunities and recommendations for realizing it.



Methodology

Qualitative methods were used to inform the observations and insights in this paper. To identify key trends, emerging issues, challenges, opportunities and recommendations associated with locally led development agenda, a review of research papers and extensive engagements and consultations of local and National actors, local governments and marginalized groups across 7 sub regions reaching 128 NGOs, 87 CBOs, 4 private sector organizations, religious and cultural institutions. Contextually, the stakeholders span from Women led organizations, youth led organizations, Civil Society Organization networks, Community Based Organizations, NGOs both at National and district level, people with disability (PWD) led and focused organization, local governments, private sector, human rights organizations and networks including the media.

The author's personal experience gathered over his 17 years of experience as an actor in Uganda's civil society sector laid a foundation for consolidating key insights to improve the quality of the paper. He understands the dynamics, challenges and obstacles INGOs, local and national actors go through in advancing locally led development.

A paper that combines authorship with personal practitioner experience must contemplate its ability to offer a fully objective view which has been achieved.

“
The paper highlights insights, challenges, and opportunities for advancing **Locally Led Development**
”



| METHODOLOGY | |
|--------------------|---|
| FORMA | |
| 1. NGOs | |
| 2. CBOs | |
| 3. FBOs | |
| 4. Self Help Grps. | |
| 5. Private Sector | |
| 6. Academia | |
| 7. Media | ✓ |
| 8. Networks | ✓ |

Enabling Legal & Policy National Frameworks for Locally Led Development.



The Ugandan government promotes locally led development through its National Local Economic Development (LED) policy, emphasizing partnerships between local governments, the private sector, and communities to mobilize resources and drive economic growth, while also aligning with national development plans. Local economic development (LED) was introduced to Uganda as the sixth objective of the Decentralization Policy as decentralization was failing to get the population out of poverty as envisaged during conceptualization in 1993. Efforts were made to fulfill it, but a bold step was made in 2014 with the development of the LED policy. The Uganda National Local Economic Development Policy (2014) defines LED as a process through which Local Governments (LG), the private sector and the communities form partnerships to mobilize, manage and invest resources effectively into economic ventures to stimulate development and growth of the locality. LED is a multi-sectoral, multi-level, and multi-disciplinary process that requires a systems approach to succeed. LED is a framework for further deepening of fiscal decentralization, and this comes to be actualized through the parish development model (PDM) which has been allocating substantial but not adequate amounts of resources.



The evolution of Locally Led Development

The evolution of "locally led development" has seen a shift from traditional top-down development approaches, where external actors dictated projects, to a growing emphasis on empowering local communities to identify their own needs, lead decision-making, and implement solutions, with international organizations playing a supporting role, driven by increasing recognition of the importance of local knowledge and ownership for sustainable development outcomes; this shift has been fueled by growing critiques of colonial development practices and the increasing influence of the "Aid Effectiveness Agenda" promoting local ownership and participation. This agenda increased focus on development effectiveness and ownership by developing countries and led to a stronger push for local participation and alignment with national development priorities.

The Grand Bargain (2016): A landmark commitment by humanitarian actors to prioritize locally led development, particularly in crisis contexts, by increasing funding directly to local organizations and strengthening their capacity. The Grand Bargain committed to donors and aid organizations to provide 25 percent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more un-earmarked funds, and increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response, among other commitments. It provides a unique platform for collaboration. Signatories, large and small, have repeatedly articulated that the main comparative advantage of the Grand Bargain is that it brings actors from different constituent groups together to work on key technical and, to an extent, political challenges, and to develop solutions. While frustration and disagreement on many issues remain, the collaboration that has characterized the Grand Bargain is recognized by signatories as a key factor in the progress that they have made to date. In 2020, only 13 (25%) of 53 grant-giving signatories had met or exceeded the target for allocating 25% of funds as directly as possible to local and national actors: These included, ActionAid, CAFOD Christian Aid, Czech Republic, IFRC, New Zealand, OCHA, Slovenia, Spain, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP.

In recent years, there has been a push towards localization in development programs. To increase inclusivity and be more efficient with resources, it is important to work with local parties. Local communities must be included in the discussions and efforts to provide aid to their country. Locally led development is not a new trend. It is the direction that the development sector is following towards greater efficiency and sustainability, and indeed a direction the sector must follow to succeed. This is understood both internationally and in the local communities themselves. To make a deeper, longer-lasting impact, it is crucial to work with and empower local actors.





Locally Led Development centers on empowering local stakeholders, individuals, communities, and governments, to set priorities, devise solutions, and mobilize resources for sustainable outcomes. While donors acknowledge the importance of integrating impact into local systems, current practices often fall short of fully transferring decision-making authority to local actors.

This position paper summarizes key findings in the literature on the status of Local Led Development and localization – in the seven sub regions of Uganda namely, Karamoja, Eastern, Central, Southwestern, western, Acholi / Lango and West Nile. The consultations targeted local and national actors such as CBOs, NGOs, private sector and local government revealing critical regional context specific realities on Locally Led Development. CAPAIDS Uganda initiated the Local Leadership Lab (LLL) project which aimed to foster sustainable, Local Led Development in collaboration with global civil society networks like CIVICUS. The project focus is on empowering diverse civil society actors across the global south to address socio-economic inequalities in their communities through content –specific solutions and key values such as power – building, inclusivity, systems thinking and accountability.

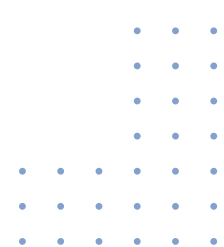
Through this initiative, CAPAIDS Uganda created context-specific spaces where civil society actors, religious and cultural institutions, district local governments, the media and private sector learned from each other, built mutual understanding and respect, developed cross-sectoral relationships and co-create solutions to barriers to local leadership. Through a synthesis of comprehensive literature and extensive consultations of local actors, local governments and marginalized groups across the 7 sub-regions covering over 50 districts of Uganda, the position paper on locally led development attempts to offer unique insights by amplifying voices of local and national actors into how locally driven, locally led and locally owned development can be realized. It also points out the challenges, opportunities and recommendations faced while operating in the development space.

Locally led development and response for Actors

Locally led development provides an opportunity for local stakeholders, including individuals, communities, networks, organizations, private sectors, and governments, to take the initiative to set their own priorities, devise solutions, and mobilize the necessary capacity, leadership, and resources to implement these solutions . Donors recognize that it should be the end goal of development efforts that impact is embedded in local systems and can therefore endure beyond the interventions of international actors.

Locally Led Development is gradually transforming into localization which broadly recognizes and strengthens the leadership of local authorities and the capacity of local civil society in humanitarian action to better address the needs of affected populations and prepare national actors for more informed and effective development outcomes (Care, 2016; OECD, 2017; Save the Children, n.d.).

Promoting localization and for effective development cooperation is not a novel concept. It has been built gradually on the push for participatory approaches from the 1970s, the ownership principle of the Aid Effectiveness Agenda from the early 2000s, the shift towards development effectiveness and a people-driven 2030 Agenda, and the Grand Bargain localization commitments made in 2016. In recent years, strategic and political reasons have renewed interest in locally led development. Factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, Russia's large-scale aggression against Ukraine, and an increasing number of crises and geopolitical issues have disrupted traditional development cooperation models and underscored the need for greater effectiveness and local relevance.





Additionally, critical perspectives on racism and colonialism in development cooperation have highlighted the urgent need to address power imbalances that hinder local leadership, ownership, and legitimacy (OECD, 2023). Therefore, locally led development is broad, inclusive and should seek to challenge the status quo and be aligned with the following concepts. Core guiding concepts for locally led development and response have been identified from a strong body of existing evidence :

- Locally led development is sharing power and leadership with local actors.
- Purposeful, strategic and action-oriented transition to support the sovereignty, self-determination and full independence of local actors/partners.
- Fundamental transition, scaling up, and promotion of civil society rather than a predominant focus on INGO activity.
- Recognition of local and indigenous knowledge; understanding local systems and the priorities, strengths, and goals of local partners.

Drawing from current literature locally led development is not:

- International non-governmental organizations (INGOs) competing with local actors
- INGOs growing (fostering a transition mindset rather than a growth mindset)
- INGOs create/register local organizations that are just entrenching their footprint.
- Transactional partnerships.
- INGO's working only with 'local elites' and sidelining grassroots organizations; and
- Imposing untenable compliance and management requirements.





A case for Locally Led Development.

Solutions that are designed and led by local actors are more likely to be culturally relevant and sustainable. Local communities appreciate their contextual challenges which enable them to identify tailored interventions and ownership over their development initiatives. Their participation and commitment in executing these interventions help to maintain and scale them up in the long term. Locally led development uplifts communities by giving them control over locally mobilized resources to support their decision-making. This model builds local capacity hence strengthening organizations to deliver impactful programs and services to ensure sustainability in the event external funding ends. It shifts the power balance, allowing local actors to shape the future they want for themselves, rather than being passive recipients of aid.

Based on this rapid evidence review, the following key points emerged regarding successful aspects of localization and locally led development initiatives:

- **Knowledge Transfer and Building on Existing Initiatives:** Innovations in capacity building that incorporate local perspectives and move away from traditional top-down approaches have proven effective. Rather than starting new projects, advocates of localization can accelerate progress by building on these established initiatives (Green, 2022). Existing models, reviewed by the Overseas Development Institute (2021), show various successful strategies such as building movements, directing funds to the global South, sharing knowledge, and supporting local leaders deeply connected to their communities.
- **Enabling Local Decision-Making:** Creating an environment that facilitates local decision-making involves leveraging donor resources and capabilities to empower domestic policymakers. This approach allows communities to choose and implement policies aligned with their needs and priorities supported by evidence and grounded in local realities. This shift not only involves reducing external intervention but also exploring opportunities for donors to enhance support where it is most impactful.
- **Exploring Alternative Approaches:** Moving beyond conventional practices, there is a growing recognition among Development Assistance Committee (DAC) members that viewing cooperation through a locally led lens requires substantial changes rather than mere adjustments (OECD, 2023). For instance: The START Network, supported by Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, operates through autonomous national and regional hubs with their own memberships. These hubs receive funding to develop and implement their own programmes, fostering local ownership and responsiveness. These approaches highlight a shift towards empowering local actors, enhancing their decision-making capacity, and fostering innovation in development practices. They represent steps towards more effective and sustainable development outcomes that align closely with local needs and priorities.



Local organizations are often more agile and innovative because they are directly embedded within their communities. They can quickly identify community challenges, emerging needs, respond to crises, and innovate solutions that are more contextually appropriate. When development is locally led, there is no bureaucracy, and decisions can be made in real-time based on the actual needs of the community.

Locally led development enhances accountability and transparency. Communities have a stake in the success of their initiatives and are more likely to hold their leaders and implementing organizations accountable. This reduces the risk of mismanagement and ensures that development programs deliver real benefits to the people they are intended to serve.

For a long time, development models have been dominated by international actors with little input from the beneficiary communities. Locally led development helps dismantle such power imbalances by centering local voices and ensuring that the most affected people by development decisions are the ones making them. This shift is crucial for creating a more equitable and just development landscape.

“For a long time, development models have been dominated by international actors with little input from the beneficiary communities.”





Dimensions of quality funding for Locally Led Development



While locally led development aims to uplift local actors, development partners; both international organizations and funders have a vital role to play in making this approach successful. They should provide **flexible, multi-year, and direct funding**.

Quality funding focuses on several key dimensions to ensure the effectiveness and impact of resources. These dimensions include affordability, transparency, convenience, fairness, and the ability to adapt to changing circumstances. Additionally, consider factors like the duration of funding, the level of earmarking, and reporting requirements, which can all influence the overall quality of funding.

Elaboration on Quality Funding Dimensions:

Affordability: This dimension examines how accessible and affordable financial services are, particularly for low-income individuals.

Transparency: Ensuring that information about funding, its use, and its impact is readily available and understandable is crucial.

Convenience: The ease with which individuals can access and utilize financial services is a key aspect of quality.

Fairness: This dimension ensures that financial services are offered equitably and without discrimination.

Adaptability: The ability to adjust funding to changing needs and circumstances is essential for effective implementation.

Funding Duration: Multi-year funding provides greater stability and predictability for implementers.

Earmarking: The degree to which funding is restricted to specific purposes or locations can affect flexibility and adaptability.



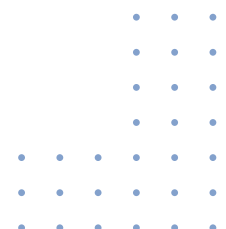
The Downside of Locally Led Development



While there have been notable successes, critical examination also reveals evidence of what has not worked as intended in localization and locally led development initiatives:

- **Donor proliferation and coordination failure:** The challenge of coordinating donor partnerships to align with recipient-countries' priorities and ownership, and the use of their established systems remains a persistent issue. A study on the Canada-Ghana development relationship reveals significant hurdles in achieving effective bilateral country ownership amid numerous and varied partnerships. Balancing alignment with recipient priorities and harmonizing with competing donor interests often results in cumbersome and inconsistent demands e.g. frequency of report submission conditions, proving difficult to overcome even in favorable conditions (Black, 2019).
- **Retention of Donor Power within Partnerships:** In promoting locally led development, it's vital to avoid aid practices that diminish initiatives to mere indicators, sidelining local decision-makers (Green, 2022). Despite the rhetoric of partnerships, many aid approaches still operate hierarchically. In this setup, donors act as principals while local governments or implementing organizations serve as agents. This model often persists in donor efforts to influence policy through tools like conditionality and policy dialogues (King, 2023). Critics argue that these practices create power imbalances that undermine equitable relationships among partners, a gap highlighted in the reality versus rhetoric of aid partnerships (Elbers & Schulpen, 2011).
- **Focus on Donor-centric Themes:** There is a notable trend towards donor-centric thematic priorities, which poses challenges to the responsive and effective use of donor funds in partner countries. While concentrating on specific issue areas may stabilize development policy priorities and deepen expertise, it necessitates redirecting limited aid resources and should be carefully balanced with broader development needs (Black, 2019).

These complexities and challenges encountered in implementing locally led development initiatives, underscoring the need for nuanced approaches that empower local actors while addressing systemic issues in donor engagement and thematic priorities.





Deeper Analysis & Focus Of The Position Paper

In this paper, Locally Led Development was framed to increase the legitimacy and effectiveness of development interventions. Beyond its limited use in the development space, the term has gained traction in its application to broadly cover the development sector. Globally, the positive effects of the Grand Bargain narrative have triggered a shift in the rhetoric of international policymakers towards the inclusion of local communities and local CSOs in decision-making processes. The Locally Led Development process thus recognizes, respects, and strengthens the leadership and capacity of local authorities and local civil society in development processes to better address the needs of target communities .

The idea behind locally led development is that aid work should be locally led, enabling communities to be the drivers behind the programs and services that support their own needs. This paper, therefore, contends that the locally led development agenda is closely interlinked with the decolonization conversation in the broad spectrum of development aid. It exists alongside a broader global movement toward anti-racism and decolonization, seeking to identify and eliminate the power imbalances that govern international relations.

Although locally led development is a necessary technical step in the decolonization process, it may only tackle its symptoms and not its root causes. In fact, one major critique of the locally led development agenda is its failure to tackle the root structural issues responsible for the existing power imbalances within the current system of development financing . Therefore, locally led development is an approach that places local actors, community organizations, local governments, and civil society at the heart of decision-making processes.





Locally Led Development In Civic Space

Local community actors, including civil society organizations, community groups, and local governments, take the lead in identifying and addressing development needs within their communities in upholding Local Led Development.

While utilizing the available civic space to advocate for their priorities, their active participation in decision-making processes is key rather than relying solely on external actors to dictate development agendas. For actors in civic space to achieve the benefits of locally led development, there are key aspects that need to be consciously taken into consideration including.

- **Community ownership:** Local communities actively define their own development priorities and strategies, drawing on their unique knowledge and experiences.
- **Civic engagement:** Citizens being able to utilize platforms like public meetings, protests, advocacy campaigns, and community forums to voice their concerns and influence policy decisions.
- **Capacity enhancement:** Local organizations and communities are empowered through training and support to develop leadership skills and effectively manage development initiatives.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Local actors are held accountable to their communities through open communication and participatory monitoring mechanisms.
- **Collaboration:** Partnerships between local government, civil society organizations, and private sector entities are fostered to leverage diverse expertise and resources.:
- **Freedom of expression:** A robust civic space allows communities to openly discuss issues, criticize government policies, and advocate for change.
- **Collective action:** An enabling civic space allows communities to organize and mobilize to address shared concerns.
- **Representation:** By actively participating in decision-making processes, local communities can ensure their needs are adequately considered.

Despite the enablers that have made locally led development in civic space to thrive, there are limitations that counter its progress which needs to be addressed, for instance, **Political constraints:** Restrictive laws or government practices can limit civic engagement and participation. **Capacity deficits:** Local organizations may lack the necessary skills and resources to effectively lead development initiatives, **social inequality:** Unequal power dynamics within communities can hinder marginalized groups from fully participating.

Findings from regional consultations on **Locally Led Development**



Before consultations commenced, the initiative mapped out a wide range of local actors, identifying: 128 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), 87 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), 4 Private Sector Organizations. This diverse group represents the rich fabric of grass-roots initiatives working to drive positive change. The project's geographical reach spans the entire country, with focus areas in Acholi, East, Central, Elgon, Karamojja, Lango, Teso, West Nile, Western and Southwestern regions.

During regional consultation meetings, Karamojja was represented by 23 actors (11 CBOs, 1 local government, civil society actors 4, and 7 National NGOs), Eastern and east central sub region were represented by 24 actors (10 CBOs, civil society actors 4, 1 local government, 7 National NGOs , 1 private sector and a religious institution), South western sub region was represented by 23 actors (5 CBOs, civil society actors 5, 3 local government and 10 National NGOs), Western sub region was represented by 20 local actors (8 CBOs, 7 civil society actors, 3 local government, 2 National NGOs, Acholi and Lango sub regions were resented by 24 local actors (7 CBOs, 2 local government, 2 civil society actors, 1 INGO and 12 national NGOs) and West Nile sub region was represented by 25 local actors (14 CBOs, civil society actors 2, 2 local government and 7 National NGOs) as illustrated in the map below.

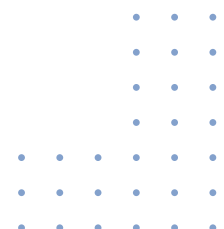
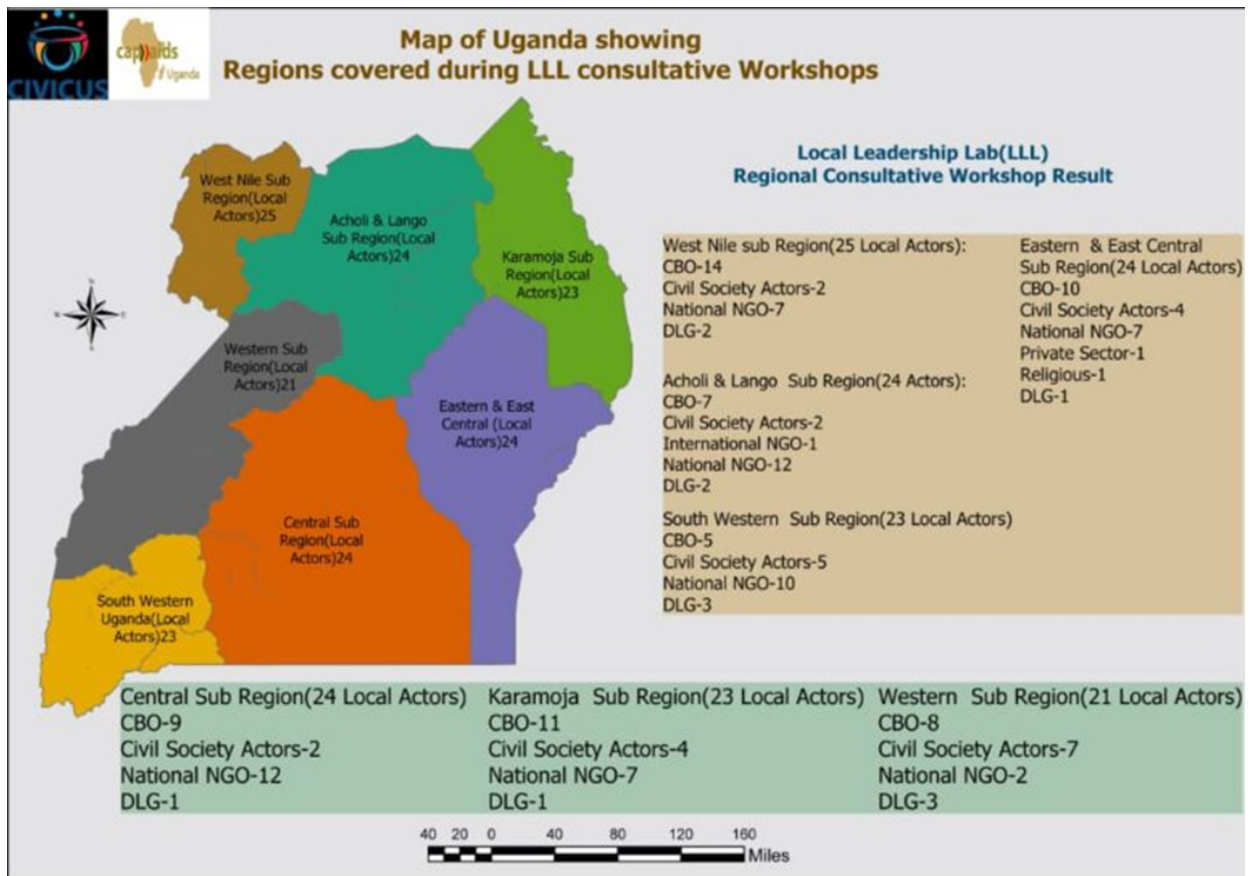




Figure 1:
A map of Uganda showing regions covered during LLL project consultations



A synthesis of emerging issues and gaps by CSOs, civic networks, district and local leaders

Drawing from the perspectives of consultative meetings with local and national civil society actors, local governments, networks, media and the author's first-hand experience within the Ugandan NGO landscape, below is a synthesis of issues emerging from seven sub regions of Karamoja, West Nile, Eastern, Northern, Southwest, Western and central Uganda.

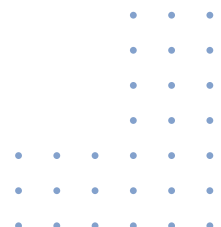


Table 1:

Highlights a synthesis of major six (6) emerging issues across the seven sub-regions

| Issues | Emerging gaps / situation | Proposed strategies for address them |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| <p>Nature of funding:</p> | <p>Stringent / conditional/ restricted or tied funding where donors are willing to disburse funds with predetermined priorities to local organizations.</p> <p>Most donors / intermediaries provide activity based and annual Funding, which does not allow room for administration and operational costs to be provided.</p> <p>Misconception of most donors / intermediaries about Western Uganda as a developed region on matters of governance, accountability and poverty</p> <p>Limited Funding to core projects within the organizations.</p> | <p>Involvement of local LNAs at proposal development and encourage donors' flexibility. Donors / intermediaries should practice joint planning (co-design), co-creation of projects since local communities understand their challenges and are able to identify appropriate interventions.</p> <p>Donors / intermediaries should provide multi-year funding to help in tracking progress and building the capacity and credibility of organizations. On the other hand, local actors should negotiate and justify to donors the need to finance operational and cost recovery costs</p> <p>Working in consortiums within the different regions builds local actors' capacities to bargain for realization of meaningful funding</p> <p>Since different regions suffer different development issues and have different development priorities, conducting evidence-based research and documentation through grassroots advocacy would be a solution</p> <p>Developing Self-sustaining plans and projects by diversifying funding such as local fundraising / philanthropy and establishing local enterprises to ensure sustainability.</p> |

| Capacity gaps | Emerging gaps / situation | Proposed strategies for address them |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Nature of funding:</p> | <p>Limited fundraising capacities of local actors</p> <p>Limited capacity for the local actors to negotiate, making them vulnerable to exploitation from the donors.</p> <p>Limited capacity of the Board members to raise local resources that ensure the smooth running of the organization.</p> | <p>Capacity enhancement of LNAs in local resource mobilization, donor relationship building, Negotiation for the right funding.</p> <p>LNA should focus on their field of expertise and mandate, develop sustainability plans and local resource mobilization strategies</p> <p>Local actors should exercise a high level of integrity, transparency and accountability.</p> |
| <p>Compliance requirements and shrinking civic space</p> | <p>Government registration bureaucracies and restrictions are overwhelming for local and national actors to comply with.</p> <p>Policies that limit the operational freedom of organizations, particularly during critical periods such as elections.</p> <p>Stringent operational environment for LNAs. (ever changing requirements and in most cases very difficult to observe). This restricts operations of many LNAs.</p> | <p>LNAs should strive to comply to ensure their existence.</p> <p>Engaging in regular evidence-based dialogue meetings with government officials and local authorities to discuss compliance challenges, restrictive policies, and bureaucratic hurdles. This helps in advocating for reforms and smoother processes.</p> <p>Actively involving stakeholders, including LNA, civic networks, and local leaders, in decision-making processes and policy discussions. This ensures their concerns are heard and addressed, fostering transparency and collaboration.</p> <p>Awareness creation and government should Harmonize compliance requirements at all levels with relevant stakeholders.</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Limited transparency and accountability of LNAs to local governments</p> | <p>Limited involvement of Local government in planning and budgeting process of donor funded projects.</p> <p>Limited Transparency in terms of budgets and accountability to the local government.</p> <p>No clear definition of Local government roles and responsibilities during project design and implementation.</p> | <p>Involvement of local government in the planning and budgeting process of donor funded projects by LNAs.</p> <p>LNAs should share project budgets with local government leadership.</p> <p>LNAs should ensure specification of different roles and responsibilities of different local Government actors in the implementation of projects.</p> <p>Strengthen District Non-Governmental Organization Monitoring Committees (DNMCs) and local platforms that bring all stakeholders together in respective districts or regions</p> |
| <p>Limited Trust by donors to LNAs</p> | <p>The LNAs are always looked at as limited and wanting in compliance.</p> <p>International organizations are now registering as local entities overshadowing local and national actors</p> <p>Some donors / intermediaries have continued to work with specific individuals and organization which discourages growth of other organizations (Funding Modalities – suffocation in implementation, unhealthy competition)</p> | <p>LNAs should improve systems for transparency such as financial system, conduct audit and demonstrate impact for the resources provided. Make use of social media and develop websites.</p> <p>Coordination meetings among local and national actors, local governments and development partners to separate roles and address the gaps including dashboards to track INGOs & Local actors in practice.</p> <p>Donors / intermediaries should continuously map and update list of LNAs they can work with</p> <p>Improve the compliance levels both internal and external</p> <p>Increase visibility of LNAs</p> |

Limited visibility of LNAs' brands and acknowledgement during reporting to donors

Donors/INGOs should demonstrate transparency and equity at all levels

Understanding funding quality, donor -partner relationship, local challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations

This section highlights the quality of funding and donor-partner relationships, local challenges, opportunities and recommendations faced by LNAs across the seven sub regions of Karamojja, West Nile, Eastern, Northern, Western, Southwest, Central and among 5 key populations.

Quality of funding and donor-partner relationships:

The major objective set by the humanitarian community during the Grand Bargain was to increase funding to local and national actors to 25% "as directly as possible" to advance locally led development by 2020. However, this goal, to date, has not been achieved. Most donors still face significant political, legal and administrative barriers to achieving this commitment . Moreover, commitment has been lowered to 25% of funding reaching local actors directly or through a single intermediary, measuring it and reporting on it.

Quality funding and participation remains a key focus for Grand Bargain in advancing locally led development. During the launch of **Grand bargain National Reference Group (NRG)** in Uganda held on 11th September 2024 whose objective was to enhance accountability among Grand Bargain signatories in fulfilling commitments and to foster discussions on key priorities such as quality funding, equitable partnership and humanitarian peace development nexus.

Dr. Moses Isooba the executive director Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF) addressed the nuances in flexible funding and its relationship with local resources in what he referred to as "*warm and cold money*". He shared his experience of working with established locally led networks that have secured quality funding, such as the RIAMI RIAM Civil Society Network in Karamojja. "*We as CSOs have become accustomed to a starving lifestyle, where we receive small amounts of funding. We need to address both quality and quantity funding.*"
Dr. Moses Isooba.

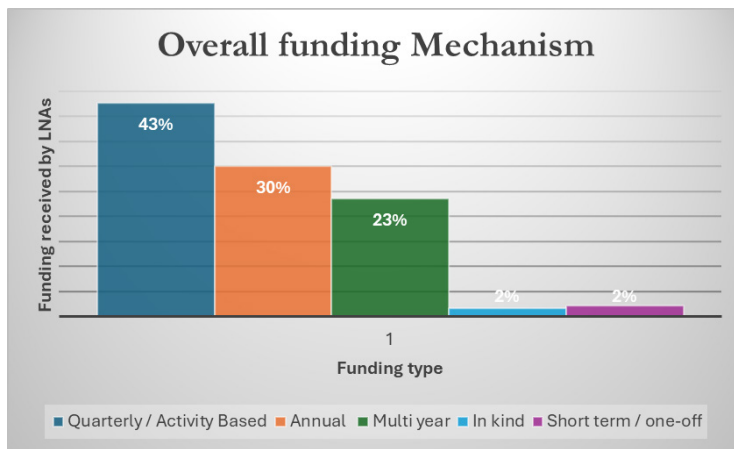
Dr. Moses Isooba emphasized that quality funding must also consider quantity. He made it clear that localization is not about reducing or cutting funding. He advocated for what he called the "vaccine approach"—multi-year, direct, unrestricted funding that ensures sustainability. In contrast, he criticized the "paracetamol approach," which focuses on short-term funding with more attention paid to compliance mechanisms than the actual funding itself.

He stressed that localization cannot succeed when current funding relationships are based on control and mistrust, with INGOs bearing the burden of proving themselves. Instead, equitable partnerships should be built on trust and mentorship. Dr. Isooba encouraged local actors to take steps to build trust and for INGOs and donors to change their attitudes toward local actors, viewing them not as risks but as partners in sharing risks.

From the consultations, the situation on the quality of funding, partnership mechanisms and the level of participation of Local and National actors in designing, implementation of projects / programs was explored. This was in all the seven sub regions of Karamojja, West Nile, Eastern, Northern, Western, Southwest, Central and among the marginalized groups.



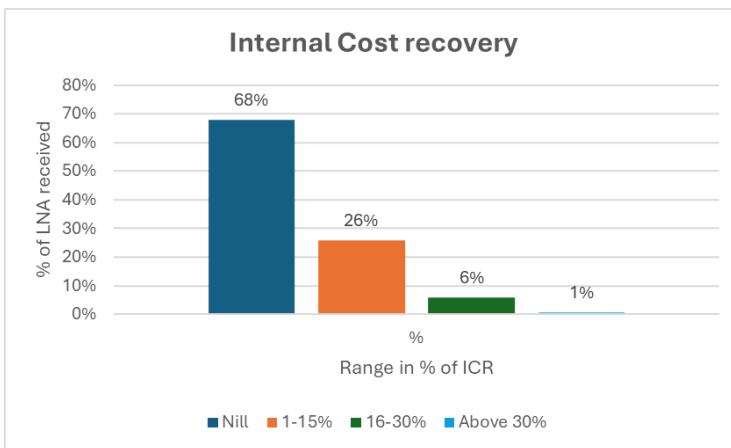
Figure 2:
Showing an analysis of funding mechanisms across the seven regions & 5 key populations



According to the findings, 43% of funding is activity based or quarterly based, while 30% funding is annual and 23% multi-year funding. In the West Nile where humanitarian assistance is on the rise, an observation of 2% funding was one-offs / short term and 2% in-kind was realized in Karamojja and central sub regions respectively. Activity based and annual funding falls short of parameters of quality funding which is flexible, multiyear and direct funding to LNAs. It is worth noting that 23% are providing multi-year funding, which is a positive decision by donors towards localization.

The northern sub region is the worst performing since 6 out of 30 (20%) local organizations receive quarterly / activity-based funding while only 1 (3%) receive annual funding. However, none received multi-year funding, in kind or short-term funding

Figure 3:
Showing the analysis of Internal Cost recovery (ICR)



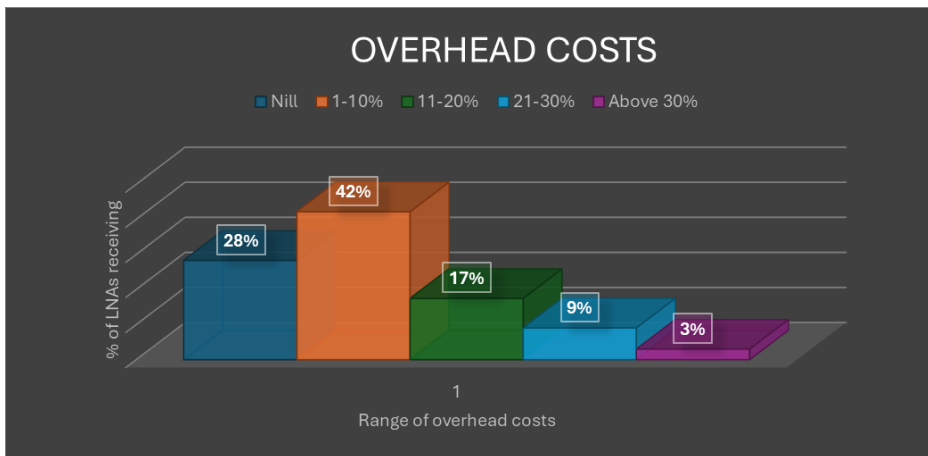
According to the findings, 68% of local actors do not receive internal cost recovery or institutional support from donors, 26% receive between 1-15%, 6% between 16-30 while 1% receive above 30%. The worst region is Karamojja sub region. Out of 37 donors, 27 (73%) don't provide any of these costs, followed by West Nile, central, southwest, however, Western and Eastern sub regions receive between 1-15%.

One of the female CSO leaders in Karamojja sub region said, "some

donors come with pre-determined activities and ask you to mobilize, use your printers, staff, and equipment including office space and they facilitate you with 50,000 UGX (14-USD) for mobilization. These kinds of donors do not avail funds to address the community needs rather to manage their burn-rate". This illustrates the fact that the burden is still on the local actors to find a way of sustaining their organizations in most regions.



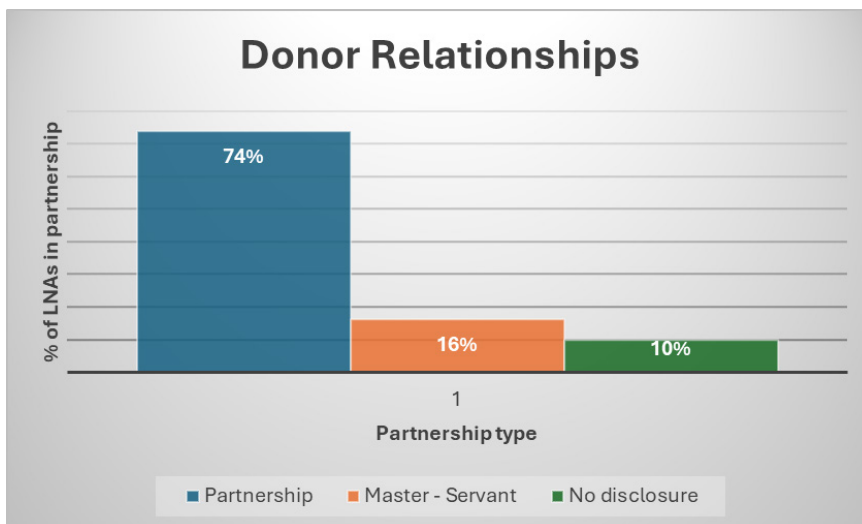
Figure 4:
Showing the analysis of Overhead Cost Received by Local Actors



The findings show that 42% of local and national actors receive overhead costs ranging from 1-10%, 17% receive between 11-20%, while 9% receive between 21-30% and 3% receive above 30%. It's worth noting that 28% of the actors do not receive any overhead costs. These findings mean that while majority of the donors are meeting the operational costs below 10%

to enable the execution of activities it is low to maintain the organization afloat. It's observed that 28% do not even provide the overhead cost, which is absurd!

Figure 5:
Showing an analysis of Donor relationships with LNAs



Findings in figure 5 show that 74% of donor -LNAs relationships are partnerships and local actors feel respected, while 16% relationships are master-servant relationships where the donors impose terms and conditions for local actors to obey. 10% of local actors could not disclose their relationship due to fear. This shows the inferiority complex they have and their inability to engage with their donors. It is also possible that they could be implementing donor-imposed activities outside their own scope.

Karamoja sub region

The regional consultations were inclusive and targeted local actors in the 9 districts of Karamoja.

21 participants (15 Male, 06Female) from different organizations attended. 5 local actors operating in Napak, 5 local actors in Moroto, 3 local actors in Kotido, 6 local actors in Nakapiripirit, 4 local actors in Abim, 4 local actors in Nabilatuk, 2 local actors in Amudat, 4 local actors in Kabong and 4 local actors operate in Karenga. In terms of formation and representation of local actors, there was one CSO Network, ten NGOs, Six CBOs, One Media, One Faith Based Organization.

Quality funding in Karamoja Sub region

Findings show that some donors have encouraged co-creation right from ideation during proposal writing to project implementation. It is worth noting that some donors like Royal Danish Embassy, UNDP, UNNGOF, Welthunger Hilfe and DCA have intentionally provided more that 15% even up to 50% to operational costs. However, there is a need for improvement especially since most donors do not involve the LNAs in strategy and proposal development. The top-bottom approach is often preferred with directives on the area of intervention by donors. It is important that funding is allocated to address the community gaps and needs, for these are aligned with the districts' development priorities which can be sustained after the project exits.

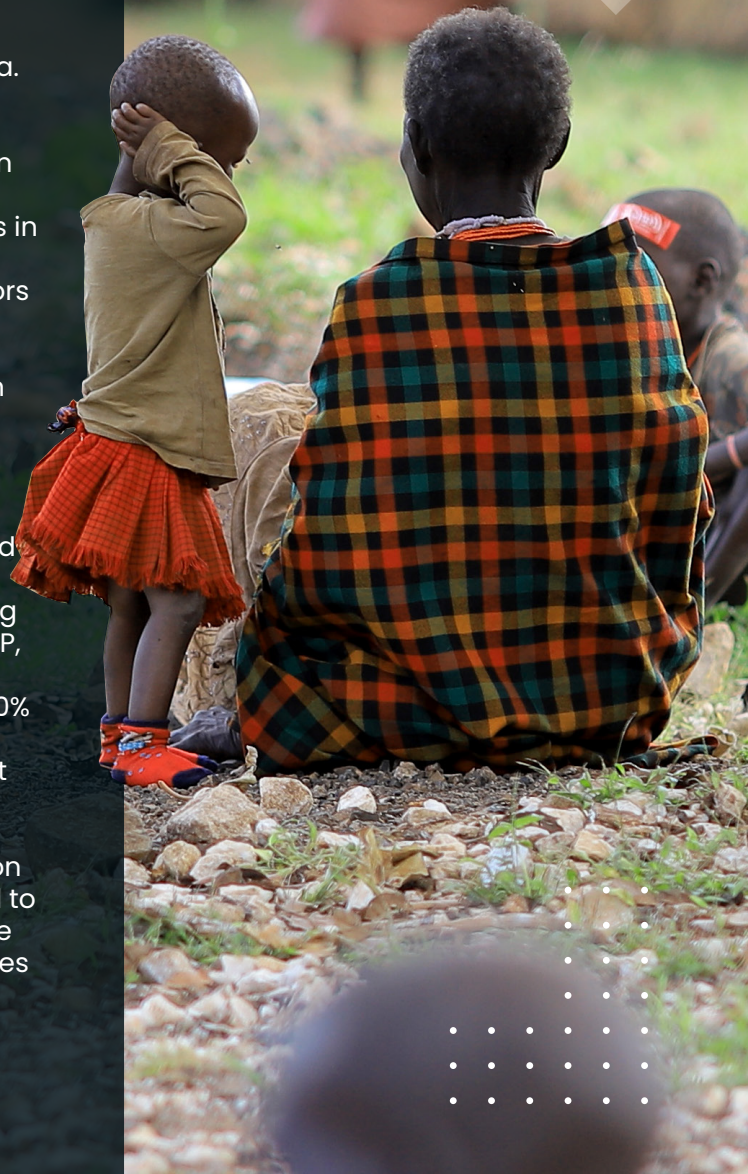
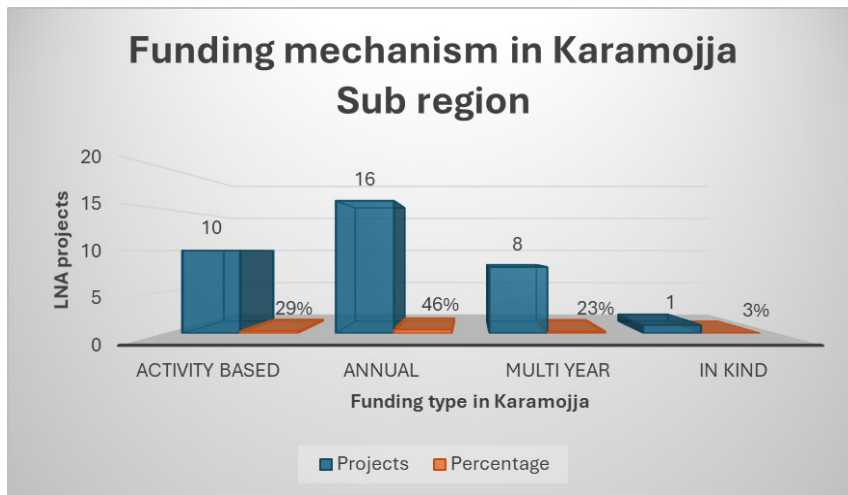




Figure 6:
Showing funding mechanisms in Karamoja Sub region

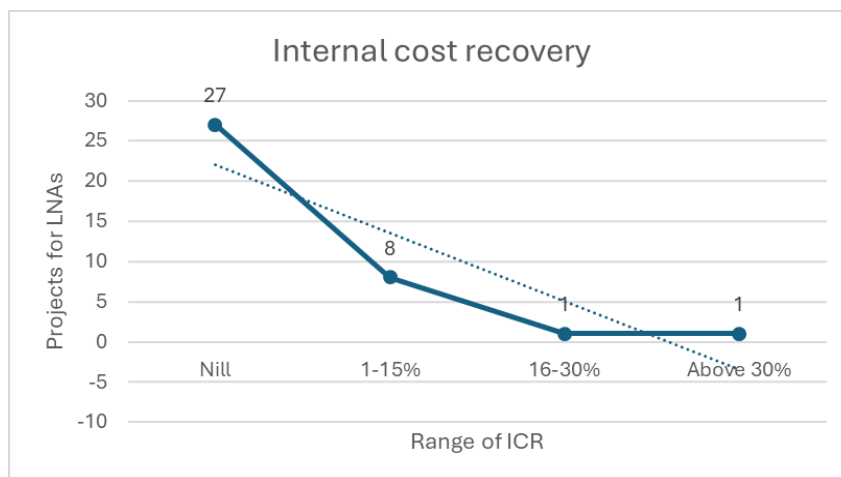


Findings show that the funding mechanism in the region for local actors is mainly annual at 46%, while others receive activity base funding at 29%, 1% receive in kind and 23% of local actors receive multiyear funding. Considering the vulnerability and remoteness of the sub region, this trajectory should be improved towards more multi-year funding for local actors to be in position to enhance their capacity and respond to the needs of the community.

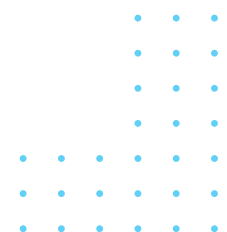
Internal cost recovery in Karamoja sub region

It was also observed that some donors are appreciated for promoting co-creation and empowering local actors in the region. A CSO leader from RIAMI RIAM said, *'Some donors like Royal Danish Embassy, UNDP, UNNGOF, Welthunger Hilfe and DCA have intentionally provided more than 15% even up to 50% to operational costs'*. This is a good gesture in promoting locally led development and sustainability of local and national actors.

Figure 7:
Showing internal recovery costs in Karamoja sub region



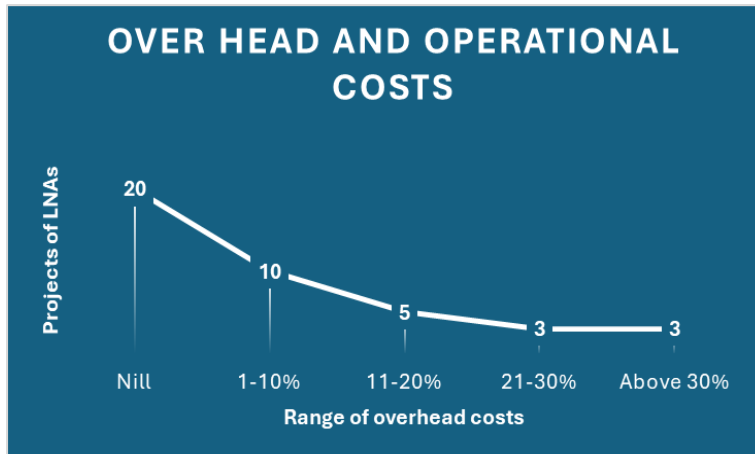
Findings show that out of the 37 projects in Karamoja sub region, 27 (73%) did not provide any internal cost recovery while 8 (22%) provided between 1- 15%, 1(3%) donor provided 16-30% while 1(3%) donor provided above 30%. This implies that local actors cannot sustain their work beyond the life of project and build their institutions to be fit for purpose.





Overhead and Operational costs in Karamoja sub region

Figure 8: Showing overhead and operation costs for Karamoja sub region



Out of 41 projects in the sub region, 10 (27%) receive overhead costs ranging from 1-10% - 5 (14%) projects, 11-20%, 3 (8%) projects receive overhead costs ranging from 21 - 30% and above 30% respectively. Further findings reveal that 20 (54%) projects did not receive any overhead costs in Karamoja sub region. This is unfortunate considering the efforts and commitments LNAs put in while delivering project results which impact negatively on project sustainability.

Recommendations from Karamoja sub region are:

- Development partners should facilitate more space between the donor community and the DNMCs. This interface will be important in capturing further the interests and needs of the local people. A case in point is the Royal Danish Embassy which made consultations with LNA during a call for proposal. As a result, they created two separate calls for proposals, one for the sub national level actors which were later referred to as the minor project and another for the national actors which were later referred to as the Major. Indeed, Karamoja local actors such as RIAMI RIAM and WECISNET in West Nile among others received grants directly from donors, particularly RDE without intermediaries. This platform creates an interface where the donors will be advised on the priorities of development challenges in Karamoja region.
- Enhance the capacities of and orient the NGO monitoring committee to play their role of coordination and oversight of LNA's operations in the districts. These offices are enabling the sustainability of the projects since they are the spokespersons for the NGOs. Once they are aware of the priorities of the local actors, they are better positioned to brand and make projects visible.
- The donor community to engage with Network organizations / platforms such as RIAMRAIM as a coordinating CSO network in designing, comprehension and monitoring the interventions in Karamoja, since it is the regional agency that coordinates all the CSOs. As local actors, they do understand the contextual issues, challenges, opportunities etc. This will reduce funding-failed projects and have value for money.
- The Voice: There is a Karamoja Donor Working Group, which discusses issues that affect the region and plans for the development of the region yet there is no local actor voice representation. Although there are intermediaries who represent the locals, it's important that the voices of the local actors are present to articulate the priorities of the region.



Donor asks from Karamoja

- Long term support (multi-year programs and flexibility in funding)
- Increase capacity building of NGOs and CSOs in the sub region.
- Increase funding quality for local actors and organizations (Grants, overhead costs and Internal control costs be addressed)
- Strengthen partnerships, coordination with other CSOs and government.
- Donors to have a sustainability strategy for the local organizations.



Northern sub region

This region is on positive recovery trajectory from civil war which lasted for over a decade in the early 1990's. A lot of aid and humanitarian assistance was invested into this region while responding to the crisis. This was majorly by INGOs, government, local and national actors.

During the consultation meetings, 30 local actors (13 Male, 17 female) participated representing Acholi and Lango sub region. Several challenges were highlighted including Inadequate funding by LNA to sustain operations, shortage of skilled personnel and capacity gaps within CSOs such as financial management hindering effective program implementation and organizational growth. There are high expectations from project participants (beneficiaries) since they are used to handouts. The shrinking Civic Space such as increasing restrictions and regulations that impede the activities and advocacy efforts of CSOs and civic networks.

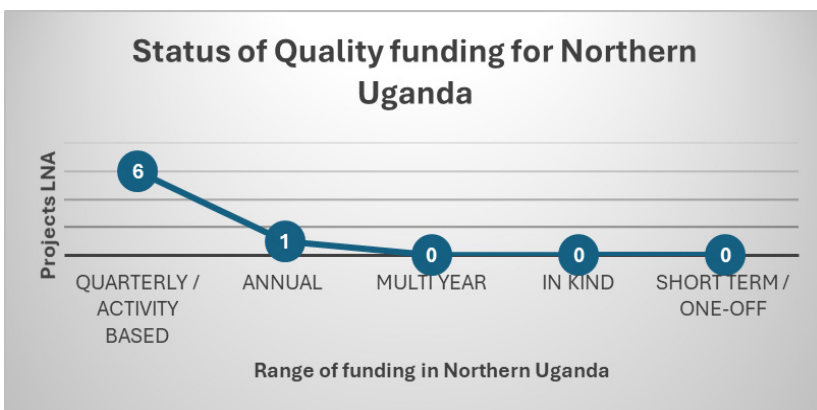




Status of funding mechanism in Northern Uganda

Well as other regions were freely sharing information, the Northern region held back vital information especially on funding mechanisms and partnership relation with donors. This could be because they are not empowered enough to negotiate and engage with donors in a meaningful way. While there are several donors in the region, some local organizations such as Noble Community Agency for Peace and Development (NOCAPAD), Keziah Hope for Humanity, Sisters of Hope, and Passion Aid Foundation Africa (PAFA) among others, have neither donors nor witnessed quality of funding. As such, they have no administration costs to cater for operational or overhead costs. Usually, LNAs in the region work with volunteers since they cannot afford to pay for their services and staff.

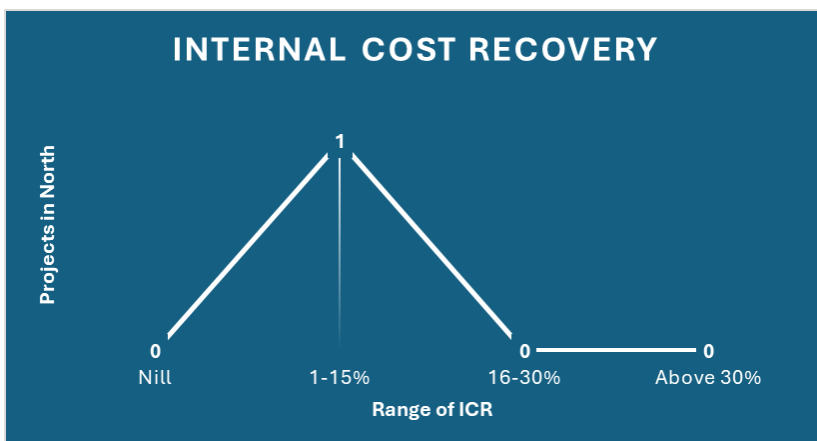
Figure 28: Status of overhead costs for northern Uganda



Findings show that 6 out of 30 (20%) local actor organizations receive quarterly / activity-based funding while only 1 (3%) receive annual funding. However, none received multi-year funding, in kind or short-term funding. This demonstrates low quality funding mechanisms in northern Uganda compared to other regions. Much has been done by LNAs to advocate for change funding by donors.

Internal cost recovery

Figure 10: Shows internal cost recovery for northern region

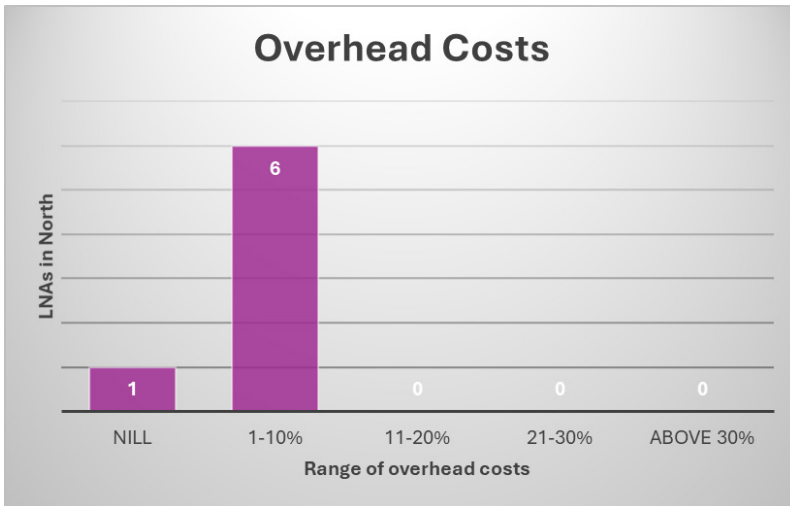


Findings show that only 1 (3%) organization out of 30 received 1-15% of internal cost recovery and there were no organizations that received 16 – 30% and above 30% cost recovery. This situation illustrates a poor operational state of local actors in northern Uganda.



Status of overhead and operational costs in Northern region

Figure 11: Shows the status of overhead costs for Northern region



Findings show that 6 (20%) local actors received 1-10% operational costs, 1 (3%) local actor did not receive any overhead costs while 73% could not disclose their situation.

Opportunities in Northern region

Amidst this miserable operating situation of local actors in the sub regions, there are opportunities they should take advantage of. These include:

- **Local Resource Mobilization:** Tapping into local funding sources, partnerships with local businesses or opinion leaders, and community contributions to enhance financial sustainability.
- **Strengthened capacity to implement projects in consortium.**
- **Readily Available Resources:** Accessing local expertise, infrastructure, and community networks that can support and supplement organizational efforts.
- **Integration of Trending Fundable Projects:** Incorporating emerging priorities like climate change adaptation and mitigation into existing programs to attract funding and address pressing community needs
- **Political Will and Government Support:** collaboration with local governments and policymakers who are supportive of CSO initiatives and willing to advocate for their interests.



Recommendations from Northern Uganda

- Funding: Provide comprehensive funding and limit activity-based funding. Provide direct funding to local CSOs/NGOs and early disbursement of grants
- Donors should provide feedback to LNAs on the proposal submitted
- The donors should utilize Coordinating Structures that exist in Northern sub region for Funding
- Information: CSOs should actively engage with and utilize existing coordinating structures to stay informed about timely funding opportunities and maximize their access to resources.
- Follow compliance with the details and make work visible i.e. develop websites, go digital, and use social media for accessibility.

Major Donor asks from Northern Uganda

- Investment in local resource mobilization and social enterprises, Advocacy and Policy Influence: Urging donors to prioritize funding advocacy efforts aimed at strengthening social enterprise, Local Resource Mobilization, influencing policies and regulations that impact CSOs and civic networks. This includes support for research, coalition-building, and engagement with policymakers.
- Co-creation: Involve local CSOs in designing, engage the donor-working group. Improve the percentage of funding to support sustainability initiatives. Increase support for overhead costs percentages, operational costs percentages and other direct additional costs:
- Promotion of Local Partnerships and Ownership: Emphasizing the importance of supporting local partnerships and fostering ownership of development initiatives by local organizations. This involves funding local NGOs directly, promoting local leadership, and building sustainable partnerships.





Eastern sub region

Being a dynamic region, participants' formation where from CSO networks, 12 NGOs, 7 CBOs, 2 operating as CBOs yet registered as NGO capacity, 1 FBO, 1 Media, and 3 representatives from the local government. Of these, six were from Busoga region, six from Bukedi, two from Bugisu, nine from Teso region, one from Sebei region, and three representatives from the local governments of Mbale, Tororo and Mbale city

The DCDO Mbale district acknowledged that operating as a local and national actor is difficult and has many problems encountered which sometimes frustrate the interests of the local and national actors. She encouraged the LNAs to ensure they are compliant with regulatory requirements, to constantly interface with the local stakeholders, involve the district actors and work towards ensuring sustainability of the programs.

Well as LNAs appreciated that some donors provide funding for internal cost recovery and overhead cost in addition to long term multiyear funding, majority of the donors prefer direct implementation of projects to empowering and the LNAs to implement. As such, there are limited initiatives to ensure sustainability of organizational functionality.



Figure 12: Highlights funding mechanism distribution in Eastern region

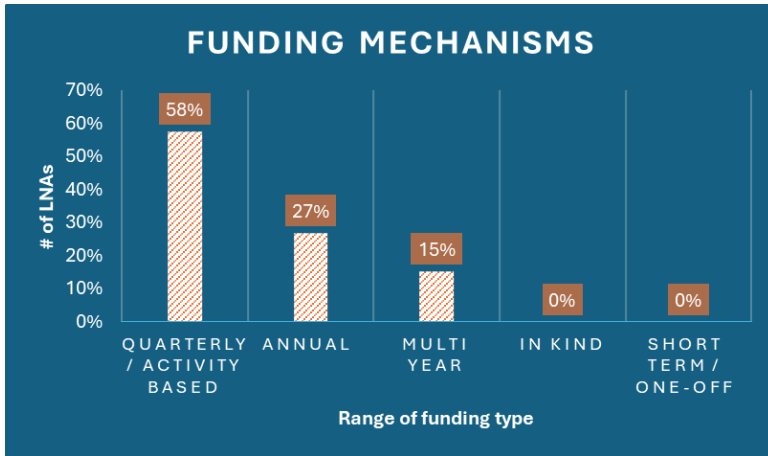


Figure 12 above shows that 58% of LNAs in Eastern region receive activity based / quarterly based funding, 27% receive annual funding while 15% receive multiyear funding. This nature of funding cannot sustain organizations unless there is a deliberate effort to strengthen the capacity of LNAs to be in position to raise more funds to sustain their programs by establishing enterprises or consultancy arms that attract income.

Figure 13: Showing internal recovery costs in Eastern Uganda

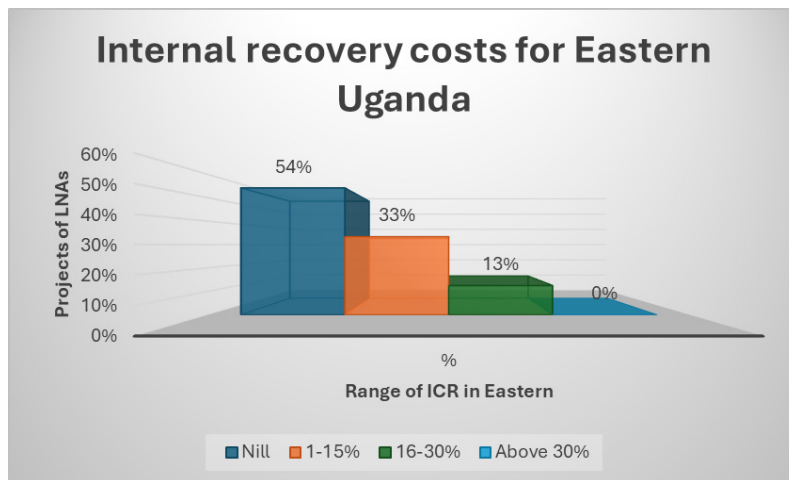


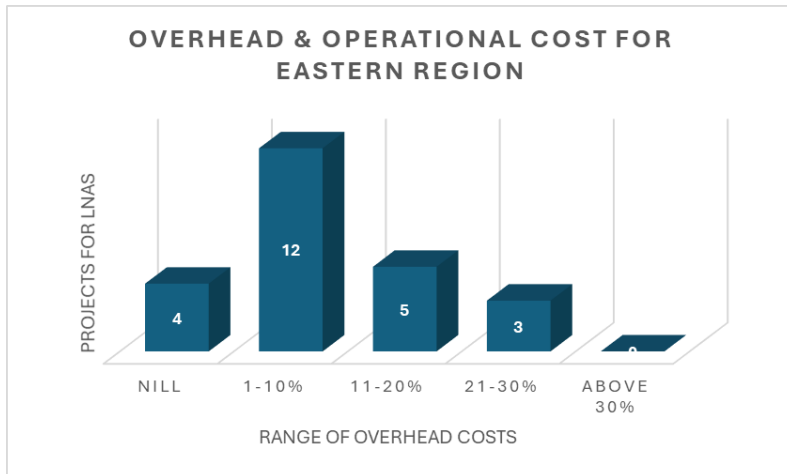
Figure 13 shows that 54% of local actors did not receive any internal recovery costs while 33% received less than 15% and 13% received less than 30%, none received above 30% of the internal cost recovery.





Overhead and operational costs for Eastern region

Figure 14: showing overhead and operational costs for Eastern Uganda



Findings in figure 14 reveal that 12 (50%) local actors received 1-10% overhead and operational costs, while 5 (20%) local actors received between 11-20% and 3 (13%) actors received between 21-30%. It is worth noting that 4 (16%) of local actors did not receive any overhead and operational costs. Further advocacy and donor engagements must be done for improvement in the quality of funding to consider such costs.

The Eastern Region Donor asks:

- Encourage co-designing and implementation of interventions by donors and LNAs.
- Long term - multiyear funding to consolidate and ensure sustainability of results.
- Quality funding with institutional development and operational costs.
- Directly map and work with local actors





Southwest Region



Many issues are affecting the LNAs in Southwestern region and participants from this region were represented by 10 NGOs, 5 CBOs, 5 from the private sector and local government. Issues of concern in the sub region range from Corruption, limited capacity to engage and implement, brain drain for qualified staff, donor interference in the management of the organizations often manifested as micromanagement, limited capacity to comply due to the many and uncoordinated requirements to mention but a few according to participants.

During consultations, Mr. Albert Talemwa Executive Director LOSCOS, HRD Kigezi and Ankole region had this to say:

“A journey of 1000 miles starts with one step, never to despise the days of humble beginnings, the future will assess us on this journey for community transformation. Every Stone thrown in water may not shift the water but will create the wave. Progressive and consistent efforts will get us there; time is always key and staying the course will get us to the much-needed change.”

“The Best person with the right diagnosis is one facing the challenge and this is why the language, and actions must shift to Localization – shifting power to communities because they understand their own context through their local development lens. Consistently there is a shift in development, from Expert Model to Learning Spiral Model that is more grassroots / community focused and sustainable. He spoke.





Overall, the ranking of donors by the local actors was good and moderate. However, there are glaring gaps in capacity to negotiate, appreciate and decide reflected. An indication that the relationship is a master servant as opposed to a partnership relationship. Locally Led Development is yet to take shape.

At the district level, many partners engage the district local authorities on an ad-hoc basis since they are hardly involved in the planning and budgeting processes. Those who involve the LG in the planning processes provide little or no clear definition of Local government roles and responsibilities during project design and implementation and as such, there is limited support

Quality funding in southwest region:

Figure 15: Showing funding mechanism in Southwest Region

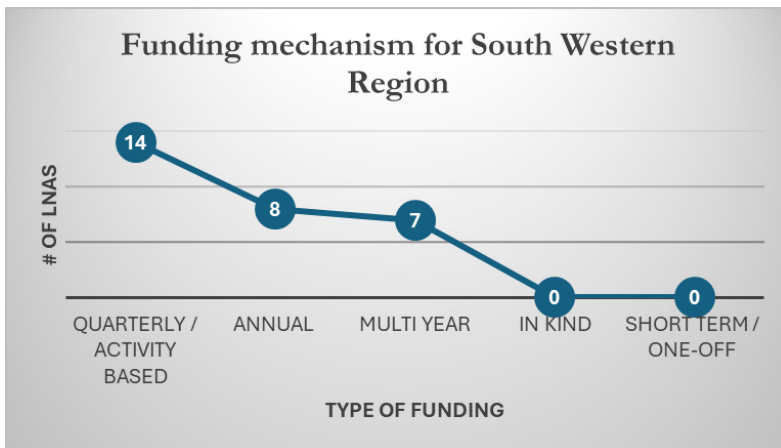
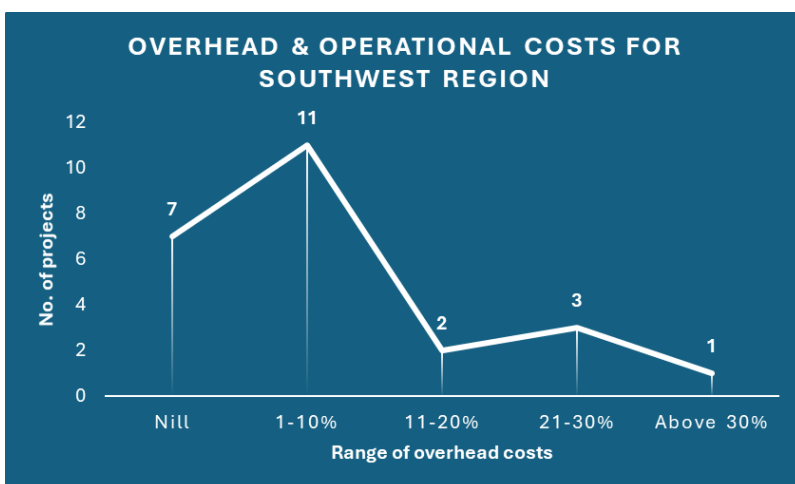


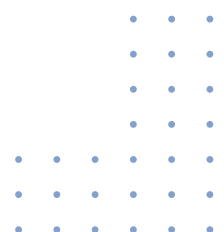
Figure 15 shows that 7 (30%) local actors received multi-year funding, 8 receive annual funding (35%) and 14 (60%) receive funding at quarterly or activity based. Some donors are changing their approach in working and are engaging the local actors directly including the Local Government actors in the implementation. These included CRS, Oxfam, Help-Age international, Action Against Hunger, and Save the Children.

Overhead and operational costs for Southwest Region

Figure 16: Shows overhead and operational costs for southwest region



Findings in figure 16 reveal that 11 (45%) of local actors receive between 1-10% of overhead costs, 2 (8%) receive between 11- 20%, 3 (13%) local actors receive 21-30% and 1 (4%) receives above 30%. This region illustrates a positive trajectory in realizing locally led development. However, 7 (29%) of local actors still do not receive any operational costs.





Status of Internal cost recovery in Southwest region

Figure 17: Shows status of internal cost recovery in Southwest region

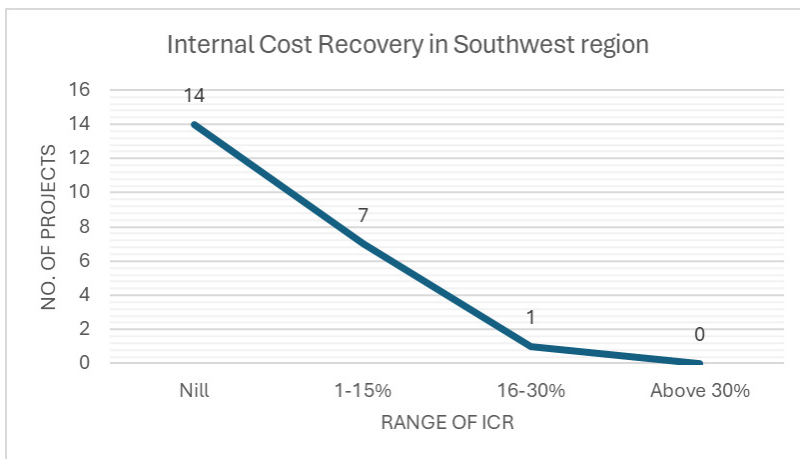


Figure 17 shows that 7 (31%) of projects received internal cost recovery between 1-15%, 1 (5%) project received between 16-30% while none received above 30%. Most of the projects 14 (64%) did not receive any internal recovery costs in the southwest region.





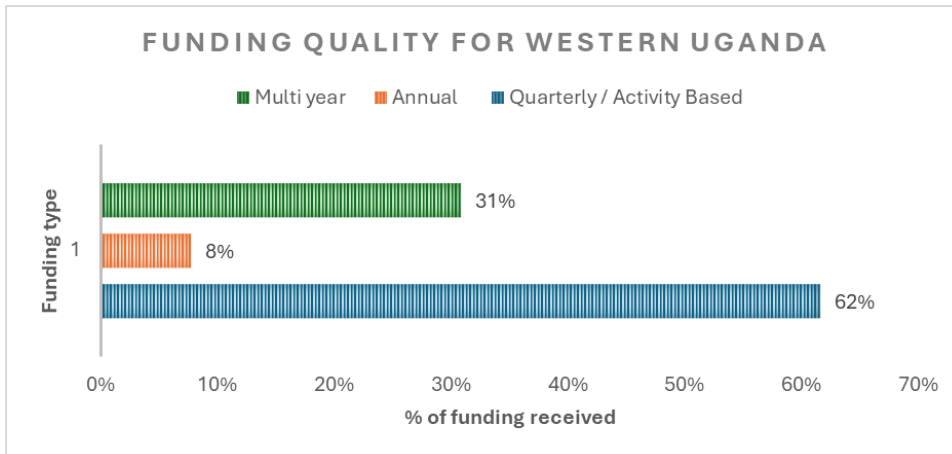
Western Uganda

21 participants (9 female, 12 male) representing NGOs, CBOs, private sector and local government attended the meeting. It was noted that different donors have different interests because each region suffers different development issues and has different development priorities. Conducting evidence-based research and documentation through grassroots advocacy would be a solution. The real problem is at community level where some donors do not conduct needs assessments and as such those projects have become white elephants. It is worth noting that regardless of this situation, the LNAs are passionate and willing to work with donors in realizing their community dreams.





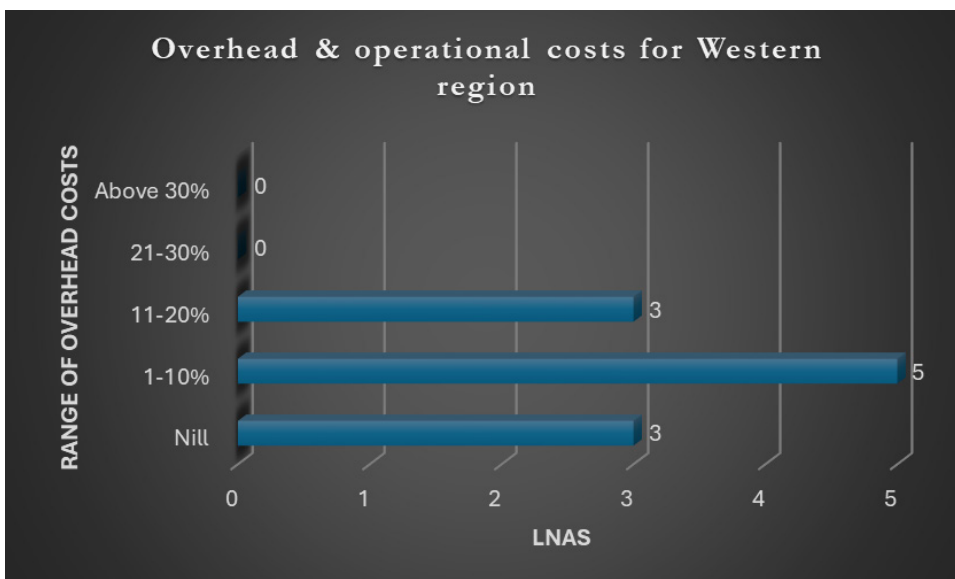
Figure 17: Shows status of internal cost recovery in Southwest region



Findings in figure 18 show that in this sub region, LNAs raised mixed reactions in funding modalities of donors highlighting some form of flexibility and rigidity at the same time, for instance, some of the donors allow addendums and space for discussion and rarely terminate the contracts, these are the 31% for multiyear funding while majority 62% fund activity- based or quarterly. There are a lot of superiority tendencies with some donors over partners because of the Power dynamics.

Overhead and operational costs

Figure 19: Shows the status of overhead and operational costs for western region

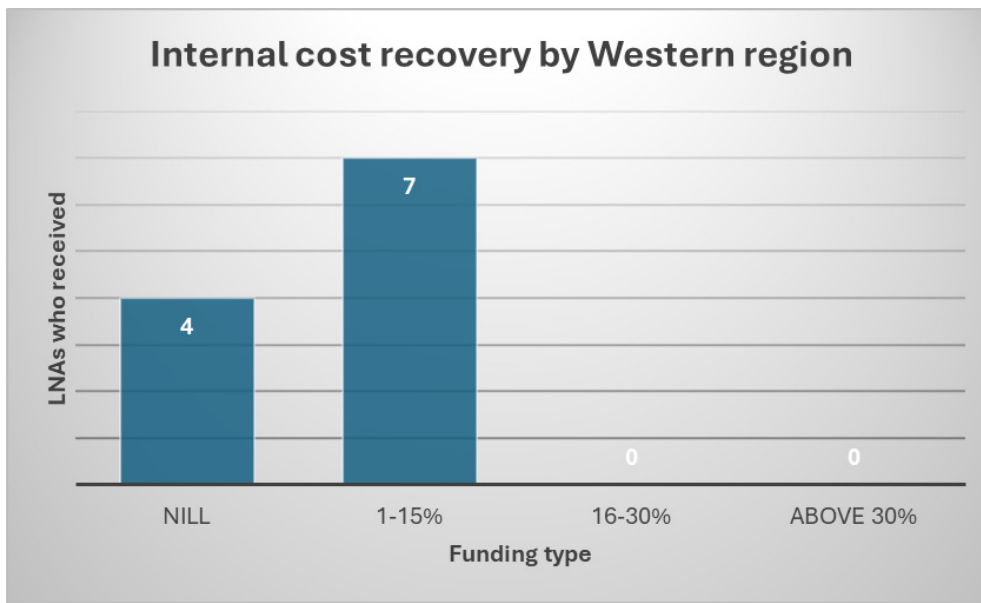


Findings in figure 19 above reveal that 5 (24%) local actors receive between 1-10% of overhead costs, 3 (14%) receive between 11- 20% and none receive between 21-30% and beyond 30% operational costs. It's worth noting that 3 (14%) of local actors still do not receive any operational costs.



Internal cost recovery

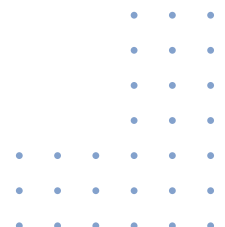
Figure 20: Shows status of internal cost recovery in Western region



Findings in figure 20 reveal that 7 (33%) local actors receive between 1-15% internal cost recovery, and 4 (19%) local actors did not receive any internal recovery costs in Western region. However, a lot of effort must be put in place to increase this trend. Since the cost recovery provided is not enough to build the organizations' capacity to run effectively after the activity project.

Western region Donor asks

- Multiyear funding to create room for implementation, measuring impact and institutional growth.
- Involve local actors at ideation/ creation stages.
- Increase percentage on Administration to at least (30%)
- In the spirit of Locally Led Development, flexibility in the fund access requirements and nature of funding is needed.
- Consider creating a pool of funds to trusted local organizations that can sub grant grassroots organization.



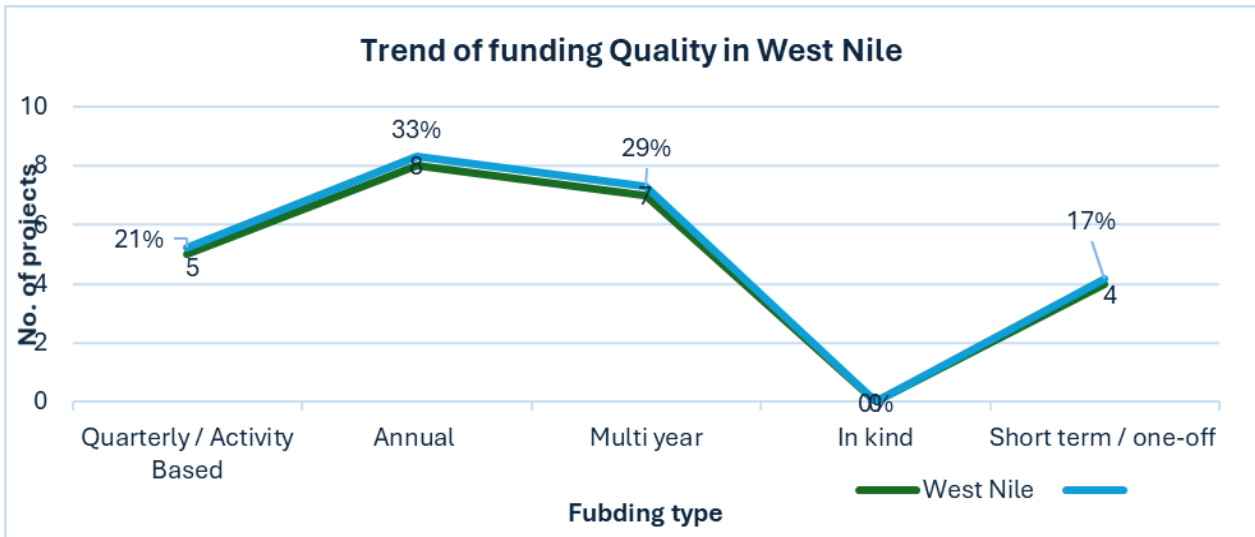
West Nile sub region

In the West Nile, there is limited capacity to attract and manage funding. This is made even worse when very few agencies are willing to implement programs in some districts like Zombo and Nebbi. In addition, delayed disbursement of funds to local actors by donors and when funds are disbursed, there is urgency to implement and account for the funds in a limited but compromising timeframe. This, although is sometimes caused by limited capacity to report to the funders on time, it often leads to quality and capacity compromise. More still, unhealthy competition among CSO networks often manifested through delayed information sharing, negative speeches about other CSOs when opportunity for funding arises, limited coordination, duplication of activities in same communities among others. This is worsened by the INGOs which operate at the community levels. This has led to short-term funding for such CSOs to support their capacity building.





Figure 21: Shows funding mechanism for West Nile region

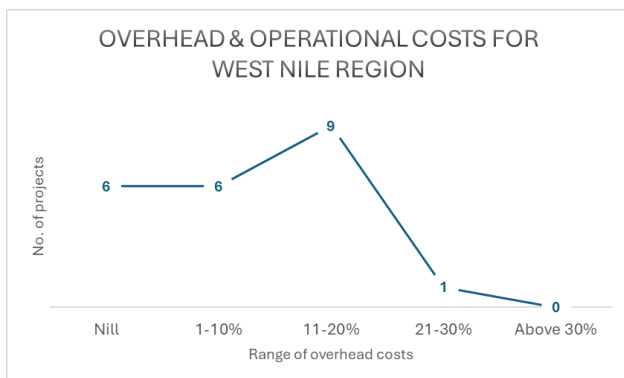


Due to the influx of refugees in the sub region, most donors do direct implementation and if they don't, they provide activity-based funding – 21% and annual funding – 33%. Since the region hosts refugees, one-off funding modalities exist and constitute 17% of the funding. It should be noted that 29% are multiyear funding, which is a good trend in realizing locally led development.

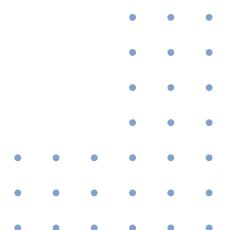
In addition, 35% of LNAs could not disclose the nature of partnership with donors. This illustrates their vulnerability to engage and negotiate with donors. The process of strengthening the capacity of local and national actors should be intentional through a deliberate effort in fostering the locally led development agenda.

Overhead and operational costs

Figure 22: Status of overhead and operational costs in West Nile region



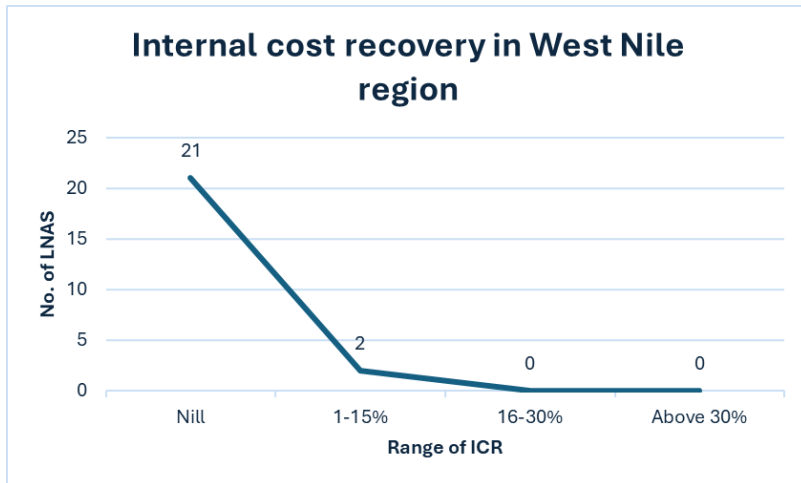
Findings from figure 22 above shows that 9 (39%) local actors received between 11 – 20% of the overhead costs, 6 (26%) received 1-10% while 1 (4%) received between 21-30%. However, 6 (26%) of local actors did not receive any operational costs. This situation calls for intensive engagement and advocacy of donors to improve the funding mechanism.





Status of Internal cost recovery in West Nile

Figure 23: Status of internal cost recovery in West Nile



Findings in figure 23 above reveal that only 2 (9%) of local actors out of 23 received an internal cost recovery between 1-15% and 21 (91%) of them did not receive any cost recovery. This is a bad situation for local actors' operations in the region.

Opportunities

- The presence of Refugees/Migrants: has turned their interventions into humanitarian and easy to access funds from specific humanitarian aid donors, both national, local governments and international organizations.
- Enabling the political environment: There is political will to facilitate and support humanitarian and development initiatives, relative Peace provided to ensure both the host communities, and the refugees are safe
- Existing network memberships like Charter for change (C4C) which is a technical working group which tracks the commitments that INGOs agreed to implement to address imbalances and inequality in the global humanitarian system, WECISNET etc. These have provided resource mobilization and networking opportunities.
- Presence of INGOs: these conduct baselines which are used by local partners to source funds from them, they sometimes recommend the local actors for funding.
- Positive relationship between the Media and the local partners. The media often reports and amplifies the works of the local actors. Local actors often provide first-hand information to the media on matters that affect the beneficiary communities. However, their capacity to report accurate information is critical.
- Presence, existence, and availability of local resources both human and technical. If well capacitated to understand the language of the donors, then local solutions would be a reality.
- Locally Led Development agenda is the trend. This is included in the MoUs signed with the districts and is honored, despite the shortfalls which sometimes make the governments demand for some friendly bribes before the implementation is effective.





West Nile donor asks:

- Increase direct funding percentage to administrative costs. Reduce micromanagement, build trust and disburse money to the INGOs directly.
- Modify the funding approach to multiyear funding. Reduce pilot funding. Be flexible with the funding to cater for capacity building.
- Build capacity of local actors- allocate funds for training the local actors for sustainability purposes.
- Improve CSO coordination, strengthen effective communication by establishing hubs and networks.



Central Region

The Central Region is situated in the heart of Uganda, encompassing the capital city of Kampala and the Kingdom of Buganda. The region is divided into districts, including Kampala, Wakiso, Mukono, Luwero, Mpigi, Masaka, Lwengo and others. The Central Region largely overlaps with the Kingdom of Buganda, one of the ancient African monarchies constitutionally recognized in Uganda. The region is densely populated, with a significant portion of Uganda's population residing here. Many residents in central Uganda are drawn to urban areas for employment opportunities, with agriculture becoming less prevalent as a primary source of livelihood. While Uganda has experienced economic growth, a significant portion of the population continues to live in poverty. The population of the Central Region is diverse, with people from various ethnic and national backgrounds, though Luganda is the most widely spoken language after English. The political environment in Uganda, including the Central Region, is characterized by authoritarianism and restrictions on civil society activism. There are concerns about the government's actions that restrict civil society's voices and action, particularly those dealing with controversial issues like democracy, governance, and human rights.





This region is extremely diverse in composition of LNAs since several actors register as organizations but fail to comply with regulatory frameworks. LNAs are firmer on their principles while engaging with the donors. This is often manifested when they negotiate for realistic funds and their allocation. This trajectory is improving due to improved access to information and services for LNAs. Some INGOs operate as LNAs, and this is because the law authorizes them to implement as local organizations with international affiliation. LNAs coordination must be strengthened to improve in capacity and deliver the locally led development.

Figure 24: Shows the funding mechanism for central region

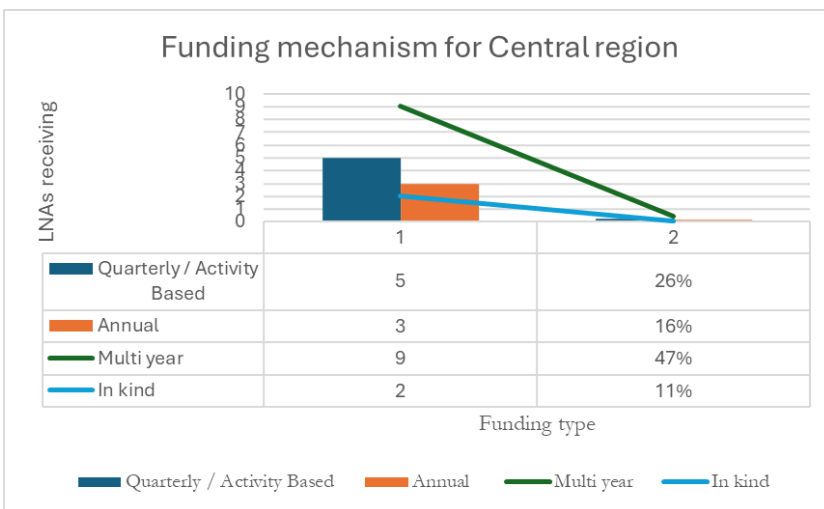
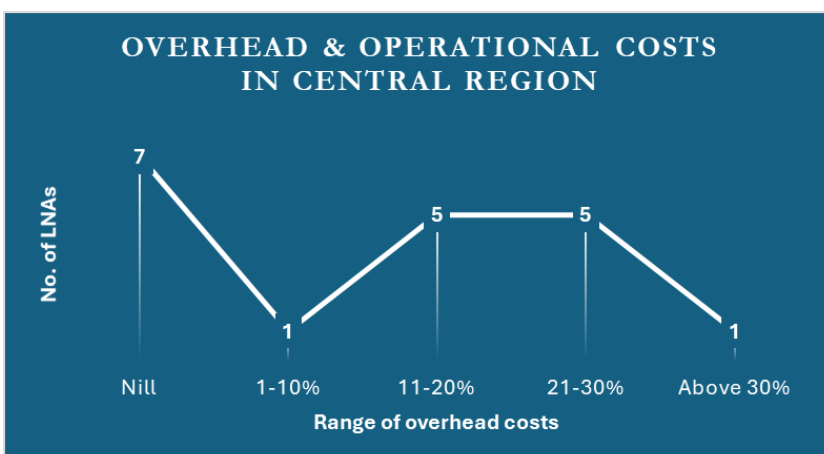


Figure 24 above shows that in central region the majority of LNAs, 47% are receiving multiyear funding, while those who receive activity-based funding are at 26%, 16% receive annual funding and 11% receive in-kind support in the form of membership.

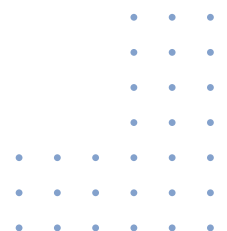
This trajectory highlights that donors find it comfortable to trust and engage with central LNAs for long-term programming due to their proximity for monitoring and support supervision by the donors compared to other regions away from central.

Overhead and operational costs in central region

Figure 25: Shows the overhead and operational costs in central region

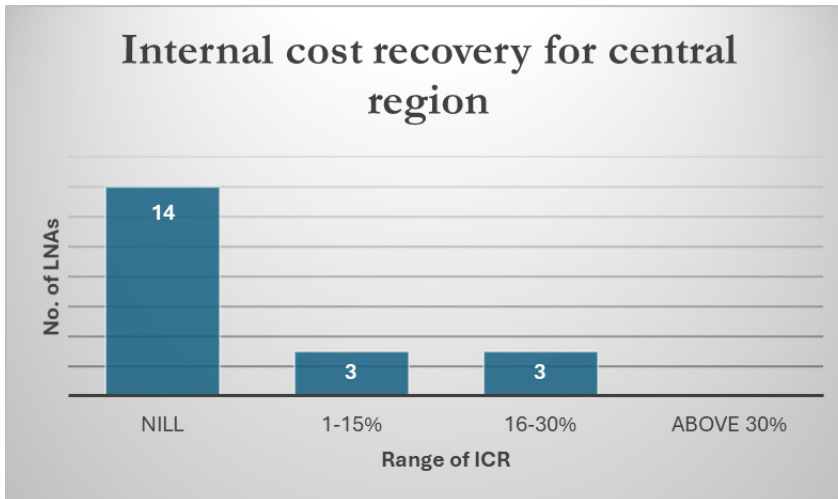


Findings from figure 25 above shows that 5 (26%) local actors received between 11 – 20% of the overhead costs, 5 (26%) received 21-30%, 1 (5%) received between 1-150% while 1 (5%) actor received beyond 30% overhead costs. However, 7 (37%) of local actors did not receive any operational costs. This trend is not so bad compared to other regions but routine engagements with donors should continue.



Internal cost recovery for central region

Figure 26: Shows internal cost recovery for central region



Findings in figure 26 above reveal that 3 (15%) local actors received an internal cost recovery between 1-15% and 16-30% respectively while 14 (70%) actors did not receive any cost recovery. This situation calls for urgent action from local actors.

Central region major donor asks

- Flexible funding/ co-funding
- Facilitate in institutional capacity building.
- Reduce donor funding bureaucracy- relax eligibility criteria by the donor.
- Pool funding through a coordinating agency of local and national actors
- Encourage LNA participate in co creation and designing of programs.



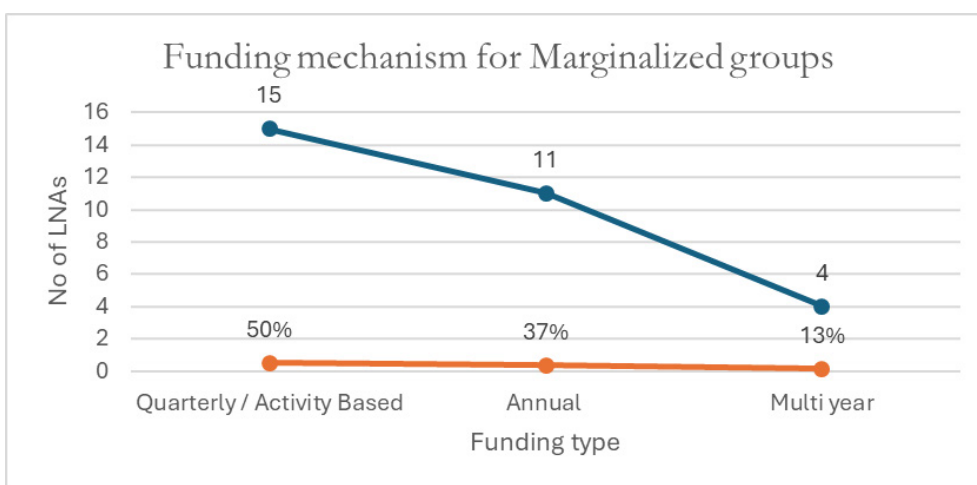
Marginalized Groups



In the extensive consultation, we engaged various stakeholders including Refugee women -led organization, women-led, faith-based, women's rights, youth-led and disability-led, private sector and cultural institutions. Among these were 08 Non-Government Organizations, 04 Community-Based Organizations, 05 Community Faith-Based Organizations at the district level, 02 Companies Limited by Guarantee, 01 media, and 02 cultural institutions.

Funding mechanisms

Figure 27: Highlights funding mechanisms of Marginalized groups



Findings (figure 27) show that even with marginalized groups, the majority of their funding are activity based at 50%, annual funding is 37% while multiyear funding is 13%. Improvement in funding mechanisms should be advocated towards a more sustainable funding mechanism



Donor and local actor's relationship

Figure 28: Shows the donor – local actor's relationship

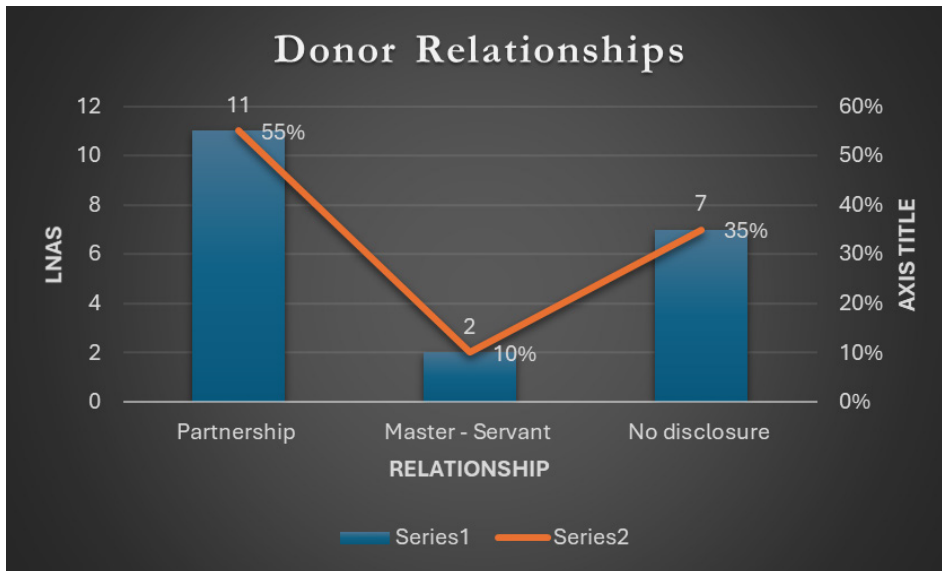
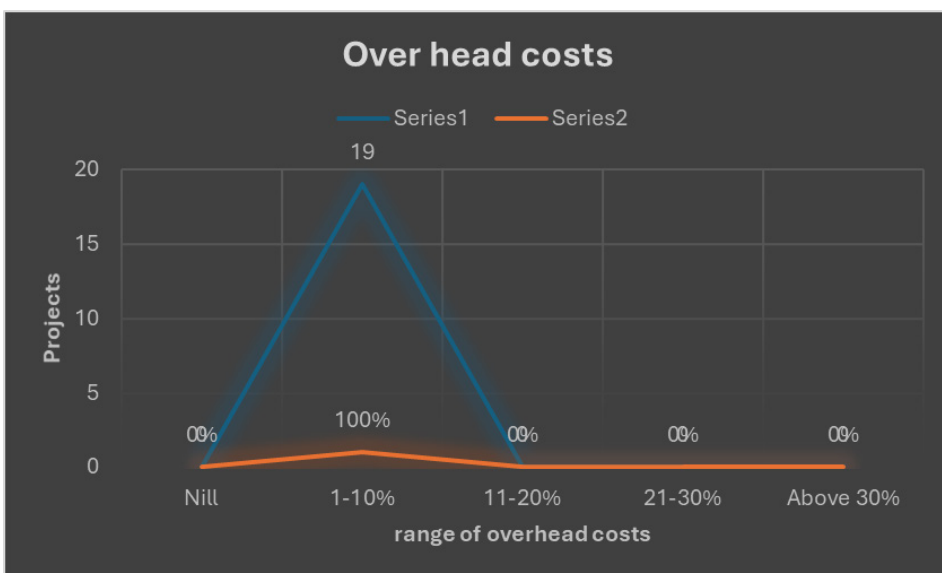


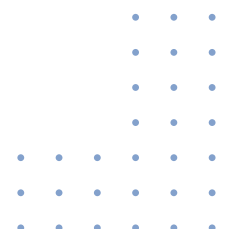
Figure 28 shows that most donor – local actor's relationship is partnership at 55%, while 10% is a master – servant relationship while 35% of local actors could not disclose their relationship with donors.

Overhead and operational costs for marginalized groups

Figure 29: Status of Overhead costs for marginalized



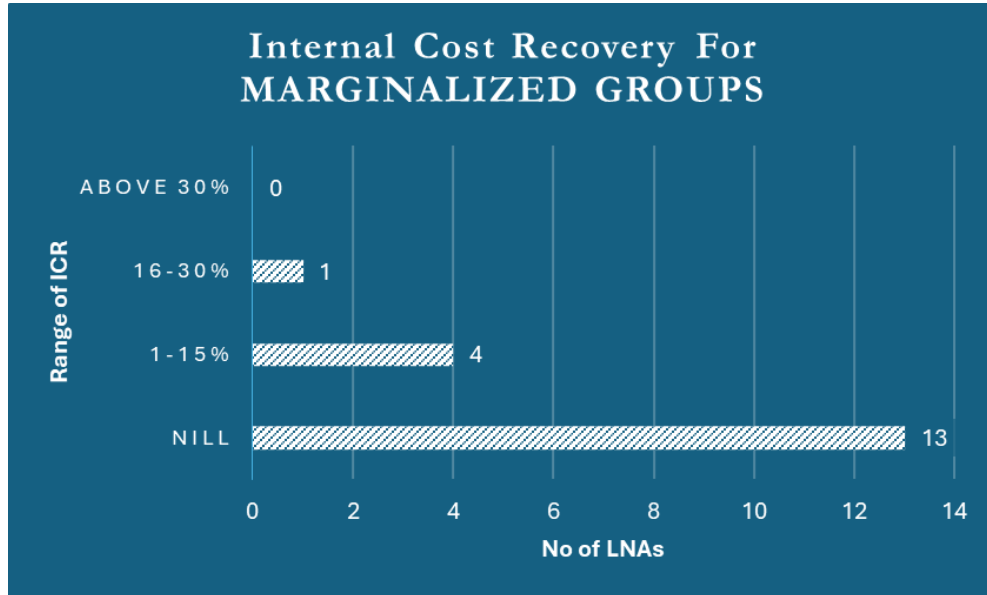
Findings in figure 29 above show that all local actors present received an overhead cost of between 1-15%. Well as this is fair, there is room to push for an increment to sustain the institutions.





Internal cost recovery

Figure 30: Showing status of Internal cost recovery for marginalized groups



Findings in figure 30 above reveal that 4 (22%) of local actors received an internal cost recovery between 1-15%, 1 (6%) received between 16-30% while the majority -13 (72%) actors did not receive any cost recovery. Well as all local actors received overhead costs, the majority did not receive internal recovery costs which should be addressed if we are to realize locally led development in the region

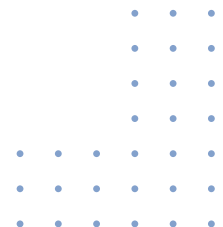




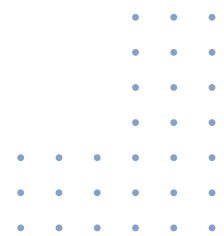
Table 1:

Highlights a synthesis of major six (6) emerging issues across the seven sub-regions

| Category | Key emerging issue | Proposed solution for donor & Actor consideration |
|---|---|--|
| <p>People With Disability Organizations</p> | <p>Dictated needs from the donors</p> <p>Tight donor requirements to access funding</p> <p>Lack of Transparency by the donors - change in program priorities and design during implementation</p> <p>Institutional capacity strengthening initiatives not supported</p> <p>Lack of experiential learning from the donors and the partners</p> | <p>Donors encouraged to adapt co-creation approaches.</p> <p>Relax the funding requirements</p> <p>Encourage open communication with the donors support institutional capacity development</p> <p>Develop initiative to network and learn from other likeminded organizations.</p> |
| <p>Faith Based Organizations</p> | <p>Dictated needs from the donors</p> <p>Tight donor requirements to access funding information of eligibility criteria</p> <p>Lack of Transparency by the donors - change in program priorities and design during implementation</p> | <p>Encourage co creation.</p> <p>Relax the funding requirements</p> <p>Encourage open communication with the donors</p> <p>Encourage bi-lateral discussion between the donors and the actors on funding streams including the operational costs and inter cost recovery costs</p> |



| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | <p>Many donors are willing to fund programs but not overhead costs and internal cost recovery</p> | |
| <p>Women-led refugee Organizations</p> | <p>No overhead costs to cover and internal cost recovery to build capacity of the organization</p> <p>Master - Servant relationship</p> <p>Tight reporting templates and guidelines</p> <p>Tight registration requirements by the government.</p> <p>Dependency syndrome on donor funding</p> | <p>Local Actors and Government should advocate for the allocation of allowable overhead costs and Internal cost recovery percentage</p> <p>Build a trust-based partnership</p> <p>Plan in time, documentation is key to the success of programs</p> <p>Encourage bi-lateral discussion between the government and the actors on registration of refugee organizations</p> <p>Local organizations should develop and establish social enterprises that can sustain their organization programs in case of no funding.</p> <p>Develop local fundraising strategies.</p> |
| <p>Cultural institutions</p> | <p>Lack of respect from the donors.</p> | <p>Since culture is core to the success of programs, the donors should learn to respect, include diverse stakeholders and adapt</p> |



Donor asks from Marginalized groups

- Strengthen the capacity of local actors to implement comprehensive and complex programs.
- Avail co design and co creation spaces for local actors
- Loosen donor requirements and support local actors to establish social enterprises.
- Create safe spaces for dialogues on inclusive funding streams.



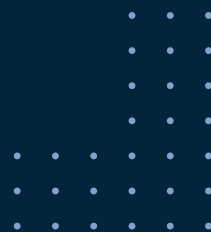


Discoveries During Consultations



- The existence of many regional and district networks for local and national actors which should be tapped into in advancing LLD
- Most CBOs across the country are operating as NGOs – beyond one sub county to cover districts which is against the Non- Governmental Organizational Act 2016 where CBO operation jurisdiction is in a sub county and below.
- Funding mechanisms across the regions do not permit institutional growth
- Some marginalized groups such as PWD cannot access funding and services due to various barriers
- Myth that western Uganda is developed limiting donor prioritization of the region towards development and instead focus on humanitarian response.
- District Local governments have a lot of potential for the success of Locally Led Development that donors and LNAs do not leverage on.

Recommendations



From the conversation, trends and analysis of locally led development in Uganda, the author makes the following recommendations:

Enable Quality Funding: One of the major aims of the Grand Bargain was to secure better-quality funding to support more efficient and effective operations. There remain substantial political challenges to increasing the volume or proportion of international funding that is flexible and predictable. Adopting a pragmatic approach, the signatories need to adopt actions that reduce or navigate some of these challenges, providing funding options that enable varying degrees of control by donors and grant-giving aid organizations over how funds are spent, while also enhancing the flexibility and predictability necessary to ensure more effective and efficient locally led development.

More specifically:

- Clarifying what a 'critical mass' of quality funding means.
- Promoting a suite of funding models to increase the volume of and access to quality funding, including increased use of core funding and programme-based approaches, expanded use of pooled funds, standardizing inclusion of overhead costs in agreements with local partners and increasing flexibility within existing agreements.
- Creating an enabling environment for more predictable and flexible funding, including more consistent application of existing reporting criteria and standards to enable better tracking of funding flows, greater transparency through more timely and comprehensive publication of financial data to agreed standards and systems, enhanced visibility for quality funding allocated and its impact, and improved inter-sectoral needs analysis and prioritization to inform more evidence-based decision-making.
- Donors should establish pooled funding managed by local actors where they can access funding for strategic or emergency work.





Address power imbalances by encouraging mutually beneficial partnerships with local actors and committing to principles of equitable partnership, which emphasize fairness, mutual respect, trust and co-creation. For instance, through working with local actors as co-creators, not subcontractors and adapting proposal processes and reporting mechanisms to enable local actors to contribute effectively without being strained by overcomplicated templates.

Increase support for local Actors: The expectations generated by the Grand Bargain go beyond the language of the commitments on localization. Recognizing this, the donors need to elevate the original ambition and focus on securing a fairer and more appropriate distribution of leadership and decision-making authority, as well as access to funding between international and local actors.

A series of actions can be taken individually and collectively to achieve this over the next years, including:

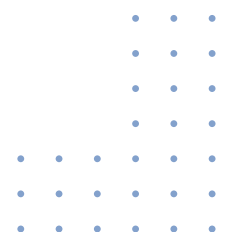
- Donors need to support local actors to develop internal systems, for example, for finance, procurement, and human resources, to encourage organizational development and sustainability of interventions.
- Donors need to identify how they can facilitate more local actors in line with their existing mandates, working to support a system-wide operational shift based on their own comparative advantages.
- Donors need to collectively adhere to long-standing pledges to support local-level leadership and increase practical and financial support to enable local actors access to international mechanisms.
- Donors need to articulate expectations in terms of the role of intermediaries.
- Donors need to work with local partners to better define elements of a 'quality' partnership, recognizing that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach.

Realize the participation revolution: In the new enabling priorities, participation of affected populations appears to be more of an 'add-on' than an integrated approach to achieving the locally led development outcomes envisaged. Donors need to pause and reflect in a more considered way on how they can move to a more demand-driven response, developing an objective akin to the original ambition of a participation 'revolution'. In support of this, the following measures should be implemented by signatories with immediate effect:

- Expand good practices on survivor- and community-led approaches, wherein communities are empowered (financially and technically) to design and implement their own responses.
- Establish a mechanism for independently soliciting the views of target populations on the strategic-level response.

Increase outreach to local governmental and non-governmental actors: donors should engage more consistently at a political level with local actors including through expanding the current concept of country-level dialogues. Developing and implementing a strategy for engagement with affected states at regional and global levels using existing bilateral channels and multilateral mechanisms.

Develop methodologies to identify, code and use locally existing knowledge and experience to determine the needs of crisis-affected populations through their lens. International partners were encouraged to recognize that local communities have a better understanding of their realities and can therefore contribute to developing sustainable solutions.



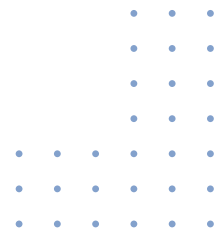


Recommendations for Local and National Actors:

- Local and National Actors need to comply with regulatory framework for them to be credible.
- Local and National Actors need to establish and respect systems and structures which will encourage transparency.
- Local and National Actors need to establish coordination mechanisms so that they can advocacy and negotiate better.
- Local and National Actors need to work in consortiums while applying for grants.
- Local and National Actors need to improve their branding and visibility.
- Local and National Actors need to establish partnerships with different stakeholders.
- Local and National Actors need to work closely with local governments.

Governments

- Government needs to refine and simplify compliance requirements to make it easier for more local actors to comply
- The role of Government in providing technical support and guidance to LNAs in advancing Locally led development is crucial hence the need to involve them at all stages of locally led development.
- The government needs to close all the gaps that facilitate corruption in its agencies for effective delivery of locally led development.





Conclusion

In line with the above facts, while we discovered and dialogue with over 200 local and national actors countrywide, we conclude from the consultations, it's evident that LNAs are passionate about their work and willing to advance transformative locally led development in their respective regions. They are using available resources and opportunities to influence positive changes including community philanthropy and fundraising.

The local actors re-echoed the fact that communities have assets in the form of local resources, skills, talent, local knowledge, expertise, networks and communal work approaches that donors and other development actors can leverage on in advancing locally led development. However, LNAs have been starved for a long time in terms of accessing resources to scale up their respective locally led development agenda amidst hardships in sustaining their work due to shrinking financial opportunities and as such, they accept any form of funding. Some donors have used this loophole to relate with LNAs in a transactional manner with terms that are not favorable with LNAs.



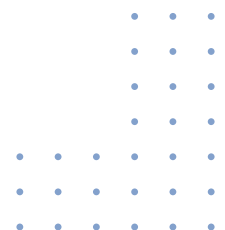


There are three major asks from a synthesis of issues generated throughout this paper in seven regions on locally led development to succeed in Uganda and these are: **i) Quality funding and equitable partnerships, ii) Capacity enhancement of local and national actors, iii) Documentation and investment in existing local philanthropy.**

CAPAIDS Uganda summarizes conclusively the voice of over 200 local and national actors as below for transformative locally led development to be achieved:

- Collective action can only be driven by collective decision-making processes hence the need for international intermediaries and donor community to be more intentional in engaging local and national actors in decision making spaces for locally led development, information and knowledge sharing while valuing the local knowledge, local expertise and networks
- Operationalization of risk sharing at scale as a mechanism for trust building and accountability is vital for locally led development to thrive while providing opportunity for institutional capacity strengthening
- As funding space becomes smaller with narrowing civic space, locally led development should be collectively and collaboratively done while creating more avenues for local and international intermediaries to co-create and come up with solutions for transformative locally led development
- The local leadership labs can sustainably be a safe platform for local and international intermediaries to collectively re-imagine, listen, learn, unlearn from each other while co-creating solutions for transformative locally led development and scale up what works rather than scaling INGO's siloed respective work

“
LNAs drive community
change but face
resource gaps
and unequal
donor terms.
”





Annex 1.

Voices From Local & National Actors

During the validation of this position paper with Local and National Actors, the following are a few voices from them. hashtag#LocallyLedDevelopment

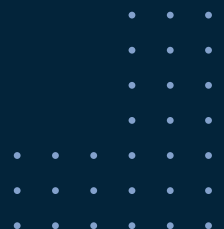
Albert Talemwa from LOSCO – Kigezi said *"I personally have been part of this process from start to end and I can authoritatively say the voices of local and national actors were well captured as far as Locally led development is concerned!"*

Jokwonga Hofin Lunya from West Nile said, *"CAPAIDS Uganda is spot on by encouraging Consortium based partnership; and with localization agenda, the local leadership lab is emphasizing the community being at the center of locally led development, co-creation and bottom -up approach to LLD which was profound for me, collective programming and the need for local and national actors to focus is a critical point, as local actors being able to learn and unlearn so as to be compliant! I am very happy for the work produced by CAPAIDS Uganda and the local leadership labs in general"*

John Segujja from central Uganda emphasized that; *"These findings of the Local leadership labs team in Uganda are a true picture of the realities on ground, especially with several compliance conundrums that we face as local and national actors; we hope that CAPAIDS Uganda will utilize this report to create opportunities for the last mile actors like us the CBOs. Local actors dealing with Governance & Human rights are treated with suspicion all the time."*

Jessica Ataa; *"Especially the women led organizations, we are used as implementation vehicles but never taken serious; it's important that we look deeply into the bottom - up approach to collective programming and these findings as presented by CAPAIDS Uganda are a true picture of what is on ground. The big organizations come at grass roots and provide us with Ugx 50,000 that cannot even buy toner for the office."*

Thank you CAPAIDS Uganda for putting this together, it is really the voices of local and national actors, Edaru Magdalene from @RIAMI RIAM in Karamojja said; *"Many times the local NGOs and CBOs are under-looked to a point where some donors find it easy to breach the partnership agreements. This lack of mutual respect for partnership agreements frustrate efforts of local organizations"*





A Position Paper

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MAY, 2025

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