LOCALISATION OF AID- THE FUTURE OF NON-PROFIT LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

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Abstract-*This article attempts to offer an accentuated understanding of the dynamics of localization of aid given that calls for greater resource allocation and control by local actors has been mooted by scholars. Aid localization commits and directly provide for development and emergency aid to grassroot organizations, where the goal is to eliminate intermediaries and bring aid closer to where it is most needed. Despite the ongoing debate on localization of humanitarian relief, it appears that many of the local non-profit organizations, particularly those in the Global South, lack adequate capacity to effectively utilize aid for realization of higher order objectives. The question on the future of non-profit leadership is conspicuous in the review of literature, where scholars suggest that dissemination of knowledge from international aid organizations to the local organizations is critical in shaping the future non-profit leadership. Drawing from existing evidence, this paper finds that greater empowerment of the local organizations in terms of increased resource allocation and greater control in decision-making is sine qua non for aid effectiveness. The paper underscores that localization of aid builds and strengthens the capacities of local actors to provide long-term answers to the recurring challenges faced by communities. The paper recommends that localization of aid can be effective if gaps in the local capacity are appraised with a view to offer support in noted gaps and encourage local organizations to undertake leadership in the conceptualization, design, and implementation of interventions. However, the extent to which the capacity gap, such as financial management, leadership and monitoring and evaluation, has been cured through diffusion of knowledge, skills, and expertise from seasoned international organizations remains an interesting area that needs further research, which were initially missing among local actors.*

Key Words: Aid, localization, grassroot organizations, humanitarian relief

Introduction

In the recent time, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, calls for more localization of aid has been voiced owing to the need to increase effectiveness of interventions at the grassroot level. As the debate on localization of aid takes centre stage in the mainstream literature, the question on the future of non-profit leadership has morphed into a research agenda, particularly on what needs to be done to increase relevance and sustainability of various interventions implemented by non-profit organizations (Hebinck et al., 2018). Aid localization refers to commitment and direct provision of development and emergency aid to grassroot organizations, where the goal is to eliminate intermediaries and bring aid closer to where it is most needed (Duclos et al., 2019). The increasing debate on the essentials of bringing development and emergency assistance nearer to the affected individuals is a current subject of debate in the context of donor aid. Moreover, the effect of COVID-19 and the expatriation of aid management technocrats and bureaucrats has led to emerging need for direct empowerment of beneficiaries at the local level since this may lead to strengthening of the organizations at the grassroot to offer much needed humanitarian assistance (Awuah, 2021). As the proposals for aid localization increase, the future leadership of non-profits has also attracted unprecedented focus from scholars and policy-makers on leadership requirements in terms of structure and application.

The debate for and against aid localization appear to be widening as those in support of localization argue that local actors are the first responders to disasters and humanitarian emergencies at the field level (Manlutac, 2021). Evidence indicates that local organizations, such as Civil Society groups and community-based organizations are providing much-needed support at the grassroot level since they are in constant touch with the affected communities (Cook & Ne, 2018). In fragile areas, local organizations have been central to restoring affected communities, suggesting that aid localization will go a long way in unlocking the potential of the local people since they are deemed to have innate ability to achieve life goals if well aided (Kraft & Smith, 2019). Besides restoring communities and providing first line response to disasters, local organizations, such as faith-based organizations, are instrumental in mobilizing resources at the grassroot level. The agility of local organizations in terms of response and resource mobilization reinforces the need for aid localization since most non-profits have already developed institutional capacities to offer first line response.

Evidence shows that despite the focal roles played by local actors, convincingly, the global humanitarian system is skewed towards international NGOs, multilateral organizations and international actors who control decision-making in the international aid and humanitarian system (Gomez, 2021). This seems to suggest that efforts towards localization of aid may face a myriad of challenges given that existing humanitarian structures favor a more centralized systems of renowned NGOs and international actors that define the rules of aid utilization and what needs to be done to increase its effectiveness. Borrowing from the Paris Declaration (2005) on aid effectiveness, this paper underscores the need for concerted efforts in managing for results so that aid influences positive change among the targeted groups. Similarly, the Accra Agenda for Action underlines the need for accelerated achievement of results which are critical for the impact on development initiatives (Declaration, 2012).

Far from the projected goals of the Paris Declaration (PD) and Accra Agenda for Action (AAA), many countries in the Global South, let alone local non-profits, do not have adequate capacity to monitor the progress of developments undertaken, particularly at the grassroot level (Lozano et al., 2018). World Bank (2010) notes existence of individual and institutional gap for monitoring and evaluation capacity at the field level. This paint a picture on the overall debate for and against aid localization since on one hand it appears that local organizations lack the institutional capacity and leadership to effectively utilize aid, while on the other hand aid localization is sine qua non for first hand responders to offer much needed humanitarian emergencies. Towards this end, this paper attempts to make a case on localization of aid and the future non-profit leadership given that grassroot and/or local non-profit organizations are undergoing a paradigm shift vis-a-vis intervention planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and local leadership.

Statement of Problem
The centrality of aid localization is the need to provide fast and targeted response to humanitarian crises, emergencies and development needs of the affected group at the primary level (Duclos et al., 2019). However, it appears that most of the development aid is still concentrated at the international and/or country level offices, which has a substantial effect on the extent to which aid is efficient and effective in changing the lives of the targeted beneficiaries. Perceived control and/or hoarding of resources by major international non-profit organizations through their host country offices has been cited as a possible precursor for ineffectiveness of interventions at the

field level (Hilton, 2018). This appears to casts doubts on the efforts of international non-profits in enabling performance of the designed and implemented interventions. Furthermore, non-profit leadership has been quoted as a challenge to aid localization since corporate donors have cited lack of capacity for organizations to conceptualize, design, implement and undertake monitoring and evaluation for the projects or programs (Frennesson et al., 2020).

As this goes on, the debate on aid localization has attracted considerable perspectives since those who support localization and those who do not have indicated pertinent issues towards the same. Moreover, many local non-profit organizations in the Global South do not have adequate capacity to undertake performance monitoring at the field level, while those who have developed the demand for monitoring and evaluation are yet to institutionalize systematic and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation. The lack of capacity to undertake performance monitoring has affected the extent to which local NGOs teams are using findings gathered to inform performance improvement. This appears to suggest that most interventions at the local level are not using evidence or insights from routine monitoring to increase effectiveness of the interventions through learning processes.

Management of non-profits has been a topic of concern for scholars who have done studies on aid efficiency and effectiveness, where leadership and tone from above continues predicts the extent to which interventions supported by aid are able to achieve higher order results (Tu et al., 2019). Moreover, aid localization will ultimately call for leaders who have the ability to balance an array of competing stakeholder pressure since implementation of interventions through aid requires leaders who are able to create feedback systems that support information flow from the project teams to the donors (Muyia & Nafukho, 2017; Wei, 2019). The analogy of 'trees dying from the top' has been applied in the non-governmental organization leadership, where most non-profits are not meeting the results or goals of the interventions implemented (Hailey & James, 2004). Towards this end, it seems that most of the non-profit organizations in Kenya are not able to meet their planned goals owing to poor strategic planning from the top that requires commitment and agenda setting for the organization. Thus, the future of the non-profits requires agile leadership, particularly for non-governmental organizations, for aid efficiency and effectiveness at the grassroot level.

Literature Review
There is plethora of empirical and contextual literature on aid localization and what constitutes future leadership of the same. Most of the studies (see, for example, Lozano et al., 2018; Hailey & James, 2004) conducted on aid localization provide varied conclusions and generalizations, particularly on the effective utilization of aid and managing for the required change. While the need for aid localization has been voiced and accentuated by the scholars in the Global South, many researchers in the developed West where aid emanates from appear to support use of existing frameworks on aid utilization to achieve the desired goals (Gehring et al., 2018). The COVID-19 has led to unprecedented health emergencies of global scale, where Fujita, and Sabogal (2021) underscored the necessity of aid localization for Haitian health emergencies, where the top-down approach by government authorities was met with sabotage and mistrust, while bottom-up approach by local organizations was effective. This evidence casts doubt on the extent to which top-down approaches to aid utilization can achieve the desired higher value results.

The world is grappling with the novel COVID-19 situation that has changed the way local and international humanitarian organizations are responding to health emergencies. For instance, Tabari et al. (2020) argues that local humanitarian agencies are critical in offering emergence health services at the ground level. Despite the focal role performed by local agencies, there are emerging concerns that these local organizations may not access adequate funding in order to contain the spread of virus at the local or community. Thus, localization of aid can be interpreted as a precarious situation since corporate and major donor may not be willing fund local organizations owing to perceived lack of capacity to expedite response to health emergencies, particularly during the pandemic period. Similarly, Haffajee and Mello (2020) underscores that localization of aid is critical in enhancing response to emergencies, for instance, during the corona virus pandemic period, where enormous resources are required at the ground level for economic construction and restoring the livelihoods that have been lost, both as a consequence of lives lost and joblessness.

Lack of participation in aid localization by international aid organizations appears to change the debate around aid localization, especially during the COVID-19 period. Casale (2020) portends that aid localization during emergencies has been beneficial to the target groups at the grassroot level given that major non-profits may not reach appropriate beneficiaries. This signifies that local actors have better understanding of the ground-level interventions owing to better knowledge on the dynamics and social systems of the host communities. Aid localization has been accelerated during the COVID-19 crisis, where the need for funding and selection of projects to transform the fortunes of the local communities has been mooted as possible consideration for enhanced funding for local interventions (Sahu, 2020). For instance, cash transfer interventions during the pandemic period have been undertaken by local organizations with the support of the international aid entities and governments (Cooper et al., 2020). This denotes that aid localization can be enhanced by deepening synergies between the local actors and the international aid organization since these bivariate interrelationships will enhance effectiveness of aid.

Existing literature indicates that government interventions follow the path of those of international aid organizations (Brauner et al., 2021). In other words, concentration of aid and policies in country level offices may affect effectiveness of aid for ground-level interventions since most of the policies, projects and programs implemented lack adequate participatory planning and implementation approach, thus inability to achieve higher order results. Towards this end, it appears that resounding scholarship supports localization of aid since this is the new approach to ensuring that interventions at the grassroot level implementations are reflective of the needs of the targeted vulnerable groups. Clemens and Postel (2018) agrees with this perspective that local actors are the frontline responders to crisis, specifically through their distribution of humanitarian aid and preventative actions that these local organizations undertake remotely with the support of international aid organizations. This information suggests that aid localization will enhance building of capacities for local organizations, meaning that the future of non-profit leadership is to enhance aid utilization for the intended purpose.

The current body of literature is replete with information on the centrality of localization of aid and how leadership for local actors is critical in enhancing the effectiveness of aid (Duclos et al.,

2019). Literature demonstrates that collaborative learning is essential in terms of changing the fortunes of the local actors who provide first-line response to challenges at the grassroot level. Thus, development of novel technical capacities is critical for the future of non-profits, particularly on what needs to be done to enhance effectiveness of aid. Of specific concern in calling for more aid localization is the extent to which aid channeled to the grassroot will enable local communities to cultivate sustainable resilience in times of crisis. This evidence points to the centrality of astute non-profit leadership since effectiveness of aid at ground level requires leaders who are able to positively persuade their teams in order to achieve measurable and attainable social profits or social bottom-line (Grimm, 2018). Unfortunately, most of the non-profit organizations operating at the grassroot level appear to face leadership challenges since they do not have qualified technical leads who can guide these organizations in designing, implementing, and monitoring and evaluation of interventions.

Sundberg (2019a) suggests that aid localization has morphed into diffusion of technical knowledge and expertise from the developed North to the less developed South, where the management of non-profits has been muddled. Though localization of aid is perceived by donors as empowerment of and investment in local knowledge and skills, it has often been suggested by scholars, localization of aid links local expertise to international jobs, thus increasing professionalism and competence of the local non-profit personnel. From this evidence, it seems that the future of non-profit leadership hinges on the extent of the knowledge diffused from international aid organizations to the first responders to disasters and emergencies affecting people at the grassroot level. Hines (2003) contends that globalization has expanded in an unprecedented scale leading to the creation of inequalities; however, localization appear to change the globalization trend by favoring channeling of aid to the grassroot organizations. As a result, more resources at the community level increases the capacity of communities and countries to control their economy, thus improve livelihoods, conserve the environment, reduce inequality and poverty and enhance infrastructural development in addition to human security. Mercado (2002) states that localization helps communities and countries to adopt policies that are in sync with the priority needs of the people. This is particularly noticeable in the new dynamics of development activities which are highly decentralized in order to increase effectiveness.

Theoretical Review
Several theories and models have been proposed to explain resource localization and what needs to be done to enhance effectiveness of resources at the grassroot level. Institutional theories are the leading theories on resource localization since this enhances achievement of higher order objectives among the target groups (Bartley, Andersson, Jagger, & Laerhoven, 2018). The complexities involved in devoting resources to the grassroot level requires an institutional framework which governs the flow of resources in the most transparent and accountable manner (Ametepeh, 2019). In the case of localization of aid, there is need for complementary arrangements between international aid organizations and grassroot organization. This viewpoint has been reinforced by among other: Engels (2010) and Alam (2017) who underscored the centrality of statutory guidelines in the channeling of the resources to the grassroot level and subsequent usage. Institution theory portends that, situations left on their own may perpetuate a state of anarchy, thus the necessity of formulating rules and procedures that guide flow of aid from centre (established donors) to the periphery (local organizations).

Grotian's humanitarian intervention theories as cited in Criddle (2015) are critical in the understanding of dynamics of aid environment and how developed countries are using their political and economic influence in the international system to respond to violations of human rights in overseas. In other words, Grotius underscored that, nations irrespective of their geographical location have a duty to protect against violation of law of nature irrespective of whom or where the violation has taken place. For instance, the guardianship theory portends that international organizations, community and countries should act as custodians or guardians to countries that face humanitarian challenges, where unconditional aid is one of the critical approaches to reconstructing and restoring the affected countries. Though the humanitarian intervention theories exposited by Grotius centre on response to abuse of human rights, they also offer indispensable theoretical constructs that help explain how localization of interventions can go a long way in meliorating challenges at the ground level.

Stephenson (2017)'s theory and practice of international humanitarian relief coordination is sine qua non to explaining the centrality of responding to crises and emergencies at the grassroot level since this is the level where real efforts of community reconstruction are required. Stephenson underscores that effective coordination of aid from the source to the recipients is critical since is a key enabler of effectiveness of aid. This suggests that aid coordination faces plethora of challenges that needs to be circumvented for aid to be effective, that is, the changes in standards of living can be attributed to the aid. Most of the humanitarian relief agencies, such the United Nations agencies leverage coordination as a cornerstone to aid effectiveness.

Van Arsdale, and Nockerts (2008)'s theory of obligation has been widely applied in explaining humanitarian contexts, where the theory postulates existence of societal challenges that need to be addressed by the part of the privileged society. The theory of obligation is cross-disciplinary in nature since it amalgamates applied and academic work in the field of anthropology and other fields such as human rights, sociology and political science. The critical tenet of the obligation theory is the focus on what should one do help vulnerable groups or those at risk to restore them to acceptable standards of living. Over and above, the obligation theory reinforces the notion of human dignity and fairness, where this can be realized through pragmatic humanitarianism. Notably, the obligation theory underlines the moral relationship between those with the ability to offer aid/assistance which is essential in meeting the needs of those who do not have, particularly distress periods.

The cultural theory has been widely applied in humanitarian relief aid to buttress the place and relevance of culture in determining the form or structure of the aid, where one of the determinants of aid effectiveness is the acceptable of humanitarian aid workers (Childs, 2013). Owing to hostility in the application of aid, most organization have now resorted to acceptance as a form of practice to gain social license to operate. To this end, the cultural theory reinforces the need for localization of aid since this is local actors are more acceptable to the people, suggesting that aid is more relevant, and projects/programmes undertaken by the aid are more sustainable because of the support from the locals.

Issues Emerging from Review of Literature

Localization of aid appear to yield substantial debate in term of merits and demerits of the using local organizations in utilizing aid for development work or response to humanitarian crises.

Literature indicates lack of absolute consensus on aid localization even though many of the researches reviewed here point to the need for enhanced localization of aid owing to the perceived effectiveness of the approach, such as familiarity of the local organizations with the host communities (Ager, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, & Ager, 2015; Karkee & Comfort, 2016). The question on the future of non-profit leadership is conspicuous in the review of literature, where scholars suggest that diffusion of knowledge from international aid organizations to the local organizations is critical in shaping the future non-profit leadership (Potluka, Kalman, Musiałkowska, & Idczak, 2017; Unangst & de Wit, 2020). This evidence points to the need for preparedness of the local actors in using best practices to enhance the management of teams at the ground level.

Literature points to the transparency and accountability concerns of the international aid organizations who are concerned on the extent to which aid is applied in meaningful interventions (Asgary & Waldman, 2017). Most of the local non-governmental organizations in the Global South have been cited in many researches (see, for example, Agyemang, O'Dwyer, & Unerman, 2019; Ismail, 2019) to lack adequate transparency and accounting mechanisms, particularly financial management and monitoring and evaluation systems that are enablers of transparency and accountability. Literature indicates that despite efforts made by international donors to enhance alignment, still utilization of aid in the South of the globe appears to be skewed to the extent that some donors have been dissuaded against localization of aid by preferring a more centralized approach (Sundberg, 2019a). In other words, the need to prove efficient and effective use of aid to taxpayers of the donor countries has forced multilateral donors to call for more transparency and accountability mechanisms.

Much of the literature indicates that direct funding to the local organizations indicates the evolution of humanitarian aid is unlikely to fail since this is the new normal of utilizing aid for targeted interventions (McKay & Perez, 2019; Fujita & Sabogal, 2021). According to the United Nations (2015), donors should aspire to bridge the humanitarian funding gap, where 25% target and more should go to funding national and local responders. Notably, the United Nations and major donors argue that localization of aid should not only be about allocation of more funds to the local organizations; rather, there should be capacity building for local humanitarian responders to be able to manage crises and emergencies in better ways, amplify the voice of the affected and vulnerable populations, and deepen synergies with the existing partnerships. As a result, local organizations will develop the institutional ability to respond to arrays of crises using an evidence-based approach.

The higher order objective of localization of aid is improved response to various crises and emergencies affecting people at the grassroot level by ensuring that aid needed by people is accessed in a fast manner (Sadiqi, Trigunarsyah, & Coffey, 2017). Importantly, donors underscore the need for quality interventions to reconstruct and restore communities, suggesting that aid should be impactful, relevant and sustainable, where all this should be achieved in the most cost-effective way, that is, using the least number of resources (Zhang & Li, 2019). Use of local actors to undertake projects and programmes on behalf of international aid organizations is critical since local actors have unique strengths, such as acceptance from the host communities, sustainability of interventions or developing capacity to respond to the any future similar crisis, early response and use of minimum number of resources to undertake interventions.

Removal of frontline NGO personnel from critical service provision during the pandemic means that void left by the expatriates has been occupied by local employees and organizations which are now providing critical services to the affected groups in the communities (Bonis-Charancle & Vielajus, 2019). Knowledge on the local culture and geography has enabled local organizations to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions. Notably, localization of aid has increased the capacity of local organizations to respond to various crises currently or in the future, thus boosting continuity/sustainability of interventions long after allocation of aid/resources has stopped (Roepstorff, 2020). This shows that localization of aid builds and strengthens the capacities of local actors to provide long-term answers to the recurring challenges faced by communities.

Issue of challenges of aid localization continues to gain attention among scholars since centralization and localization of aid has had its share of problems. Devex Editor (2013) provides insights on the bureaucracy of international NGOs directly sponsoring projects in host communities without the involvement of local organizations. The issue of bias on the intervention to implement on the ground has morphed into a topic of discussion owing to design and implementation of interventions that do not necessarily reflect the needs of the population. On the other hand, the criticality of using local actors in enhancing the effectiveness of aid has been accentuated by many scholars on development aid since local actors are central to building capacities in many local aspects, such as monitoring and evaluation and financial management, where this is possible owing to the perceived neutrality of the local actors (Kuipers, Desportes, & Hordijk, 2019). Towards this end, it appears that aid localization can be effective if gaps in the local capacity is appraised with a view to offer support in that particular area and encourage local organizations to undertake leadership in the conceptualization, design and implementation of interventions.

Discussion

There is plethora of evidence on the dynamics of aid utilization, particularly the role of international NGOs in effecting the much-needed change at the grassroot level since this is the level that interventions can be measured against the stated objectives (Briere, Proulx, Flores, & Laporte, 2015; Dupuy, Ron, & Prakash, 2016). Unfortunately, as more aid is being channeled to the local organizations, evidence shows that leadership at that level is in dire need of capacity building in order to emblem the new dynamics of non-profit leadership (Jing, 2015; Van der Klashorst, 2018). Given the diffusion of ideas from the international NGOs to the local non-profit organizations, it appears that the leadership question has been cured since international best practices on aid utilization and management have been adopted from the international scene to the local contexts, suggesting that the place of the non-profit leadership has been further reinforced through aid localization (Potluka & Fanta, 2020). As the calls for more direct funding to the national and local organizations from international donors gathers momentum, the need for effectiveness of aid as enshrined in the Paris Declaration (2005) has equally attracted substantial support since aid must be seen to realize higher order objectives, such as improving the standards of living of the targeted groups (United Nations, 2015; OECD, 2005).

As the demand for localization of aid soars, questions have been asked on the level of accountability and transparency for local organizations that are now playing critical roles in dispensing humanitarian relief services to the vulnerable groups (Asgary & Waldman, 2017; Agyemang et al., 2019; Lozano et al., 2018). Owing to capacity concerns for local actors, for

instance, monitoring and evaluation, the extent to which grassroot organizations will be accountable in terms of using resources towards achieving the desired outcomes and impacts (Hobson, Hamilton, & Mayne, 2016; O'Leary, 2017). Though management of the local organizations is now in the hands of experts from the host countries and communities, evidence continues to paint glaring shortcomings in the management of donor funds for the intended purposes (Makuwira, 2017; Roepstorff, 2020; Sundberg, 2019b).

Critical reflections on the localization continue to take a central place in the realm of humanitarian relief since the place and relevance of local actors is on the increase. For instance, Roepstorff (2020) contends that inclusion of local organization in the humanitarian relief should be reflected with a view to establishing whether power relations in the humanitarian aid environment have been resolved to make aid more effective. Other scholars have suggested that despite the substantial attention aid localization has achieved, the debate on the subject matter of it lacks a rigorous discussion on how the concept itself (localization) has been defined and used in various contexts when making reference to aid utilization in the context of the grassroot level (Bruschini-Chaumet, Shama, Othman, & van Hilten, 2019). This lack of demystification has led to unwarranted misuse of the concept to explain aid at the ground level (Roepstorff, 2020). To cure inconsistencies in the use of localization, scholarly have deliberately demarcated and set boundaries on what constitutes localization of aid with a view to remove any blind spots that may bedevil the concept. Towards this end, aid localization must involve a framework that gives authority to the local organizations to conceptualize, design and implement interventions that reflect the needs of the population.

Conclusion

There is resounding evidence in this paper that localization of aid has attracted substantial attention and attraction from, both academia and from the development partners, such as donors and NGOs. Many researchers point to the need for enhanced localization of aid since this is critical for the realization of higher order results at the field level. Given that local organizations are the first responders to humanitarian emergencies and crises, the paper concludes that localization of aid will go a long way in enhancing the capacity of the local actors to efficiently and effectively respond to present and future emergencies. Moreover, diffusion of knowledge, skills and expertise from international NGOs to the local organizations, it appears that the question on the future of the non-profit leadership has been resolved since international best practices, such as financial management and monitoring and evaluation are now available among local non-profit organizations and leadership. Reflections made on localization of aid show a promising future if the improved capacities of the national and local organizations are anything to go by.

Recommendation

The review of literature, emerging issues, and discussions have offered a springboard upon which recommendations on localization of aid can be made. For aid to achieve results of highest order at the local level, it is imperative for localization objectives to be specific, such as improved partnerships and deepening synergies between local and international responders in addition to investment in capacity building to increase skills of local actors. Besides having specific objectives of localization of aid, this paper recommends that both international and local non-profit organizations should complement each other is efforts so that comparative advantage of each and both is leveraged to increase efficacy of the humanitarian response. Importantly, there is need to recalibrate the relationship between the international NGOs and those operating in the Global

South, particularly those in fragile areas where humanitarian response is constantly needed. For localization of aid to meet the specified objectives, it is critical to empower local actors, mainly through greater power in decision-making and increased control of financial resources. Over and above, governments and donors should be the leading force for non-profit development since this will increase genuine demand for non-profit partners, which will give more legitimacy and social license for local organizations to operate.

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