



ChildFund's Localization Journey in Kenya

A DOCUMENTATION OF PROMISING PRACTICES AND
LESSONS LEARNED (2023)

ChildFund®

Overview of ChildFund

ChildFund is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) working in 21 countries to help deprived, excluded, and vulnerable children have the capacity to improve their lives and become young adults, parents, and leaders who bring lasting and positive change to their communities. In Africa, ChildFund works in 9 Countries and is committed to child-centered change that enables children to grow and realize their full potential. ChildFund International works throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas to connect children with what they need to grow up healthy, educated, skilled, and safe, no matter where they are.

We are a member of ChildFund Alliance; a global network of **12 organizations** that assists over **23 million** people, including over **16 million** children, in more than **70 countries**. Delivered through 192 local implementing partner organizations, our programs address the underlying conditions that prevent any child or youth from achieving their full potential. We place a special emphasis on child protection throughout our approach because violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect can reverse developmental gains in an instant.

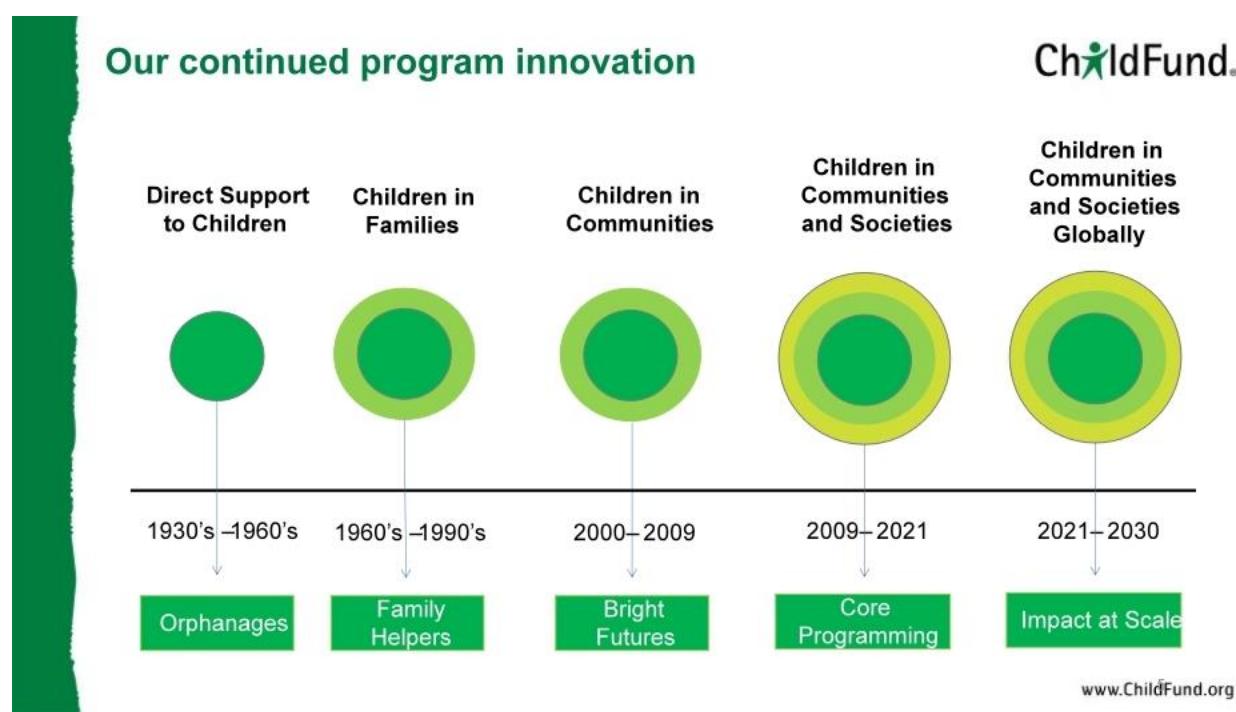
ChildFund Localization Journey in Kenya

This report is an attempt to document learning and knowledge management of ChildFund journey of Localization practice in Kenya. It highlights the evolution and eventual institutional development of local organizations alongside ChildFund's programming innovations. It acknowledges the relationship of ChildFund with local partners and some challenges and joint attempts made to overcome them. This document also highlights promising practices in ChildFund Kenya as enablers along the localization journey which include Direct Bilateral support of Alliance members to Local Partners; Developing a Road Map to Independence; Self-reliance strategies of social enterprise development; and Local-to-Local Partnerships among others. The conclusions and recommendations from this documentation and case story compel ChildFund to continue learning to inform ways for better advocacy and influencing of child development ecosystems as a participant in the current localization dispensation.

In Kenya, ChildFund operations started in the early 1960s, responding to the appalling conditions of children in the country, brought about by the political, economic, and social realities of the time. Since 1974, the organization has gone through several developmental milestones. These include the expansion of its work to 27 out of the 47 counties and streamlining its partnership arrangements. In the 1970s and 1980s, ChildFund Kenya was working with 102 local partners, mostly parents' and guardians' interest groups. In early 2000, these groups were amalgamated into 51 registered community-based organizations (CBOs).

In 2016, the 51 CBOs were further consolidated to form 13 registered local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) with stronger, more robust operations systems. The process was designed to improve operational efficiency and effectiveness, increase visibility, achieve economies of scale, increase the geographical scale of program interventions, enable increased resource mobilization, and support the recruitment, reward, and retention of a qualified and skilled workforce.

Besides the current 11 local implementing partners that have organically evolved out of ChildFund's Sponsorship programs, ChildFund Kenya's Country Strategy aims at achieving a diversified partnership portfolio that includes other locally established CSO partners, national and County Governments, Private Sector, Academia and research agencies for synergy and collective impact on the lives of children and their families.



Why ChildFund works through the LIPs (Local Implementing Partners) and the value of Partnership Approach:

For ChildFund, Partnerships are mission critical. For decades, ChildFund International made a strategic choice to deliver locally led child-centered interventions. We believe that local ownership is fundamental to the social change process and that by working in partnerships, a multiplier effect is experienced. There are 11 LIPs in Kenya who support ChildFund in the implementation of child-centered programs and sponsorship activities with children and families who experience deprivation, exclusion, and

vulnerability. Kenya LIPs include: Eastern Community Development Program- ECDP, Nairobi Metropolitan Program-NMP, Lake Region Development Program- [LRDP](#), Emali Dedicated Children's Agency- EDCA, Pioneer Child Development Program- [PCDP](#), Western Community Children's Program-WCCP, Central Rift Community Development Program-CRCDP, Nawiri Child Development Program- [NCDP](#), Samburu Children's Program- [SCP](#), Child Rise Development Program- CRDP, Ewangan Child Development Program- [ECDP](#) and Mt. Kilimanjaro Child Development Program Frontiers Child Development Program-[MKCDP](#).

Partnerships are important for lasting social impact and our ability to scale that impact. Local partners' unique knowledge of local context and relationships with children and families are particularly important. With child-programming evolution at ChildFund, was emerging and organic growth of local partners from focus groups to CBOs and now NGOs. ChildFund has made effort in its partnership journey to align with the principles of localization, especially by ensuring mutually respectful partnership, direct funding, transparency, advocating for LIP, providing technical support, and promotion of their visibility.

This Partnership approach has great value and benefits including:

- **Population Access and Influence:** Through Local Partners, we have a more direct relationship with children and communities that are experiencing deprivation, exclusion, and vulnerability, as well as with the local governments who serve them.
- **Program Relevancy/Adaptation/ Leverage:** Local Partners understand their communities and facilitate the identification of priority issues to address through program interventions.
- **Community Ownership:** Local Partners promote stronger local decision-making and have a more powerful effect on the local power base, given their roots in the community.
- **Sustainability:** Local Partners can more ably sustain efforts to support the well-being of children over successive generations, long after ChildFund's financial commitments end.
- **Efficiency, effectiveness and impact:** Working through Local Partners leverages other resources such as tools, frameworks and technical assistance delivered through program specialists.

Capacity Strengthening and Local Partner Accompaniment along the Journey

ChildFund Kenya has been implementing programs with and through Implementing Partners (LIPs, which are indigenous to their areas of operation (local communities) for

more than 40 years now. Currently, it works through 11 Implementing Partners (LIPs) - Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and direct implementation is in two program areas (Kisumu and Nairobi).

Partnership with the LIPs is anchored on the Letter of Agreement (LOA) that details, among other obligations, the responsibilities of each partner, ongoing capacity building, sponsorship, delivery, and performance monitoring and evaluation. ChildFund provides institutional capacity strengthening, funding support, strategic guidance, technical support in programming and operations. We conduct rigorous monitoring and evaluation of partner performance, which has ensured that the partners are on track and deliver for children as per their mandate.

Locally led program delivery

LIPs identify gaps and areas of need through community engagement in needs-assessment for special interest groups such as women, PWD, Children. They carry out participatory ranking of the needs and thereafter, the Country Office (CO) provides information on priorities for the year based on the CSP and annual operational plans (AOPs). Partners then prepare plans based on all the above and submit drafts for review and support by technical specialists before they are approved for implementation. The LIPs also consult County Governments through KIIIs during needs assessment and link with the CIDPs for their specific counties/wards/sub counties. Plans are also shared with the community for ratification. The evidence, relevance and quality of both the partnerships and of the programs delivered through LIPs, has a sweet spot in the nexus between Theory of Change for ChildFund and community-led needs assessment process as outlined.

ChildFund Commitment to Localization- The leadership tone:

‘One main aspect in the external environment in which we are delivering our global strategy is "localization," which is primarily focused on increasing local ownership of the development effort. At ChildFund we have known that while there are many factors affecting children's ability to grow up healthy, educated, skilled, and safe, local actors play a key role as part of the larger ecosystem in which a child develops. The strong local relationships ChildFund has built, especially on the program side, are an asset we can leverage to expand our impact and influence. ChildFund's CEO/President- Isam Ghanim's in one of his monthly communiques.

The Africa Director- Chege Ngugi's guidance on Kenya's two areas of direct implementation has been that ‘The Kenya Country Office should have in place a clear road map of transitioning from direct implementation for both WCCP (Western Community Childrens Program) and NMP (Nairobi Metropolitan Program) back to local partnership arrangement in the short term’.

ChildFund's local capacity strengthening Journey- What has worked?

- ✓ Partnerships with the LIPs have proved to be mutually beneficial, and ChildFund has made a significant investment in the capacities of the LIPs to enhance their capabilities to deliver on the Sponsorship and Programs objectives.
- ✓ ChildFund continues to strengthen the capacities of the 11 LIPs in areas of compliance, strategy development and management, governance, and management, programming, partnership, and resource mobilization.
- ✓ ChildFund continues to strengthen the governance of local boards to have adequate systems, structures, and policies to meet required donor standards. This is done through continuous accompaniment, mentorship, coaching, targeted skills upgrades, and support to develop a LIP funding sustainability strategy to be financially more independent, conducting periodic reviews through program quality reflection forums (PQR) and joint field monitoring visits.
- ✓ Program quality is attained through M&E and annual internal and external audits support.
- ✓ Financial support is directly sent to LIPs' Bank accounts for their Administration and Program costs.
- ✓ 70% of humanitarian emergency responses are done through LIPs with funding support from Alliance members.
- ✓ Partnership Development and Capacity strengthening of both board members and staff.
- ✓ Resource mobilization training and working with LIPs in consortiums.
- ✓ Technical support on key programming areas: MEALK (Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, Learning and Knowledge management) systems. ChildFund is enabling LIPs to leverage on global digital tools such as [CAMEL](#) (to enhance data management and learning and quality assurance), Food Security, Child Protection and Safeguarding, Safe Programming including Accountability to Affected People (AAP), ECD, Humanitarian Response, DRR, and Climate Change.
- ✓ Support in the development of policies, processes, and operational guidelines hence ensuring that LIPs are compliant with the country's Laws.
- ✓ Partner capacity assessments and periodic Strong Partner appraisal.
- ✓ Joint needs assessments and co-creation of children's interventions.

Gains evidenced from the Study on Local Partner Consolidation Process

The review of the Governance & Management Systems [Final Report on ChildFund 12 Local Partners Governance & Management Review 03.03.22.pdf](#)) of the 12 Local Implementing Partners done by an External Consultant (Mindset Business Solutions) in 2021, indicates that as

was initially conceived and envisaged, the consolidation process has benefited the LIPs in several ways:

Brand Visibility: The new structure makes interventions easier to market. ChildFund supported LIPs build Office Structures. Their offices are more visible and with their NGO registration, the LIPs can now apply for other grant funding and resources that they did not qualify for as CBOs. This has made them be taken more seriously by the authorities and the communities in which they serve.

ChildFund has been at the forefront in engagement with the media for visibility and this has ensured the promotion of the work ChildFund does jointly with Local partners in the media as per the commitment in the C4C that calls for promoting the role of local actors to media and public.

Sustainable Development Projects: The merging of LIPs has increased resources disposable to the partners, giving them the capacity to implement development projects.

Economies of Scale: With increased resources from the mergers, the LIPs enjoy economies of scale in project implementation and service delivery. Administrative costs have been reduced, and the units are more cost-effective. As the Program and Resource Mobilization Coordinator of Pioneer John Kingori remarked in 2022, I can confirm that the pooling of funds and skills together has made implementation faster, as we are able to implement more sustainable programs and the combining roles has resulted in reduction of administration costs'. This same result was also evident in Eastern Child Development Program, Pioneer, Frontiers among other partners from the LIPs Board and Management feedback.

Return on Investment (ROI): The NGOs emanating from the merged LIPs have a higher return on investment than their independent parent CBOs. The sponsors and other donors can identify more directly with the projects, whose quality has improved, resulting in improved goodwill and increased deliverables with the same amount of resources.

Talent Acquisition and Retention: The new structures have elevated the LIPs to a position where they are able to attract, retain and reward qualified technical staff to support their core operations.

Program Scope and Outreach: With increased centralized resources and the new structures, LIPs have been able to deepen the scope and outreach of their programs and are able to cover a bigger geographic area and reach more people with better quality program interventions. For example, Childrise Development Program grew its coverage from village sites to Cover parts of Embu County and Tharaka Nithi Counties with big projects such as the Kamarandi girls rescue center against FGM and child marriage.

Resource Mobilization: ChildFund has continued to build the capacity of the LIPs to mobilize their own resources in the dispensation of localization and tap into the

available resources for local organizations. These entities can now competitively bid for funding with other organizations and are able to secure reasonable funding. For instance, EDCA was able to secure funding from Kenya Community Development Program, while Samburu and Frontiers have secured funding from the Nawiri USAID program of KES 50 and 70 million respectively.

Networking and Collaboration: The new consolidated structures allow the LIPs to operate at County and Sub-County levels. This offers better networking and collaboration opportunities with local/central governments and other key development partners.

Governance: The new consolidated structure increases the possibility that LIPs will put in place more competent governing Boards, capable of fulfilling their oversight mandate. Currently, we have professionals in 6 out of 11 LIP Governing Boards.

Applied principles of partnership- The Governance structure has enabled ChildFund to channel a bigger proportion of resources to the local/national organizations for program implementation having a greater impact on Deprived Excluded and Vulnerable (DEV) children and their families. In FY22- 23, 100% of developmental funds were channeled to Local Implementing Partners because ChildFund does not implement directly. This exceeds the [Charter for Change \(C4C\)](#) commitments. This consolidated governance structure allows for building working partnerships with local organizations on a transparent and mutual basis for the benefit of communities living in vulnerable situations.

Risk Management: ChildFund supports implementing partners to carry out both financial and program audits of the financial resources passed to them to establish if there has been effective and efficient utilization of funds for maximum impact.

Enhanced capacity of the NNGOs: ChildFund has continued to build the capacity of the local partners through training of staff and enhancing internal systems and governance. ChildFund funds LIPs on a 70:30 ratio for programs and administration costs respectively, which aligns with the C4C commitment that calls for the provision of robust organizational support and capacity building of NNGOs and undertaking to pay administrative costs.

Relevance: Working with the grassroots NNGOs has enabled ChildFund to remain relevant and address the real felt needs since the local organization is with the community and knows their needs and context due their ITEK (Indigenous Technical Knowledge). This has enhanced community participation and engagement since power is with the people.

Wide reach: Through a partnership with the grassroots NNGOs, ChildFund has been able to reach the hard-to-reach areas in the ASAL counties ensuring that we take services where they are most needed, despite the access challenges by leveraging on their presence.

Current Challenges and Limitations identified by the Governance Study

- ❖ Overdependency by the local implementing partners on ChildFund and reluctance to diversify sources of revenue. From the analysis, all the LPs derived over 90% of their budget from ChildFund. However, we hope this will increasingly change with strengthened LIP resource mobilization capacity and them developing own strategies towards the road to independence.
- ❖ Feeling of entitlement has limited innovation and growth due to the Sponsorship approach delivered through the community structures. ChildFund and LIPs are beginning to change this trajectory gradually by developing a phase-in-and phase-out plan (Exit strategy) with an end in mind developed with community participation. The roadmap to independence journey type of approach is a long-term approach that has potential to not only have a trickle-down effect of mindset change from local partners to program participants, but also to compliment a more responsible phase out (Partner/ Community Exit) strategy.
- ❖ Some of the local organizations are weak with governance and management challenges hampering the quality of program delivery. This challenge is being addressed through emphasis on professionalization of governance structures and drivers for sustainability.
- ❖ Staff turnover in some of the organizations has been a big hindrance to already triggered growth of the NNGOs, as some good staff transit for better opportunities, with INGOS. This challenge is common to the rest of the sector players including ChildFund. However, as partners enhance their grant making, their salary structures may improve and supplement what ChildFund offers.

Intentional Engagement in the localization space to enhance Practice:

- ✓ ChildFund continues to loop in partners in the localization space, sharing with their surveys and opportunities available from the C4C Working group and inviting them to participate in the discourse.
- ✓ Local partners have been invited to participate in the C4C surveys and training and we are linking them up to enroll as active members in their own capacity as Local Partners where they will be able to share their evolution story.
- ✓ Together with Local partners there is new learning of concepts for example around the [Risk Sharing Framework](#) that needs to be factored in the partnership journey especially as we seek to scale up in humanitarian response .
- ✓ Networking and Supporting the LIPs to bid for funding opportunities available for the NNGOs.

Promising Practices in strengthening localization ‘The Journey to Independence! A case study of EDCA

Emali Dedicated Children’s Agency (EDCA) is a local NGO based in Emali, initially registered as a CBO in 2002, before upgrading to a Local NGO in 2013, whose core intent is to help deprived, excluded, and vulnerable children to have the capacity to improve their lives and give them the opportunity to become young adults, parents and leaders who bring lasting and positive change in their communities and societies; whose individuals and institutions participate in valuing, protecting, and promoting the rights of children.

Leveraging On Alliance Membership:

EDCA works in Makueni and Kajiado Counties in Kenya reaching 4,200 households annually spread across Poka-Kenyewa ward, Mashuuru sub-county in Kajiado county and Emali-Mulala ward, Nzau Sub-County in Makueni County. In its work EDCA programmatically targets to promote growth in five thematic areas including Sustainable Livelihoods, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Education, Health and Nutrition and Child Protection. These interventions were implemented by grants funding building on sponsorship funding.

‘EDCA also implements humanitarian emergency response programs with funding from ChildFund Newzealand. Through ChildFund Kenya, we have secured resources as a grassroot organization to build our capacity to deliver to the affected population. The emergency response interventions are informed by our own baseline carried out independently in collaboration with government departments. This has enabled us to ensure relevant response to children’s needs especially school feeding component in response to drought disaster’ Victor Aduda Program Coordinator- EDCA.

Dedicated Program area for Bilateral Support from Alliance Member:

In 2002, EDCA was Dedicated to ChildFund New Zealand (CFNZ), where all its sponsorship and other sources of funding for projects in the Emali community including grants, NSPs, and Golahs would only come from CFNZ. The idea behind this was to ensure CFNZ was able to assess the impact it was created within a community like Emali through its sponsors and donors in New Zealand. In 2016, EDCA through the support of CFNZ and ChildFund Kenya, developed a 2016-2026 roadmap with a goal of making Emali a thriving community where all children and youths were protected from

all forms of harm and abuse. The roadmap targeted to accelerate the development of Emali as a thriving community with an aim of graduating EDCA and Emali community within 10years. In 2016-2021, CFNZ supported EDCA and Emali community with an economic resilience grant from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) in addition to monthly sponsorship funds. This was expected to accelerate development and build economic resilience for the Emali community while preparing EDCA and the community for the final phase.

Roadmap to Independence:

In 2022, EDCA with support from CFNZ and ChildFund Kenya reviewed and updated the 2016-2026 roadmap and developed an independence journey plan out of the gaps that were identified during the review that would feed into the roadmap to independence and see CFNZ gradually phase out of Emali by 2026. The independence plan focuses on five key thematic areas that need strengthening for EDCA and Emali Community before phase-out namely: Governance, Management & leadership, Income generation, Relationships, and Civic engagement. These plans have been budgeted for and clearly outline where EDCA is to focus its resources in the next 4years of the final phase.

Social Enterprise Development & Local Resource Mobilization:

*To ensure EDCA independently runs its operations beyond CFNZ exit, there have been deliberate concerted efforts to come up with strategies to mobilize resources outside traditional funding from CFNZ and ChildFund Kenya. EDCA has come up with three resource mobilization strategies that will enable the organization to maximize the reduced resources from the main donors during the phase-out. The three categories include **community contribution, social investments, and grants seeking**. These efforts continue to bear fruit in many ways.*

Social impact investments -EDCA has been able to not only design self-sustaining community projects but also commercialize such projects to ensure they generate income for the organization as they continue to sustainably meet community needs. For instance, through community water projects at Emali and Mwanyani Communities, EDCA sells water to these communities at an affordable price to meet the community WASH needs while generating income that has **sponsored 11 bright needy Children** with full secondary education scholarships.

Value Chain Development: EDCA took over the overall oversight and capacity strengthening of two cooperatives (SAML Dairy and EMUKA cooperative) that were formed through the implementation of a grant-funded project in efforts to promote dairy and [moringa value chains](#).

Local to Local Partnership with Local Government for Leverage:

*Through community contribution, EDCA has been able to receive **land donations** from the County Government of Kajiado to set up its youth resource Centre which doubles up as EDCA's office cutting down on the operational costs by 60% as the organization initially used to pay rent. In addition, EDCA has also received a donation of 10 acres of land from the Imbilin Ranch group in Kajiado County where it's to set up pasture and dairy farms which is expected to contribute to the resource mobilization efforts.*

Grant Seeking beyond ChildFund:

EDCA has been able to secure funding outside the traditional donors i.e., ChildFund Kenya, CFNZ, and other ChildFund alliance members. EDCA has so far received total funding of up to 12million from Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) both in cash and in-kind from 2021 to date and continues to receive more funding and the future looks promising with the new partnership.

While EDCA and Emali community may still be very far from being financially independent, they are on the right step toward self-reliance and locally led sustainable development.

Conclusions from learning and reflections on the localization journey:

With ChildFund's deep knowledge and experience in local partnerships, we need to take a fresh look at our experience, and practices, and utilize the lessons learned from our localization journey and how beneficial this has been in sustainable development, putting children's needs and child protection at the center of development through the local advisory councils that we used to have several years ago.

We have plans to enable local organizations to leverage global tools, such as the (CAMEL) M&E Platform. ChildFund is intentional and the IO President started co-chairing the Alliance working group on localization and we will work to have shared principles and approaches to support localization.

ChildFund is committed to continuously strengthening the LIP's leadership and governance structure through the training of boards and providing technical support in the professionalization of the boards for diversified skill sets. This will in turn support in providing oversight and improve partnership development and resource mobilization.

In spite of various effort put in place to strengthen local partner capacity and linking them with donors, and despite the comparative advantage local actors have in local leadership of development and humanitarian aid, ChildFund still has more work to do along the localization journey.

As ChildFund Kenya Country strategy aspires to connect, champion, challenge and change for children, the CO has become more intentional as an Ally to the C4C and to the localization agenda. This has continued to inform the reflections and aspirations to the measurement indicators of a good partnership. Management has since retracted its position on registering ChildFund in Kenya as a local entity, guided by the need to continue as a practitioner of localization as an INGO instead of taking advantage of becoming localized itself. That way, ChildFund can remain respected as an enabler, facilitator, and influencer of the child development ecosystem within the localization space.

In spite of the progress made in the localization journey, there is need for ChildFund to do more and set a good example of a localization practitioner; endorse the C4C, advocate more for local actors and seek to influence donors who committed to the Grand Bargain towards child-centered financing mechanisms. Local actors such our LIPs still find it difficult relating with donors. They are still many conditionalities, rules on overheads, mandatory consortium working arrangements, power dynamics, competition from localized international agencies including the UN, lack of a desegregated definition of who is local, donor priority being to the taxpayer and scale-driven resource allocation which disadvantages local actors.

In comparison with [Grand Bargain Progress](#) made to date, ChildFund Kenya has promising practices along the localization journey. The Grand Bargain 2023 report indicates there have been no concrete progress towards a more demand-rather than supply driven humanitarian response; there is ongoing failure to substantially increase funding to local and national actors; quality of funding is still insufficient to enable desired step change in efficiency and effectiveness. ChildFund Kenya can also contribute to closing the knowledge gap amongst LIPs around the Grand Bargain, continue strengthening capacity of local partners possibly play an intermediary role to enable them to meet the stringent requirements of donors. ChildFund's diversification of partnership Portfolio should also strengthen consortium building for grant acquisition and leveraging of resources for children.

Recommendations to Enhance ChildFund's Localization Practice

- ✓ Going forward, ChildFund should seek to more actively participate in the localization discourse at the national level as per the current framework of the [Grand Bargain-Beyond 2023](#).
- ✓ Beyond being an ally and occasional participant, ChildFund should seek to be an endorser of the Charter for Change and indeed enhance the localization journey.
- ✓ Together with Local partners increase in learning of concepts for example around the [Risk Sharing Framework](#) that needs to be factored in the partnership journey.
- ✓ ChildFund should scale up the roadmap to independence model to prepare other LIPs for self-reliance and this could be linked with the phase-out strategy. This should be done responsibly for the success of the Sponsorship Programs.
- ✓ LIPs should be supported to have in place their own strategic and resource mobilization plans. LIPs should be in the driving seat of local resource mobilization and ChildFund should play a key role in creating direct linkages of LIPs with donors. In joint resource mobilization, ChildFund should not be afraid to transfer power to LIPs and let them prime during grant applications with ChildFund support.
- ✓ ChildFund will continue supporting the LIPs in the identification and management of strategic partnerships and provide networking opportunities to LIPs. E.g., Tripartite MoUs with the County Governments.

-Work in Progress...