Progress or Wasteful Efforts? Local Ownership in International Development, 1980s-1990s

Zenashe Aytenfisu

Department of History and Classical Studies

McGill University, Montreal

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Abstract

The international development sector is deeply influenced by colonial legacies and exploitation of the African continent. For decades, development discourse has centered on reforms to the sector to counteract its harmful history. Most reforms prompt development non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to achieve local ownership, meaning that program beneficiaries become decision-makers in the development programs that they access. Critics argue that such discourse is simply trendy jargon that rarely translates into true local ownership. Others strongly believe that the sector can reform and achieve local ownership. By studying three NGOs operating in Ethiopia in the 1980s and 1990s, I conclude that local non-governmental organizations (LNGOs) are well-placed to achieve local ownership, while international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) are not.

Résumé

Le secteur de développement international est profondément affecté par les effets du colonialisme et l'exploitation du continent africain. Depuis des décennies, le discours de développement se concentre sur les réformes au secteur pour inverser son histoire endommageant. La plupart des réformes incitent aux organisations non-gouvernementales (ONGs) à réaliser l'appropriation locale, signifiant que les bénéficiaires de programmes soient les décideurs des programmes de développement qu'ils accèdent. Les critiques soutiennent que tel discours est simplement à la mode et se convertit rarement en appropriation locale. Autres maintiennent fortement que le secteur peut réformer et atteindre l'appropriation locale. En étudiant trois ONGs opérant en Éthiopie pendant les années 1980s et 1990s, je conclus que les ONGs locales sont bien placées à réaliser l'appropriation locale pendant que les ONGs internationales ne sont pas.

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Abbreviations

CBD: Community-Based Distribution

EOC: Ethiopian Orthodox Church

EOC DICAC: Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission

EPLF: Eritrean People's Liberation Front

EPRDF: Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization

FGAE: Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia

LNGO: Local Non-Governmental Organization

LC: London Conference

NFW: Nutritional Field Worker

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NSP: Nutritional Surveillance Programme

ODA: Overseas Development Administration

PAC: Partnership Africa Canada

SCF: Save the Children Fund

SCF UK: Save the Children Fund United Kingdom

UCC: United Church of Canada

Notes on Naming

The terms Global North and West refer to the countries in Europe and North America or any country perceived as high-income and economically developed. The term Global South typically refers to countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia, or any country perceived as low-income, underdeveloped, and previously colonized. This dichotomous naming practice is geographically inaccurate and often leads to an essentialization of the countries associated with the Global South, portraying them as lagging in not just economic, but social and political development.[1] I use the terms Global North, West, and Global South because they are widely understood, but I recognize their limitations and attempt to consciously combat stereotypes about the Global South while using the terminology. The term expatriate is similarly nebulous, used to describe Westerners who voluntarily migrate to the Global South to work.[2] Although expatriates can technically be called immigrants, I use the term expatriate to underline their privilege.

Many of the organizations in the case studies continue to operate and serve Ethiopians today, and numerous individuals associated with the organizations are still living today. I assign a pseudonym to many of the individuals and communities mentioned in this paper. This choice is to protect the confidentiality of beneficiaries and staff members involved in the case studies. This paper intends to observe and critique broad phenomena in the international development sector, and not single out individuals. Furthermore, this paper only considers, critiques, and applauds the work of organizations in the 1980s and 1990s, and does not serve as an evaluation of any organization's present work.

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[1] Sinah Theres Kloß. "The Global South as Subversive Practice: Challenges and Potentials of a Heuristic Concept," *The Global South* 11, no. 2 (2017): 2-4.

[2] Byron G Adams and Fons J.R van de Vijver, "The Many Faces of Expatriate Identity," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 49 (2015): 323-324.

Introduction

The international development sector is unique in its level of self-reflection and self-critique. Critiques of the sector hail from international institutions and governments, development experts, researchers, practitioners, and Global South beneficiaries, all of whom are well aware of the historic abuses and shortcomings of the sector. These voices will be the first to admit that the sector was founded on colonial, racist, and exploitative principles which persist to this day. In typical international development dynamics, the beneficiaries who access development programs have little to no say in a program's design, decisions, or implementation. This pattern does not foster what I call local ownership, meaning that the beneficiaries of international development programs participate in and make decisions about the development programs in their communities.

I explore the case studies of two international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and one local non-governmental organization (LNGO) operating in Ethiopia in the 1980s and 1990s. I examine the differences between the local and international non-governmental organizations' (NGOs) implementations of the principles of local ownership. I conclude by judging whether these NGOs' efforts were genuine and worthwhile, or empty promises without action. These conclusions are useful in predicting whether current sectoral efforts will successfully implement local ownership.

For decades, progressive voices in development discourse have called for countless sectoral reforms to engender local ownership. The NGOs in the case studies engage with the terms of the 1980s and 1990s to describe local ownership, such as indigenization, community participation, decentralization, self-help, rights-based development, dependency prevention, and participatory development. Critics view the terms relating to local ownership as empty buzzwords which allow development organizations and donors to make lofty and vague commitments to local ownership with no tangible follow-through. Others are staunch supporters of the terms' potential to lead to sector change and the empowerment of beneficiaries. In other words, there is doubt surrounding NGOs' abilities to implement local ownership, despite having committed to its principles. I examine to what degree each case study NGO committed to local ownership and subsequently implemented its principles. I also consider how its position as a local or international NGO affected its ability to do so.

Just as in the 1980s and 1990s, present-day international development actors are outwardly committed to achieving local ownership. A new term relating to local ownership is localization, meaning that Global North donors would fund LNGOs directly, without controlling how the LNGOs used the funds. The concept of localization relies on a fundamental belief that LNGOs are better placed than INGOs to implement local ownership. Through the case studies, I explore whether the assertion that LNGOs are more successful in achieving local ownership is correct, and if LNGOs should receive more funding. This paper doubles as both a historical analysis and a contextualization of modern local ownership efforts. By conducting a historical assessment of local ownership efforts in the 1980s and 1990s, readers can predict whether current sectoral commitments to local ownership, such as localization, are viable.

By engaging in development discourse, this thesis risks buttressing the system of development itself, without allowing for a radical critique of the sector's history. When studying development in Lesotho, anthropologist James Ferguson found vast differences between development discourse and academic discourse.[3] Ferguson determined that, although

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[3] Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine,* 29.

development experts were trained in academic research, their reports about Lesotho were riddled with inaccuracies. He concludes that development experts willfully and incorrectly depicted Lesotho as agrarian, traditional, and politically stable to encourage funding for their development projects in the country.[4] In this case, Ferguson illustrates how a principal underlying goal of development discourse is to maintain funding and the continuation of the development sector. Another problematic aspect of development discourse is its depiction of African development as a linear process with a goal of "catching up" to Western development.[5] Since their first encounters with Africa, Europeans constructed epistemes about the continent, disregarding and discrediting African ways of knowing.[6] Current engagements with development discourse can easily replicate this combination of disregard for African voices and manipulation of data to encourage further funding.

This thesis aims to avoid the downfalls of development discourse in three ways. First, it centers African perspectives on international development by seeking African sources or by reading Western sources against the grain. Second, it approaches development discourse with the intention of questioning, rather than asserting, the history and evolution of the international development system. Third, it contributes to the historicization of a more recent chapter in a long history of African advocacy for self-determination, unity, and sovereignty.

In many ways, the premise of local ownership presented in this thesis draws from the ideals of African sovereignty, self-determination, decolonization, Pan-Africanism, and anti-imperialism. Political theorist Adom Getachew outlines how African thinkers and intellectuals

[4] Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine,* 69-71.

[5] Corrie Decker and Elisabeth McMahon, "From Progress to Development," in *The Idea of Development in Africa: A History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020) 21.

[6] Corrie Decker and Elisabeth McMahon, "Knowledge and the Development Episteme," in *The Idea of Development in Africa: A History* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2020) 41.

have catalyzed historic shifts in global discourse about injustice, inequality, and poverty in Africa. In the 1930s, thinkers such as W.E.B. DuBois, C.L.R. James, and George Padmore critiqued imperialism and bolstered the movement of Pan-Africanism and internationalism. In Padmore's words, Pan-Africanism meant "the attainment of the government of Africans by Africans for Africans."[7] These intellectuals organized against Italy's 1935 invasion of Ethiopia, some by appealing to the League of Nations and others, who were disillusioned with the League of Nations, by advocating for workers around the world to sanction Italy.[8]

Intellectuals and leaders of the 1960s led the fight for decolonization, with Kwame Nkrumah calling for the United Nations to oppose imperialism.[9] To Nkrumah, DuBois, and Padmore, the labour system of colonialism was akin to enslavement.[10] In 1960, the United Nations passed a monumental Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Amílcar Cabral, who was fighting for Guinea Bissau's independence against Portugal, spoke of the declaration, saying that "colonialism is now an international crime."[11]

In the 1970s, Michael Manley in Jamaica and Julius Nyerere in Tanzania represented a new generation of advocates against the capitalist economic system of dependence disadvantaging Black nations.[12] Nyerere and Manley, among others, pushed for the United Nations' New International Economic Order (NIEO) which would right unequal trade relationships between developed and underdeveloped countries.[13] The 1980s economic crisis put

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[7] Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019) 76.
[8] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 67-69.
[9] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 73.
[10] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 82-83.
[11] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 73.
[12] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 151.
[13] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 160-161.

an end to NIEO's traction, with international financial institutions taking control of global economic planning from the hands of United Nations lawmakers. Furthermore, crises such as the 1980s Ethiopian famine shifted global institutions from addressing systemic inequality to providing needs-based solutions.[14]

Undeniably, thinkers from across the Black Atlantic have been tireless advocates for African peoples' self-determination, unity, and sovereignty with regard to addressing injustice, poverty, and inequality. It is unclear how the past movements for anticolonialism and self-determination will manifest in the present era, especially concerning the international development sector. For the most part, the concepts of local ownership of the 1980s and 1990s presented in this thesis did not originate from African advocacy and thinking. Yet, the premises of local ownership and African decision-making echo some of the values of Padmore, Du Bois, James, Nyerere, Nkrumah, and many others. In assessing NGOs' implementations of local ownership, I aim to historicize and contextualize the more recent period of the 1980s and 1990s within a longer history of advocacy against injustice, poverty, and inequality in Africa. Perhaps, in doing so, this thesis will provide the historical backdrop for the present generation of African thinkers as they advocate for self-determination, anticolonialism, and African sovereignty.

[14] Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire,* 175.

Chapter 1: Local Ownership

History of Development

International development is a term that encompasses short- and long-term development programs and economic aid. International development programs are typically implemented by NGOs to improve quality of life and eradicate poverty throughout the world.[15] These programs are also likely to exhibit a lack of local ownership when serving Global South communities. International aid, on the other hand, refers to economic arrangements between international institutions and governments. Although this study focuses on development programs and not economic aid, the two are entwined. An understanding of the history and critiques of development, including economic aid, is useful.

Long before Europeans began imposing colonial systems reliant on African labour and skills, African societies had developed systems to protect against poverty. According to historian John Iliffe, in precolonial African societies, most individuals experienced poverty only situationally, such as during famine or conflict. The experience of indefinite poverty was reserved for slaves, or for those who could not physically work. In some languages, the term to describe a poor person was defined as a person lacking kinship connections, rather than lacking wealth. In many societies, a leader gained approval by providing for the larger community, thus ensuring communal well-being. Families could protect themselves against possible crises by storing grain or keeping commodities for trade, such as cattle. Both Muslim and Christian institutions provided charity to their communities. Many societies safeguarded against poverty through arrangements of servitude, working off debts, and relying on family networks. Iliffe

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[15] James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 55.

pinpoints a shift in systems of poverty during the 19th century, with the introduction of European systems of private property, wage labour, and limitations on polygamy and kinship building.[16]

As Europeans arrived in Africa in the 19th century, they began missionary movements in earnest. These missionaries worked on their "civilizing mission" to simultaneously spread Christianity and import Western ideals to Africans. In this narrative, missionaries could see themselves as humanitarians promoting economic development, rather than colonizers exploiting Africa's resources.[17] To historians Corrie Decker and Elisabeth McMahon, the missionary profile reincarnated in the 20th century in the form of NGOs. Though NGOs were secular, they echoed missionary rhetoric about "saving" Africans. While missionaries hoped to import "civilization," NGOs promised to import democracy, human rights, and economic development. Both missionaries and NGOs positioned themselves as voices who could communicate the needs of African people to large international institutions and governments.[18] Scholars Firoze Manji and Carl O'Coill describe the substitution of missionaries with NGOs succinctly.

> It was no longer that Africans were "uncivilized." Instead, they were "underdeveloped." Either way, the "civilized" or "developed" European has a role to play in "civilizing" or "developing" Africa."[19]

The present iteration of international development and economic aid can be traced to the 1940s.[20] With Europe reeling from the effects of Word War II, Western countries rallied to provide aid to European countries to rebuild and stimulate trade. In 1947, under the Marshall Plan, the United States offered significant economic aid to multiple European countries. The

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[16] John Iliffe, *The African Poor: A History*. African Studies Series (Cambridge Cambridgeshire: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 9-29.
[17] Decker and McMahon, "From Progress to Development," 24.
[18] Decker and McMahon, "The New Missionaries," 164-166.
[19] Firoze Manji and Carl O'Coill, "The Missionary Position: NGOs and Development in Africa," International Affairs 78: 3 (2002) 574.
[20] Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. (Princeton University Press, 1995) 4.

international community deemed the Marshall Plan a success, and Global North countries turned their attention to Africa as a recipient of future aid. By the 1960s, Global North countries began implementing development programs in Africa and offering African countries aid to fund large-scale industrial projects. In the 1970s, at a time of global inflation, many African countries began accessing loans from Global North institutions at low interest rates, then cyclically borrowing to repay debts, leading to recessions in most African countries. By the end of the 1970s, several African countries were receiving exceptionally high amounts of foreign aid.[21]

Not so coincidentally, the arrival of aid and development programs in Africa aligned with the exit of colonial powers in newly independent African countries. Following independence, many African countries were experiencing a gap in previously colonially provided services, such as education and health. In many countries, development NGOs stepped in to fill the gap. This period was characterized by sharp increases in the number of local and international NGOs in Africa. For instance, Kenya saw its INGOs grow by 260 percent, and its LNGOs grow by 115 percent between 1978 and 1987.[22] Consequently, many view development as a transmogrified form of colonialism, arguing that, though European colonizing countries officially exited most African governments in the 1960s, they maintained power by introducing international development programs on the continent.[23] To Kwame Nkrumah, the former president of Ghana and leader in its independence struggle, aid schemes and development programs were simply a new way for the West to maintain its powerful grip on Africa. Nkrumah argued that the West

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[21] Dambisa Moyo, *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is Not Working and How There Is Another Way for Africa* (London: Allen Lane, 2009), 10-17.
[22] Kassahun Berhanu, “The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values,” in *Ethiopia: The Challenge of Democracy from Below*, ed. Bahru Zewde and Siegfried Pausewang (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002), 121.
[23] Olivia U. Rutazibwa, “On Babies and Bathwater: Decolonizing International Development Studies,” in *Decolonization and Feminisms in Global Teaching and Learning*, ed. Sara de Jong, Rosalba Icaza, and Olivia Rutazibwa (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2019) 161.

achieved this by charging high rates of interest when lending to Africa, suppressing African political revolutions, and using film, evangelism, and Western development volunteers to disseminate pro-Western capitalist propaganda.[24] Historian Walter Rodney echoes Nkrumah's stance, highlighting the immense devastation caused by Europe's colonization of Africa, and how that devastation has persisted by way of neocolonialism and a continued European presence in Africa.[25]

Although Ethiopia was never formally colonized by European powers, its current political and economic patterns reflect those of African countries which were colonized. It experienced similar increases in economic aid and financial indebtedness to the Global North.[26] Consequently, Ethiopia's international development sector also shares many qualities with other African nations. The results of this case study can be applied to other African countries, and to countries throughout the Global South, to assess the potential for development NGOs to enact local ownership.

Critiques of Development

Although the development sector engages in self-critique, many commentators call into question the sector's authenticity when committing to local ownership. The following scholars provide sharp critiques of development and aid, which are relevant and applicable to the NGO case studies.

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[24] Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1966), 239-251.
[25] Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington: Howard University Press, 1974), 287-290.
[26] Maraki S. Kebede, "Transnational Educational Leadership of International Organizations Working in Ethiopia: Walking the Local-Global Development Tightrope," PhD thesis, (Pennsylvania State University, 2020), 13-14; Xavier Furtado and James Smith, "Ethiopia: Aid, Ownership, and Sovereignty," *University of Oxford, Global Economic Governance Programme,* GEG Working Paper No. 2007/28 (2007): 4-8.

In 2009, Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo published a book advocating for a complete stop to economic aid in Africa. Moyo's work proposes that Africans can and should be left to build their economies without external aid and intervention. What is perhaps most remarkable about Moyo's work is the emotional response it elicited in many voices of development discourse. Bill Gates, a wealthy entrepreneur and international development philanthropist, accused Moyo's book of "promoting evil." Jeffrey Sachs, a leading development economist, called Moyo's perspective "cruel and mistaken."[27] The intense responses provoked by Moyo's critique reveal a fundamental undercurrent of development discourse. Many voices in the sector adamantly oppose radical reforms to aid such as those advanced by Moyo. Rather, they push for a continuation of the sector, lightly critique its colonial history, and propose slight tweaks to the system in hopes to achieve local ownership.[28]

Jeffrey Sachs is a major advocate for aid and paints a hopeful picture of how achievable it would be to end extreme global poverty within decades, through increased aid to the Global South. Sachs works squarely within United Nations frameworks to end global poverty, which have been criticized as lofty and immeasurable.[29] Another development economist, William Easterly, disputes the work of what he calls aid utopians such as Jeffrey Sachs. According to Easterly, aid utopians attempt to implement top-down economic policies without understanding the local norms that dictate economic relationships. Easterly is highly critical of Western aid agencies and disparages their partnering with corrupt governments. For instance, he condemns the nefarious apoliticism of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank when issuing loans

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[27] Claire Provost, "Bill Gates and Dambisa Moyo Spat Obscures the Real Aid Debate," *The Guardian*, May 31, 2013.
[28] Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty: Economic Possibilities for Our Time* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005) 39-41, 208.
[29] Thomas Pogge and Mitu Sengupta, "Assessing the Sustainable Development Goals from a Human Rights Perspective," *Journal of International and Comparative Social Policy* 32, no. 2 (2016): 88, 90.

to the Hutu government leading up to the Rwandan genocide. Easterly labels as arrogant the belief that a donor can change another community's problems better than the community itself. Ultimately, Easterly believes that aid cannot end poverty, and that only poor countries and people can lift themselves out of poverty. In many ways, Easterly's critiques call for increased local ownership. Both Moyo and Easterly's critiques unveil the development sector's failures to achieve local ownership. The scholars make a cogent case for the discontinuation or heavy reformation of the current system of development.

Other critical voices focus on development's role in upholding capitalism. As James Ferguson points out, if one applies neo-Marxist and dependency theory to study development, one can sensibly conclude that capitalism is the cause of poverty in the Global South. Therefore, any capitalist development program will be unsuccessful at solving poverty, as it upholds the system of capitalism causing global poverty.[30] Geography scholar Andrew Brooks further outlines the intersection between capitalism and development, explaining that Western development programs deliberately promote the expansion of corporations in the Global South. These programs have increased economic disparity by encouraging free markets and liberalized economies, particularly in Africa.[31] Firoze Manji and Carl O'Coill assert that free trade and development have been linked since the 1840s. In British colonies in Africa, the colonial administration provided limited health and education services to Africans with the intention of upholding the economic system that relied on African labour. Any additional services were provided by charities or missionary societies. These organizations had agendas of their own,

[30] Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine*, 9, 65-66.
[31] Andrew Brooks, *The End of Development: A Global History of Poverty and Prosperity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic & Professional, 2017), 10.

including evangelizing Africans, suppressing revolutionary organizing, and protecting the exploitative colonial labour system.[32]

Development scholar Gilbert Rist investigates the concept of economic self-reliance that burgeoned in the 1960s and its implications for foreign aid. Rist attributes Julius Nyerere as the catalyst of such discussions. The former president of Tanzania adopted a declaration of self-reliance in 1967 predicated on a socialist state. The declaration maintained that no donor of foreign aid would offer Tanzania enough aid to truly solve poverty, the acceptance of foreign aid could threaten Tanzania's autonomy, and in any case, money alone could not solve poverty in Tanzania. To Nyerere, self-reliance clashed with foreign aid.[33] Rist adds that, no matter how good the intentions of foreign aid might be, aid cannot coexist with full self-reliance. Ironically, Tanzania's quest to achieve self-reliance gained the popular support of international donors, and by 1977, sixty percent of Tanzania's measures to address underdevelopment were funded by foreign aid. Rist calls this paradoxical outcome "domination through giving."[34] In this observation, Rist highlights the contradictions of development organizations and donors who outwardly support local ownership while simultaneously unraveling its objectives.

Numerous scholars identify the paradox of development organizations that commit to local ownership without acknowledging the sector's ties to capitalism and colonialism. According to Aziz Choudry, an education scholar, development organizations' refusal to name capitalism and neocolonialism as a cause of poverty in the Global South is intentional. For instance, Choudry argues, development organizations align themselves with the concept of

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[32] Manji and O'Coill, "The Missionary Position," 568-570.
[33] Gilbert Rist, *The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith* (London: Zed Books, 2014), 123, 127-130.
[34] Rist, *The History of Development* (London: Zed Books, 2014), 133-134.

democracy while simultaneously undermining it by gaining power and lobbying governments. Or, he adds, some NGOs propose adjustments to trade liberalization, but never truly challenge the fundamental trade system. To Choudry, these NGOs conflict with and even suppress Indigenous, peasant farmer, and communities of colour's movements. Choudry's arguments highlight the ironies of development organizations in their simultaneous campaigns for and undercutting of genuine local ownership.[35]

Historically, development NGOs have been founded, led, and staffed by people from the Global North, but serve beneficiaries from the Global South. This dynamic produces an uneven balance, with Global North countries yielding economic power over beneficiaries. Moreover, many Global North staff lack knowledge of local languages, customs, and development contexts, which impedes their ability to effectively serve local beneficiaries. To further complicate the problem, many NGOs are headed and staffed by white development workers, while beneficiaries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are people of colour. In this dynamic, Global North development workers may hold racist views about program beneficiaries which permeate their development work. This pattern is sometimes called the white saviour complex, meaning that white development workers feel that they are rescuing African, Asian, and Latin American beneficiaries. The motivations of white saviours are not purely humanitarian, but rather egocentric and self-serving.[36] Adjacent to the white saviour complex is the phenomenon of "voluntourism," in which development volunteers from the Global North view their volunteer assignments in the Global South as a form of poverty tourism. These volunteers spend short

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[35] Aziz Choudry, "Global Justice? Contesting NGOization: Knowledge Politics and Containment in Antiglobalization Networks," in *Learning from the Ground Up: Global Perspectives on Social Movements and Knowledge Production* ed. Aziz Choudry and Dip Kapoor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 20-21, 29.
[36] Kebede, "Transnational Educational Leadership," 64.

amounts of time in beneficiary communities, offer few professional skills to support projects, and leave having done little work and sometimes even having done damage.[37]

Development scholar Komla Tsey relays an instance of damaging development practices in his rural hometown of Botoku, Ghana. Tsey describes the experience of a student who was photographed to become sponsored by a German woman through a large Global North INGO. Before the photo was taken, the boy and the other sponsored children were told to change from their regular school uniforms into the shabby clothes they wore to work on their family's farms. This guaranteed that the INGO's donors would view sponsored children as especially impoverished. The same boy, years later, reflected on the pitfalls of the sponsorship program. His family, and many others, expected their children to be supported throughout high school and beyond, but this did not take place. They explained that, had they known that the support would be short-lived, they would have worked to mobilize funds on their own to secure their own children's futures.[38] Tsey's anecdote saliently underscores how the INGO's sponsorship program did not rely on principles of local ownership and enabled a damaging pattern of dependency.

A common critique of development and aid is that it engenders a system of dependency. Dependency is usually negatively described as the process of beneficiaries becoming dependent on the continuation of external development assistance.[39] A core issue behind worries about dependency is that a program would lack local ownership. A locally owned development program whose beneficiaries make decisions negates the concept of dependency, as beneficiaries

[37] Pippa Biddle, *Ours to Explore: Privilege, Power, and the Paradox of Voluntourism* (Lincoln: Potomac Books, 2021) 44-47, 132-136.
[38] Komla Tsey, *Re-Thinking Development in Africa: An Oral History Approach from Botoku, Rural Ghana* (Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa RPCIG, 2011), 109-110.
[39] Paul Harvey and Jeremy Lind, "Dependency and Humanitarian Relief: A Critical Analysis," *Humanitarian Policy Group* HPG Report 19 (July 2005): 3.

cannot logically become dependent on themselves. Anthropologist and legal scholar David Lempert offers a framework for development NGOs to ensure they are preventing dependency by measuring whether they are instilling the opposite values of dependency. He defines the opposite of dependency as an NGO's commitment to protecting local peoples' cultures, identities, control of resources, and freedom of choice.[40] Essentially, Lempert views the solution to dependency as the promotion of local ownership. In this paper, I measure how effectively each case study NGO prevents dependency using David Lempert's framework of local ownership.

Historian Kevin O'Sullivan describes how, in the 1960s, a group of British NGO practitioners turned critics of the sector called for changes. They believed that systemic change and not charity, no matter how well-intentioned, would solve the world's poverty. Similar debates were proliferating in the sector about whether NGOs should operate with a philosophy of justice or charity. A justice approach meant that the NGOs and donors were ethically responsible to provide for marginalized people, while a charitable approach meant that donors would give voluntarily in the spirit of goodwill. The justice approach did not sit well with many NGOs and donors, as it was predicated on an expectation of forced and involuntary giving.[41] One INGO leader quipped about the justice approach that, "the people who contribute and want to help are not digits, to have their money snatched from them and their consciences thrown back in their face."[42] As this remark insinuates, resistance to the justice approach was twofold. First, donors would lose the free will to disperse aid and resources. Second, donors would lose the ability to offer aid on their own terms and with their consciences intact. In other words, donors typically

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[40] David H Lempert, "A Dependency in Development Indicator for NGOs and International Organizations," *Global Jurist* 9, no. 2 (2009): 5-6.

[41] Kevin O'Sullivan, *The NGO Moment: The Globalisation of Compassion from Biafra to Live Aid* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 57-58, 68.
[42] O'Sullivan, *The NGO Moment*, 68.

expect a level of control over their disbursed funding. Most donors also expect a level of economic, personal, or political benefit for their efforts. This assertion is alluded to by scholars who critique development programs for their saviour dynamics, exploitation of African resources, and repression of African political organizing.

Though it is possible to find malice in INGO and donor intentions, O'Sullivan emphasizes that there is little value in attempting to differentiate between "good" and "bad" charitable intentions. Instead, he advocates for studying how even the best intentions can produce harmful development results.[43] In the case studies, I concentrate less on the intentions of the three development organizations, and more on their implementations of local ownership. In the conclusion, I return to the issue of intentions to decipher failed implementations of local ownership.

Attempts at Achieving Local Ownership

Evidently, INGOs operating in the Global South have been seriously critiqued for perpetuating harmful patterns of development. In response, many voices in development discourse offer possible solutions, including suggestions that INGOs collaborate with LNGOs, set up country offices, or fund grassroots LNGOs. However, each of these fixes presents distinct flaws. Emma Mawdsley, Janet Townsend, Gina Porter, and Peter Oakley, a team of researchers, examine the partnership problems between LNGOs and INGOs. Maraki Kebede, an international education scholar, analyzes the Global South country offices of Northern INGOs and the resulting failures to achieve local ownership. International education scholars Aziz Choudry and Sangeeta Kamat argue that Global North funding converts grassroots, activist LNGOs into

[43] O'Sullivan, *The NGO Moment*, 173-174.

professionalized and depoliticized organizations. In each case, scholars signal that collaboration and funding flows between Global North INGOs and Global South LNGOs do not always advance local ownership.

Some may view funding grassroots LNGOs as a clear path to achieving local ownership. However, multiple scholars highlight the devastating impacts of Northern funding on Southern NGO activism. Scholars such as Alex De Waal and Demeke Getachew argue that NGOs must act politically and oppose governments to truly carry out their missions and enact change.[44] Indeed, many grassroots LNGOs are vocal in critiquing their governments, but Aziz Choudry warns of their tendencies to professionalize and depoliticize their work when seeking Global North funding. This phenomenon is called NGOization, meaning that activist movements are often asked to establish a managerial capacity to acquire funding, which in turn leads to their depoliticization.[45] Sangeeta Kamat concurs that many LNGOs set out to raise consciousness and oppose neo-liberal government measures but grow to adopt functional and apolitical approaches to reducing poverty. Kamat contends that the shifts in LNGOs' politicism are influenced by large institutions such as the World Bank which fund only apolitical, managerial, competitive, and entrepreneurial LNGOs. To receive this funding, previously activist LNGOs transform themselves into neo-liberal professionalized NGOs. According to Kamat, this process of professionalization renders the NGO sector inseparable from the dominant neo-liberal state.[46]

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[44] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 124.

[45] Aziz Choudry, "Global Justice? Contesting NGOization: Knowledge Politics and Containment in Antiglobalization Networks," in *Learning from the Ground Up: Global Perspectives on Social Movements and Knowledge Production* ed. Aziz Choudry and Dip Kapoor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) 18-20.

[46] Sangeeta Kamat, "The NGO Phenomenon and Political Culture in the Third World," *Development* 46, no. 1 (2003): 89–93.

Tellingly, when discussing the career trajectories of senior staff members at their LNGO, a lower-level employee told Mawdsley et al. that, “now they are all managers, not activists.”[47]

In their observations of fifteen LNGO-INGO partnerships, Mawdsley et al. discovered similar concerns about professionalization. As Northern NGOs of the 1990s and 2000s began receiving significantly more government and donor funding than those of previous decades, their mindsets shifted from solidarity-focused to professionalized, managerial, and disconnected from Southern partners. INGO interviewees reported that their work had become bureaucratized, antithetical to compassionate development, jargonized, and overloaded with paperwork.[48] To complicate power dynamics, large Southern NGOs were often more fluent in the bureaucratic, professionalized language of the development sector than their smaller Southern counterparts, and thus received more Global North funding.[49] The researchers contended that if small Southern NGOs were able to be selective in their choice of partners and donors, they could effectively convey their ideological views, express dissent, and maintain their activism.[50] Yet, Mawdsley et al. acknowledged that most small Southern NGOs were not in a financial position to turn away Northern funding despite its stipulations of apoliticism. Choudry, Kamat, and Mawdsley et al.’s analyses challenge the belief that, by simply funding and partnering with grassroots LNGOs, local ownership will be achieved. In practice, the opposite is often true.

Various INGOs have set up country offices in the Global South, staffed by locals, to run their field operations. Maraki Kebede, an education scholar, explores the challenges of the Ethiopian country offices of European INGOs. The country offices were staffed by Ethiopians

[47] Emma Mawdsley, Janet Townsend, Gina Porter and Peter Oakley, *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas: NGOs North and South* (Oxford: INTRAC, 2002), 134.
[48] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas,* 124.
[49] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas,* 125.
[50] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas,* 146-149.

but beholden to the decisions of their European headquarters. Many Ethiopian staff members felt they did not receive culturally and regionally specific job training. Partly because of this poor job training, the country offices experienced high rates of turnover, and, in turn, had difficulty establishing long-term connections in beneficiary communities. Many country office staff felt disconnected from their Northern headquarters. [51] Mawdsley et al. found similar feelings of frustration among their interviewees. In many cases, the Southern NGOs had no clear point of contact for the Global South offices when communicating with Northern offices. When there was a point of contact, it was typically a low-level program officer charged with overseeing the entire Southern NGO's operations.[52]

Kebede also noticed that the country offices were occasionally seen by Ethiopians as a better alternative to state services. She recommended that, rather than competing with state efforts, the country offices increase the capacity of Ethiopian government authorities to conduct the programs themselves.[53] Furthermore, country offices struggled to be seen as local, even when employing entirely Ethiopian staff. In one case, a young boy from a program community referred to the country office as "the Germans" because the INGO headquarters were in Germany, despite the Ethiopian country office being staffed completely by Ethiopians. The boy's comments revealed the tendency for local communities to consider foreign-headquartered INGOs as wholly foreign, even when their country staff was Ethiopian.[54] In multiple aspects, the European INGOs failed to achieve local ownership despite establishing country offices and employing Ethiopian staff.

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[51] Kebede, "Transnational Educational Leadership," 109-111.
[52] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas,* 115-116.
[53] Kebede, "Transnational Educational Leadership," 145.
[54] Kebede, "Transnational Educational Leadership," 111.

Kebede offers a thought-provoking alternative to country offices struggling to achieve local ownership. She suggests that INGOs headed by members of the Ethiopian diaspora, rather than non-Ethiopian Northern leadership, would guarantee local ownership because of their cultural connections to Ethiopia. A non-Ethiopian-led INGO whose country office employs Ethiopians would still be viewed as a foreign presence in Ethiopian communities. However, a country office staffed with local Ethiopians, combined with a diaspora-run INGO headquarters, would have a high chance of achieving local ownership in a development project.[55] In fact, throughout the Global South, members of the diaspora take part in the aid landscape by sending remittances to their family members. Economist Dambisa Moyo suggests that African countries reduce the banking fees associated with remittances to stimulate and strengthen African economies. In Ethiopia, a future of increased diaspora involvement is conceivable. In the mid-1990s, the Ethiopian government began implementing policies to attract diaspora investors. The government began offering a unique status to people of Ethiopian origin living outside Ethiopia, affording them certain privileges, including the opportunity to receive free residential land in Ethiopia.[56] A heightened diaspora presence in development is a compelling potential solution to boosting local ownership, though not one represented in this paper's case studies.

In studying the partnerships between LNGOs and INGOs, Mawdsley et al. noted substantial issues. The researchers gathered that Northern INGOs wielded power over their Southern partners as they controlled access to funding, political sway, and inaccessible knowledge, such as the understanding of how to complete bureaucratic funding applications. They also found an overwhelming lack of reciprocal information sharing between Northern and Southern NGOs.

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[55] Kebede, "Transnational Educational Leadership," 154.
[56] Elizabeth Chacko and Peter H. Gebre, "Leveraging the Diaspora for Development: Lessons from Ethiopia," *GeoJournal* 78, no. 3 (2013): 498-499.

When sharing could take place, Northern NGOs and donors failed to truly listen to and incorporate Southern NGOs' and beneficiaries' feedback. Furthermore, there were no formal systems in place for Northern staff to learn from their Southern peers. Because of these systemic gaps, Southern NGOs withheld information, telling Northern partners what they wanted to hear and keeping their own knowledge and power to themselves.[57]

A significant challenge for LNGOs was adhering to the complex reporting processes of Northern INGOs. Development NGOs are expected to track how well their programs achieve goals and targets. This is often a time-consuming process using a rigid metrics system designed by Northern INGOs and donors, with little or no input from beneficiaries. Many NGOs measured their programs on performance indicators which could be achieved in ways that contradicted the principles of local ownership. For example, a program could succeed at achieving an indicator of maintaining a low death rate in a hospital by refusing to treat sick patients. Or it could ensure a high rate of loan repayments in a microcredit program by only lending to rich beneficiaries. Southern LNGOs identified one reporting process, the logical framework approach, as a particularly undemocratic tool to control Southern partners and impose restrictive timelines to achieve goals. Southern NGOs also disliked funding applications that were long, unwieldy, and required to be written in English rather than their community's regional language. It should be noted that, while Southern NGOs resented convoluted reporting processes, most felt that visits from their Northern partners to check in on the progress of their programs were welcome and necessary.[58] In essence, their critiques came from a place of genuine dissatisfaction with reporting processes, separate from partnership issues they may have faced with Northern

[57] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas,* 131-133, 149-151.
[58] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas,* 143, 146, 152-153.

partners. A principal takeaway from the reporting grievances is that the development sector prioritizes LNGO accountability to Northern funders despite its burden on LNGOs. The researchers propose that a better development system would give beneficiaries decision-making power at each stage of program design, execution, and evaluation. In other words, the researchers are suggesting a system of reporting based on local ownership. As a result, the programs would be accountable to beneficiary needs, rather than just to Northern donors.[59]

The above scholars expertly identify the limitations of attempts to achieve local ownership by funding or partnering with LNGOs and establishing country offices. The inclusion of their critiques is not to suggest that Northern funding of LNGOs is futile. On the contrary, it is meant to identify the gaps in LNGO-INGO collaboration to elucidate how LNGOs may be better supported. In the next section, I outline the many terms related to local ownership that have emerged over the past few decades. The most recent term, localization, describes the concept of financing LNGOs without restricting and directing how LNGOs use the funding, thus averting the lack of local ownership in the INGO-LNGO relationships described by Choudry, Kamat, Kebede, and Mawdsley et al.

The Changing Terminology of Local Ownership

Since the mid-20th century, a slew of terms has emerged in development discourse, all relating in some way to shifting inequitable development dynamics and achieving the principles of local ownership. The list of terms is long: restructuring, regionalization, federation, participatory development, indigenization, partnership, decentralization, localization, dependency prevention, self-help, and more. As seen in the case studies to come, NGOs

[59] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas,* 144.

operating in Ethiopia in the 1980s and 1990s engaged with ideas of local ownership, through these different development terms. Despite the different names, each term relates to local ownership and the relinquishing of power to beneficiaries. For instance, starting in the 1970s, many European INGOs were adopting decentralization. This term referred to a bottom-up development approach of Northern INGOs giving Southern country offices more decision-making power.[60] Despite each term's noble pledge to achieve some form of local ownership, scholars and activists have argued that many terms have become hollow, meaningless, and coopted by powerful institutions. Therefore, it is difficult to decipher whether the NGOs in the case studies, when outwardly engaging with ideas of local ownership, truly implemented changes in their programs.

Manji and O'Coill contextualize the history of sectoral discussions about local ownership. The scholars describe that, as African countries gained independence in the mid-20th century, colonial charities were forced to transform their image and separate themselves from the colonial regimes which they had upheld. On the other hand, war charities were organizations that had begun their work in Europe during World War II, and thus were free of the negative public image that colonial charities had developed. Still, war charities participated in development discourse about local ownership, and in doing so, gained popular support as they set up programs in Africa. Despite their engagement with development discourse, Manji and O'Coill argue that war charities took up the mantle of colonial charities' work. Just as colonial charities had done, war charities suppressed communist and political organizing, paid Africans significantly less than white expatriate staff, and operated without the principles of local ownership.[61] In this

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[60] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas,* 117
[61] Manji and O'Coill, "The Missionary Position," 572-576.

history, Manji and O'Coill illustrate how participating in discourse about local ownership is in the best interest of any INGO hoping to disassociate their image from the development sector's colonial past.

As Manji and O'Coill described, development organizations and institutions have pledged to reform the sector for decades, and with each new wave of commitments, new terms have arisen in development discourse. When training a new hire to work in Somalia in 1985, a Global North INGO's orientation facilitator emphasized that the INGO's "approach is not to give a man a fish but to teach him how to fish."[62] This expression about teaching a man to fish was referencing participatory development, a then-popular term related to local ownership, and meaning that Global South beneficiaries were meant to have a say in directing development programming. Michael Maren, a former development worker in East Africa turned critic of the development sector, considered this term to be the buzzword of the era, coined by academics, and then adopted by policymakers and government. Repeating the term participatory development was necessary when writing funding proposals and program reports, and when donor representatives would show up to monitor the project. To Maren, this meaningless cycle would appease donors and ensure continued program funding.[63]

Maren's frustrations with the terms he encountered signal a real phenomenon of increased jargonization in development discourse. Anthropologist and global studies scholar Andrea Cornwall explores how political ideas are rendered unclear through development discourse. To illustrate, Gilbert Rist suggests that the hazily defined term "sustainable

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[62] Michael Maren, *The Road to Hell: The Ravaging Effects of Foreign Aid and International Charity* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 45.
[63] Maren, *The Road to Hell*, 45-46.

development" is widely embraced precisely due to its ambiguous nature and multiple interpretations.[64] Cornwall notes that development terms are often intentionally vaguely defined to be easily incorporated into political discourse, a milieu in which a term's ambiguity facilitates multiple interpretations by lawmakers.[65] In this process, previously radical and grassroots ideas become depoliticized and coopted by the mainstream. Indeed, the words of a Global South employee identify the problem of vague and depoliticized development terms aptly.

> We've forgotten how to speak plain English…it's trends, fashions…I think that spoils the simplicity and force of some of the ideas that otherwise would be presented.[66]

While Maren and Cornwall draw attention to the epistemological flaws of development terms, the following scholars underscore the challenging translation of theories of local ownership into development practice and fieldwork.

In interviews with development LNGOs and INGOs in the 1990s, Mawdsley et al. noticed that many organizations were implementing indigenization, the process of hiring staff from local communities rather than foreigners and, particularly, Westerners. This practice was seen as achieving a level of local ownership and cultural congruence between staff and beneficiaries. To be clear, most INGOs indigenized at their lower and mid-level staff positions, but not in their leadership roles, suggesting the limits of Northern INGOs' willingness to share power. It was also debatable how much the presence of Southern staff with a similar educational and professional background to a Northern staff truly represented disenfranchised beneficiaries' voices. Furthermore, both

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[64] Rist, *The History of Development* (London: Zed Books, 2014), 192-196.
[65] Andrea Cornwall, "Buzzwords and Fuzzwords: Deconstructing Development Discourse," *Development in Practice* 17, no. 4-5 (2007): 474-482.
[66] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agenda,* 125.

LNGOs and INGOs reported that, occasionally, it was preferable to hire a foreigner who was more neutral when engaging with regional politics. Despite the flaws in the indigenization process, many offices reported that indigenization was worthwhile.[67]

Implementing indigenization certainly benefited Global North INGOs. When indigenized, Northern INGOs could label their country offices as Southern LNGOs, thus opening new avenues of funding. Other motivations behind indigenization included Northern offices saving money on salaries by hiring locals, who were paid less than foreigners, decreasing administrative burdens on Northern headquarters, and improving the public view of the NGO. Seldom did indigenization truly result in Southern partners taking on meaningful roles in program planning or decision-making. In fact, many Southern country offices interviewed by Mawdsley et al. advocated for an increased presence of Northern staff in local communities. Many preferred that their Northern NGO partners establish offices in the country to engage with Southern partners more regularly, rather than simply flying in representatives to check on projects twice a year.[68] Mawdsley et al.'s interviews indicate that implementing processes like indigenization in practice does not automatically constitute local ownership. In the following case studies, I will explore the difficulties NGOs faced when implementing indigenization, community participation, participatory development, self-help, and dependency prevention.

In the 2010s, many NGOs and experts in the development sector began advocating for localization, meaning that international development organizations directly fund Global South LNGOs and governments. While this paper focuses on non-governmental organizations,

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[67] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas*, 119-120.
[68] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas*, 117-119.

localization proponents also advocate for the funding of Global South government authorities. Just as Kebede argued, localization activists recognize that by strengthening Global South government services, beneficiaries will have better access to local development services. Most importantly, in the truest implementation of localization, Northern donors would not control, direct, or restrict how their funding would be used by Southern organizations.[69] At its core, the localization agenda embodies the principles of local ownership. However, as it becomes increasingly adopted into development discourse, the term localization risks losing its strength.

In 2016, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs formed the Grand Bargain as an agreement between some of the world's largest and most powerful donors and humanitarian organizations who committed to implementing localization.[70] Until 2020, only one Global South organization was taking part in the process. This organization found the Grand Bargain structure to be rigid and hierarchical, and lacking in transparency.[71] The Grand Bargain did not develop clear indicators to measure its progress towards localization, and by the end of its project cycle, it had not achieved its goals of increasing direct funding to LNGOs. In fact, an outspoken proponent of localization regarded the popularized discourse around localization as increasingly empty rhetoric with, "a lot of nice aspirational language, but no real action and substantive systems change."[72] The Grand Bargain's embrace of the term localization exemplified the pattern delineated by Maren and Cornwall. Once radical terms,

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[69] Cyprien Fabre, "Localising the Response," *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development,* 2017, 1-2, 4-5.
[70] "About the Grand Bargain," *Inter Agency Standing Committee*.
[71] "Grand Bargain in 2020: Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary," *Network for Empowered Aid Response,* February 16, 2021, 4-5.
[72] Lisa Cornish, "Is It Finally Time for the Localization Agenda to Take Off?" *Devex*, June 3, 2020.

when adopted by powerful institutions, are often fated to become vague, depoliticized, and un-implementable.

In practice, the implementation of localization is wrought with obstacles. A report by Save the Children Denmark and researchers from the Feinstein International Center concluded that LNGOs face numerous challenges, even when their donors commit to localization. Challenges included: competition with other LNGOs and INGOs to secure funding, a lack of communication with international funders, inflexible funding requirements, a lack of capacity-building, a lack of support for holistic and cross-sectoral approaches, adherence to risk management programs which lay undue burdens on LNGOs, and a lack of trust from international partners.[73] Notably, the fact that some LNGOs struggled with inflexible funding requirements reveals that localization is often practiced without the crucial step of funding Southern initiatives with no restrictions.

One key tenet of localization is a call for Global North partners to strengthen the capacities of local staff. This phenomenon is coined capacity-building, meaning professional skills training for Global South staff to better carry out their organizations' missions. The intention is to end the dynamic of Global North development workers as experts in the Global South, while Southern staff members are relegated to lower-level roles. Even capacity-building programs have been critiqued for perpetuating inequities. A report by non-profit capacity building experts concluded that conventional capacity building activities are often ill-tailored for small, local organizations led by people of colour. In one example, workshop leaders encouraged the board members of a small non-profit, made up of Vietnamese refugees, to donate to their

[73] Kimberly Howe, Sabina Robillard, and Katja Rosenstock, "Localization Across Contexts: Lessons Learned from Four Case Studies," *Feinstein International Center and Save the Children Denmark,* July 2020, 2-3.

organization. This recommendation was off-putting to board members who had experienced extortion in Vietnam, and who, though they were not financially donating, had been buying program supplies and donating their time to the organization for years.[74] Furthermore, the ethos of capacity building has been critiqued for implying that Global South staff lack skills and knowledge, and for devaluing the importance of their local knowledge.[75] On the other hand, the case studies will reveal that many Global South staff members requested that their employers provide them with job training and professional development activities.

The terms of the 1980s and 1990s relating to local ownership include participatory development, community participation, indigenization, self-help, decentralization, and more. At their core, the terms aim to promote local ownership and repair the harmful imbalances between Global North development organizations and Global South beneficiaries. However, scholars assert that powerful institutions transform the once radical terms into depoliticized, palatable, and vague concepts. Consequently, development NGOs can commit to implementing the terms, knowing that the terms can be malleably implemented. In doing so, NGOs can potentially absolve themselves of the responsibility to make genuine changes to their work while placating calls for local ownership.

The modern term of localization, if implemented fully, could be decidedly more transformational than the terms of the 1980s and 1990s. Previous terms involved INGOs sharing power with Global South actors, while localization involves INGOs relinquishing both power and resources. A legitimate adoption of localization by the development sector would likely lead to true local ownership. Alas, as the above scholars argued, many past terms of local ownership

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[74] April Nishimurah, Roshni Grahamth, Vu Le, Anbar Mahar Sheikh and Ananda Valenzuela, “Transformational Capacity Building,” *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Fall 2020, 32.
[75] Shannon Paige, “Time to Decolonise Aid,” *Peace Direct,* May 10, 2021, 22, 25, 35.

have been doomed to become depoliticized, vague, and misused by opportunistic development actors. In the following case studies, I examine whether three NGOs working in Ethiopia were successful in tangibly implementing the development terms of the 1980s and 1990s seen by critics as jargon. In my analysis of the case study NGOs, I incorporate the scholarly critiques of development and attempts at local ownership introduced in this chapter. In the conclusion, I explore the likelihood of whether modern development organizations will fully implement localization. I make predictions based on the case study NGOs' rates of success in implementing the terms of the 1980s and 1990s relating to local ownership.

Chapter 2: Case Studies

Ethiopian Political History

To understand international development work in Ethiopia, an understanding of Ethiopia's political history is necessary. NGOs operating in Ethiopia have been profoundly shaped by Ethiopian government changes and civil society policies throughout the past few decades. The NGOs of these case studies operated in the 1980s and 1990s, under two distinct Ethiopian government regimes with varying levels of tolerance towards civil society.

For centuries, Ethiopia was ruled by monarchies. By the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, many Ethiopians had grown tired of imperial rule, bearing the brunt of a feudal land tenure system that unequally benefited the ruling class.[76] Many Ethiopians organized in attempts to overthrow the imperial regime. In 1974, a group of soldiers called the Derg deposed the emperor and took power of the country.[77] Although the revolution of 1974 was a culmination of passionate calls for change by revolutionaries, many found the Derg to be even more oppressive than the imperial regime.

The Derg established a military dictatorship that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991. Aid to Ethiopia slowed in this period, as Western donors were concerned about the Derg's oppressive governance and ties with the Soviet Union.[78] Between 1976 and 1978, the Derg carried out a campaign of "Red Terror" against its citizens and effectively imprisoned and killed anyone suspected of opposing the Derg. Most of its victims were younger, educated people in urban areas presumed to be members of student opposition movements. This period left a significant

[76] Bahru Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia, 1855-1991* (Oxford, England: James Currey, 2001) 96-97.
[77] Zewde, *A History of Modern Ethiopia*, 211-235.
[78] Furtado and Smith, "Ethiopia: Aid, Ownership, and Sovereignty," 5.

impact on Ethiopian demographics, with the Derg having killed or detained most of Ethiopia's young intellectuals. Of the survivors, many were no longer willing to engage in political resistance.[79] This bleak period in Ethiopian history could be seen as an initial discouragement of political activism within Ethiopian civil society.[80]

Key groups opposing the Derg regime included the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), a coalition of multiple ethnic political parties.[81] The EPLF and the EPRDF increasingly won battles against the Derg forces, gaining more territory, eventually capturing the capital city of Addis Ababa and taking power in 1991.[82] At this time, the EPRDF assumed power of Ethiopia, and would retain power until 2019.[83] Despite its origins as a Marxist organization, upon assuming power, the EPRDF aligned itself with Western democratic powers, unlike the previous Derg regime which had aligned with Eastern Bloc countries.[84] Appeased by the EPRDF's commitment to democratization and privatization in 1992, the United States promised $161 million to support the Ethiopian economy, and the World Bank promised $1.2 billion.[85] A key goal of the EPRDF was to address extreme poverty in Ethiopia.[86] Its newfound ties with the West, increased openness to NGOs, and relative political stability provided a space for development NGOs to

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[79] Eshetu Chole, *Underdevelopment in Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa: Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2004) 119.

[80] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 129.

[81] Terrence Lyons, "The Origins of the EPRDF and the Prospects for the Prosperity Party," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 56, no. 5 (2021): 1051-1052.

[82] Harold G. Marcus, *The Modern History of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa: A Select and Annotated Bibliography* (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, 1972), 209-217.

[83] Marcus, *Modern History of Ethiopia*, 5-7, 238.

[84] Theodore M. Vestal, *Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1999), 32-41.

[85] Vestal, *Ethiopia: A Post-Cold War African State*, 30, 38, 46.

[86] Alex de Waal, "The Theory and Practice of Meles Zenawi," *African Affairs*, Volume 112, Issue 446 (January 2013): 149-152.

flourish in comparison to previous decades. However, the EPRDF also suppressed political opposition and civil society, and heavily restricted media.[87] Evidently, the EPRDF government did not serve as a panacea to decades of political unrest in Ethiopia, nor did it offer complete freedom in the development and civil society sector.

To establish an understanding of the Ethiopian NGO sector, political scientist Kassahun Berhanu describes the difficult working relationships between NGOs and many African governments. Though initial waves of NGOs in Africa focused on short-term relief, subsequent NGOs chose to shift their work to achieve longer-term development objectives. In doing so, many of these NGOs clashed with Ethiopian governments, being seen by the public as a more efficient and suitable alternative to government social programs.[88] Indeed, in 2020, Kebede observed that Ethiopian parents viewed NGOs' education programs as a superior alternative to public schools.[89] As African governments increasingly saw NGOs as competitors, they restricted the movements of NGOs. In response, many NGOs then chose to remain subservient to governments and relinquish the political aspects of their missions. In this process, some NGOs became simply arms of the state, no longer independent or politically active.[90] In contorting their politics to appease governments, Berhanu contends that African LNGOs lost their connection to the needs of local beneficiaries.

Countless scholars warn of the depoliticization of vocal, political NGOs as they engage in the international development system. De Waal, Getachew, Choudry, and Kamat all emphasize that NGOs can, and should, engage in political activism and critique of governments where

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[87] Lyons, "Origins of the EPRDF," 1056.

[88] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 123, 125-126.
[89] Kebede, "Transnational Educational Leadership," 144-145.
[90] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 123-124.

warranted. On the other hand, scholars such as Berhanu warn of overly judging NGOs that are forced to navigate complicated governmental relations. Berhanu does not propound that NGOs should completely oppose governments if doing so would inhibit their abilities to operate, nor does he encourage the cooptation of NGOs by government interests. Alternatively, he proposes that NGOs maintain an equilibrium between collaboration and criticism when dealing with governments. As localization advocates indicate, buttressing government services can be instrumental in improving beneficiaries' quality of life. In many ways, NGO-government collaboration can prove advantageous.

In certain instances, collaboration may be seen as the only realistic approach, due to the consequences of criticizing governments. In the 1980s and 1990s in Ethiopia, critique of the government came with high risks.[91] Sociologist Dessalegn Rahmato acknowledges that the antagonism of successive Ethiopian governments towards civil society resulted in a justifiable aversion to advocacy on the part of NGOs. He goes on to say that the responsibility to engage in advocacy should not fall disproportionately on LNGOs, and that INGOs should take part as well.[92] I acknowledge the complexities and dangers of political activism in the Ethiopian context in the 1980s and 1990s. I find it valuable to observe the extent to which each case study NGO collaborated with and critiqued Ethiopian governments, especially considering its position as an international or local NGO, but I am cognizant of their limitations in the sensitive political landscape of their time.

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[91] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 124-125.
[92] Dessalegn Rahmato, "Civil Society Organizations in Ethiopia," in *Ethiopia: The Challenge of Democracy from Below*, ed. Bahru Zewde and Siegfried Pausewang (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002) 109.

Ethiopian Development History

The spirit of development is not new to Ethiopia, with voluntary caretaking of the poor and marginalized having long been a part of Ethiopian tradition. Religious organizations, communities, and extended families have historically assumed responsibility for the roles now associated with modern NGOs. Yet, as Kassahun Berhanu remarks, formal African LNGOs did not organically evolve from traditions of mutual self-help. Rather, LNGOs appeared as the local incarnations of Global North INGOs. Before the 1970s, there were few formal NGOs operating in Ethiopia. In 1973-74 and 1984-85, Ethiopia experienced two severe famines. Although Ethiopia had recorded famines since as early as the ninth century, the famines of the 1970s and 1980s were unique in that they were globally publicized and triggered a wave of Global North INGOs setting up operations in Ethiopia.[93] Dessalegn Rahmato estimates that, in the 1970s, no more than twenty-five NGOs operated in Ethiopia, most of which focused on famine relief, and few of which were LNGOs. Following the government change of 1991 and a slight loosening of restrictions on civil society, the number of INGOs and LNGOs in Ethiopia steadily rose. In 1994, Ethiopia counted seventy NGOs in the country, of which twenty-four were LNGOs and forty-six were INGOs. By 2000, there were 368 NGOs operating in Ethiopia, including 246 LNGOs and 122 INGOs.[94] Though the LNGO count was high in 2000, Rahmato notes that most LNGOs were limited in size and scope.

In the 1990s, like many other sectors, Ethiopia’s NGO sector suffered the effects of the country’s brain drain, lacking skilled staff and leadership as Ethiopians migrated out of the country. Few NGOs counted on volunteers from the Ethiopian public.[95] If an NGO had

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[93] Berhanu, “The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values,” 121-122.
[94] Rahmato, “Civil Society Organizations in Ethiopia,” 106-107.
[95] Berhanu, “The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values,” 125-126.

employed Ethiopian leadership and staff, the Ethiopian employees were principally upper class and seen as outsiders in beneficiaries' communities.[96] In the case studies to follow, certain NGOs struggled with these exact issues of a dearth of skilled Ethiopian staff and volunteers. Some offered training courses to strengthen staff skills. Others attempted to incentivize Ethiopians to volunteer their time. As localization proponents argue, part of the successful implementation of local ownership is to offer capacity building so that local staff can replace foreign experts. In the case studies presented, I pay attention to how NGOs employed and treated local staff and volunteers, offered capacity building opportunities, and implemented indigenization.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Ethiopian LNGOs relied on international funding, which impacted their ability to implement local ownership. The government of Ethiopia offered some benefits for LNGOs, including the provision of land, tax-free importation of certain program materials, and easy access to certain goods.[97] For their funding, though, Ethiopian LNGOs had to turn to international donor agencies. Just as Choudry and Kamat warned, the Ethiopian LNGOs that demonstrated values of neoliberalism were more robustly funded by international donors.[98] In fact, one way that Global North institutions attempted to promote democratization in Ethiopia was by solely financing NGOs that aligned with their understandings of democracy and good governance. Ethiopian historian Bahru Zewde challenges the subjectivity of Northern understandings of democracy, pointing out that many supposedly democratic NGOs supported apartheid in South Africa.[99]

[96] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 128.
[97] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 125-126.
[98] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 117-118.
[99] Bahru Zewde, "Preface" in *Ethiopia: The Challenge of Democracy from Below*, ed. Bahru Zewde and Siegfried Pausewang (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002) 7-8.

When Ethiopian LNGOs did manage to secure funding from Global North organizations, they became beholden to donor requirements and disconnected from their beneficiaries' needs. As a result, internationally funded Ethiopian LNGOs failed to incorporate indigenous, local knowledge in program planning.[100] In 1994, Kassahun Berhanu surveyed nineteen Ethiopian NGOs receiving international funding to determine the levels to which beneficiaries were involved in decision-making. He found that beneficiaries were overwhelmingly left out of decision-making at all stages of the development process and were solely involved in programs when implementing plans dictated by international partners. Berhanu admonishingly concludes that "many NGOs have not made the slightest attempt to support the beneficiaries' aspirations for self-empowerment."[101] Clearly, NGOs operating in Ethiopia in the 1980s and 1990s faced several barriers which impeded their abilities to enact local ownership. Despite challenges, the NGOs in the following case studies discussed and attempted to implement local ownership, with varying degrees of success.

Methodology

To study how past NGOs engaged with discourse about local ownership, I compared the work of three NGOs that operated in Ethiopia in the 1980s and 1990s. This period spans the end of the Derg government and the first few years of the EPRDF government. In terms of development, Ethiopia was recovering from the 1984 famine, and the number of both international and local NGOs was greatly increasing in the country. In my search for case study NGOs, I was limited to publicly available sources, English-language materials, and non-confidential archival materials, among other constraints. My primary sources were written

[100] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 124-125.
[101] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 126.

program materials, including reports, proposals, designs, and budgets, applications for funding, internal staff correspondence, management and advisory board meeting minutes, public-facing newsletters and publications, and any other material preserved by the NGOs. Through these materials, I extracted information relating to discussions and implementations of local ownership. Whenever possible, I considered the shortcomings, missing information, and biases in certain document types. Apart from source constraints, each case study NGO was chosen to provide a distinct perspective of local ownership based on its size and position as a local or international organization.

The first case study, Save the Children Fund United Kingdom (SCF UK) is a large INGO headquartered in the United Kingdom and primarily employing expatriates, a term used by SCF UK to describe its non-Ethiopian and usually British staff, in its higher-level positions. I chose SCF UK largely due to the availability of its materials. Unlike many INGOs, SCF UK's program materials are archived and publicly available. SCF UK was a useful choice for the large INGO case study. Its work in Ethiopia in the 1980s and 1990s provides an excellent example of a large INGO with decades of development experience. As a large, secular, non-governmental, non-partisan organization with a significant budget and ties to international networks, SCF UK can be compared to many modern-day INGOs with similar attributes which also engage in discussions of local ownership.

The second case study is a large LNGO, the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE), whose decision-makers, staff, and volunteers were Ethiopians. I chose FGAE largely because it is secular. Many large local development initiatives in Ethiopia are faith-based church institutions, and ergo, are not comparable to development NGOs in their administrative and decision-making structures, funding mechanisms, and engagements with development discourse.

FGAE's purview is also comparable to many large INGOs, as the organization conducted programs throughout the many regions of Ethiopia. In terms of materials, FGAE has an extensive private collection of program materials, as well as many FGAE, government, and academic publications about the organization's work. Though there were few large, secular, Ethiopian LNGOs operating in the 1980s and 1990s, FGAE's modern contemporaries are numerous. Conclusions drawn about large LNGOs' implementations of local ownership in this study can be adjusted and applied to current Ethiopian-led development efforts.

The final case study is the London Conference (LC), which was a small INGO within the United Church of Canada (UCC) that partnered with a large local organization, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's Development and Interchurch Aid Commission (EOC DICAC). I was able to access program materials from both the United Church of Canada Archives and EOC DICAC's collections, allowing me to balance both partners' perspectives of their work. I mainly focus on the LC's discussions of local ownership rather than EOC DICAC's, since the latter is an example of a large faith-based church institution that is structured differently than most NGOs. The LC is faith-based but not institutional, meaning that it can be more authentically compared to other NGOs. Indeed, the LC's engagement with local ownership was shaped and motivated by its religious philosophy, unlike FGAE and SCF UK, which diversifies the case studies. The LC had an exceptionally small board, team, and budget when compared with FGAE and SCF UK, making it an appropriately distinctive case study.

An element missing from this case study is the study of a small, grassroots LNGO. Unfortunately, finding a local Ethiopian NGO's records from the 1980s and 1990s was especially challenging and I was unable to include one in the study. Future studies of small LNGOs would greatly enhance discussions of local ownership. It should also be noted that the three case study organizations conduct different types of development work. Hence, I am careful not to overly evaluate the effectiveness of the development programs themselves, but rather the effectiveness of NGOs' implementations of local ownership *through* the development programs.

While there is a precariousness in assessing local ownership, there is also deep value in the conversations that arise from that assessment. In asking whether a program is locally owned, this thesis is probing the program's capacity to meet the needs of beneficiaries, relinquish power, and create a future in which the NGO's presence is no longer necessary. Methodologically, it is difficult to conclude that any case study did or did not achieve local ownership with certainty.[102] There are no definite criteria to determine whether a program has achieved local ownership. For instance, if the men in a beneficiary community obtain decision-making power over their program, but not the women, is the program truly locally owned? Is it only the beneficiaries who can report that a program has indeed achieved local ownership? Very few of the written program reports I accessed contain forthright, direct assessments by beneficiaries about the case study programs. Though this thesis assesses organizations' progress towards local ownership, it is not an unequivocal measurement. It is precisely the complexities and questions that surface when attempting to assess local ownership, though, that are relevant for readers seeking to understand the evolution of development and inequality in Africa.

[102] My definition of local ownership is fundamentally contemporary and imposed onto the case study organizations. I define a locally owned development program as one in which beneficiaries maintain full decision-making power about their own development programs. I contend that each rendition of the development sector's pledges to address its power imbalances was, to some level, an attempt to implement of local ownership. Yet, the term local ownership was not used by the case study development organizations, nor were the NGOs necessarily striving to achieve it when they implemented indigenization, community-based distribution, participatory development, and other practices.

Save the Children Fund United Kingdom (SCF UK) Case Study

SCF is a large, professionalized, United Kingdom-based development organization founded in 1919.[103] It began as a war charity, serving children affected by war across Europe, and eventually began implementing programs throughout the Global South. Historically, the organization operated with an aversion to political activism, deep-rooted connections to British elites, opaquely reported expenditures, and discriminatory attitudes about Africans.[104]

As SCF grew, it transformed into a wider umbrella organization and gained national members in multiple countries, one of which being Save the Children Fund United Kingdom (SCF UK). SCF UK is an illuminating case study to observe how a large INGO engaged with ideas of local ownership in the past. SCF UK's funding was exceptionally high, which gave the organization significant freedom in its programming.[105] The organization began operating substantial programs in Ethiopia in the 1970s. In these programs, I evaluate how SCF UK engaged with and implemented ideas of local ownership.

During the 1973 famine in Ethiopia, SCF UK began offering numerous relief programs throughout Ethiopia. Even in the 1990s, most of SCF UK's work in Ethiopia continued to revolve around relief and humanitarian programs, rather than long-term development. In one of their largest scale projects, the Nutritional Surveillance Programme (NSP), SCF UK provided collaborated with an Ethiopian government agency, to bolster Ethiopia's famine response measures.[106]

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[103] Emily Baughan, *Saving the Children: Humanitarianism, Internationalism, and Empire*, (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2022), 24, 27.
[104] Maren, *The Road to Hell*, 50, 89-94, 140-148, 157-158, 187-191.
[105] "Impressions of Stockholm," SCF/CA/1/EX/2/1 (June 1989), p. 2.
[106] "Country Strategy Paper (Draft)," SCF/OP/4/ETH/2/10 (January 1990), pp. 9-10.

Collaboration between SCF UK and Ethiopian governments was not always smooth. On several occasions, SCF UK attempted to set up partnership programs with various government agencies, without success. The organization perceived the ministries to be lacking clear policies due to government changes and struggled to navigate internal departmental politics. On the other hand, SCF UK felt that it gained credibility with government officials for having remained in Ethiopia and offering famine relief programs consistently for years. SCF UK also found its relationships with various government agencies to be precarious, with Ethiopian government attitudes towards foreign NGOs often rapidly changing.[107] In essence, SCF UK's success rates in collaborating with Ethiopian governments varied, largely because of their position as a cultural outsider in Ethiopian civil society.

In 1989, the director of SCF UK's overseas department, Daniel (pseud.), attended a conference hosted by SCF Sweden. Daniel reported that the conference emphasized the importance of operating with a rights-based approach to development. This term meant that development practitioners should protect beneficiaries' human rights while implementing locally owned, empowering programs.[108] Daniel imagined this approach to be impractical in the field, preferring his staff's approach of responding to individual children's needs as they arise. At another SCF meeting following the conference, Daniel concluded that rights-based approaches were being overly promoted by SCF Sweden, with himself and SCF United States employees worrying that the rights-based approach would conflict with their fieldworkers' actual practices. Daniel's reticence to engage with ideas of rights-based approaches certainly shows an unwillingness to engage in ideas of local ownership. However, Daniel's response also echoes

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[107] "Country Strategy Paper (Draft)," SCF/OP/4/ETH/8/31, pp. 10-14.
[108] "The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies," *United Nations Sustainable Development Group,* January 2003.

Maren and Cornwall's descriptions of vague and empty terms in development discourse and reveals the chasm between the praxis and theory of local ownership.

In 1985, SCF UK reported that the government of Ethiopia had expelled an INGO, which was one of SCF UK's partners, from the country. The government had analyzed the INGO's health centres and ascertained that the organization had been over-hospitalizing beneficiaries. According to SCF UK, this created a relationship of dependency. In development discourse, patterns of dependency were disparaged. SCF UK took the expulsion of its partner as a sign to avoid working with the INGO in the future.[109] In this instance, SCF UK distanced itself from the concept of dependency, deeming it incompatible with SCF UK's development practices.

SCF UK warned of dependency frequently in its reports, but the organization did not operate with David Lempert's approach of fostering local ownership to prevent dependency. In one food distribution program in 1991, SCK UK described large polygamous Ethiopian families affected by unemployment, writing that "if anyone, these are the people who need food assistance but distribution must be very selective to avoid creating total dependency."[110] The possible withholding of food assistance reflects SCF UK's punitive approach to deterring dependency.

Apart from withholding assistance, it is unclear exactly how SCF UK's programs were designed to prevent dependency. In a 1993 proposal to extend a health project, SCF UK opaquely explained that, rather than enabling dependency, their program focused on "making ways of working more effective and responsive."[111] As Maren signalled, SCF UK's use of the

[109] "SCF Korem Report," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/74 (December 1985) pp. 1-3.
[110] "Field Trip Report" SCF/OP/4/ETH/2/16 (October 1, 1991) p. 2.
[111] "Proposal for the Utilization of Projected Current Underspend: To Finance a One Year Extension of the East Hararghe Health Project – CR 0285," SCF/OP/4/ETH/8/31 (1993) p. 13.

term dependency in this proposal is vaguely defined and unclear in its planned implementation. Ironically, SCF UK was proposing to extend their project for another year, while disdaining possibilities of dependency. When applying an indigenization perspective, it should be noted that SCF UK's proposed program budget was £218,170. Of that budget, £81,865 was allocated to expatriate salaries and support, £116,855 to various programming costs, and £19,450 to national staff costs.[112] In other words, nearly half of the program budget was dedicated to paying expatriate staff, and only a small fraction to national Ethiopian staff. Evidently, the program did not employ many locals. In this sense, SCF UK was not approaching dependency prevention through Lempert's framework of increasing local ownership.

In theory, SCF UK implemented numerous strategies to achieve local ownership in the NSP, one of its largest-scale programs. From the beginning of the program, SCF UK planned to hand over operations of the NSP to their Ethiopian government partner. The mission of the program was that SCF UK would work with the Ethiopian government to strengthen its services. Finally, SCF UK employed many local Ethiopian staff members. In practice, though, the NSP was not seen as useful to beneficiaries, SCF UK was slow to exit the program, and local staff was dissatisfied with their work. In each potential route to achieving local ownership, SCF UK's implementations of local ownership were ineffective.

The Ethiopian NSP staff members' roles were to enter communities, anthropomorphically measure the children, and compile monthly quantitative and narrative reports about community conditions. The staff members charged with collecting data were called Nutritional Field Workers (NFWs). NFWs were Ethiopians and were supervised by Ethiopian

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[112] "Proposal for the Utilization of Projected Current Underspend" SCF/OP/4/ETH/8/31, p. 15.

supervisors. Both the supervisors and NFWs were overseen by expatriate nutritionists serving as regional managers. The nutritionists reported to the expatriate director of the SCF UK country office in Addis Ababa. This office reported to the SCF headquarters in the UK.[113] This hierarchy reveals the tendency of INGOs implementing indigenization to hire local staff at low levels, while decision-making and control of programs remain with expatriates at higher levels.

SCF UK struggled to work with the Ethiopian NFWs they had hired. In the 1980s, SCF UK managers reported their firing of who they called "truly awful staff" who were uninterested in their work and poorly collected data.[114] In one region, SCF UK wrote that they counted on few proficient NFWs and had already exhausted the region's population of high school graduates to hire. To add to their hiring troubles, two of the only staff members they considered to be hardworking were planning to leave SCF UK for higher pay at neighbouring INGOs.[115] Indeed, many NGOs struggled to find skilled staff in Ethiopia in the 1980s and 1990.[116] However, SCF UK's treatment of their Ethiopian NFWs calls into question their commitment to local ownership.

In 1993, a master's student from the University of Leeds, Ben Maxted, interviewed numerous NFWs to research the quality of their reporting between 1978 and 1984. Maxted's work offers insights into the NFWs' perspectives on working with SCF UK. Through interviews, Maxted learned that NFW supervisors felt condescended to by expatriates visiting the project,

[113] Ben Maxted, "The Save the Children Fund (U.K.) Nutritional Surveillance Programme Wollo Province Ethiopia: An Analysis of the Nutritional Field Workers Qualitative Reporting 1978 to 1984," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/79 (September 1993) pp. 13-14.
[114] "Nutrition Surveillance Project," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/75, (1987) p. 2.
[115] "Proposal for the Development of the Hararghe Nutrition Programme," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/73 (1985-1986) p. 3.

[116] Berhanu, "The Role of NGOs in Protecting Democratic Values," 125-126.

who preferred speaking with expatriate SCF UK staff rather than the Ethiopian NFW supervisors who had the most in-depth knowledge of the program. NFWs felt underpaid for their work and repeatedly advocated for higher salaries, but SCF UK refused, arguing that they wanted to match government salary levels. NFWs also consistently requested job training, having only received three- or four-day orientations before beginning their work.[117] In response, SCF UK began offering monthly training, but soon stopped to focus on emergency famine response. Lastly, many NFWs were affected by the Ethiopian societal view of fieldwork as a job for people of lower status and hoped that their NFW position would eventually lead to a more respectable office job.

NFWs faced extreme stress in their work, which led to burnout. As the NFWs worked in the years preceding the 1984 famine, they saw that drought and hunger wer worsening, their workload was increasing, and they were unable to fully counteract the effects of the famine. As the famine intensified, the NFWs were given no say in when they could take their annual leave and were no longer able to visit their families when they were in the field, meaning that they would not see their families for a month, or even longer. This isolation from family caused emotional difficulty for NFWs. The employees grew tired of their long journeys to remote field sites, as their transport options were bus, mule, or walking. SCF UK deemed providing transport for NFWs as an inefficient use of program funds. In some cases, NFWs traveled for six hours on a mule to reach project sites. Meanwhile, expatriate staff members were provided private transport by the program.[118]

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[117] Maxted, "The Save the Children Fund (U.K.) Nutritional Surveillance Programme Wollo Province Ethiopia," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/79, pp. 14-16.
[118] Maxted, "The Save the Children Fund (U.K.) Nutritional Surveillance Programme Wollo Province Ethiopia," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/79, pp. 14-16, 19-21.

In addition to logistical job difficulties, NFWs felt increasingly skeptical about whether the NSP was truly valuable, partly due to a lack of faith in Ethiopian authorities and partly due to SCF UK's failings in implementing the NSP. The beneficiaries of the NSP, too, had their doubts about the program. They found the process of being weighed and measured time-consuming, felt underappreciated, and questioned the usefulness of the program. Furthermore, they worried that presenting themselves to the program could lead to the government forcibly resettling them to another part of the country as part of the national famine response.[119]

Due to the SCF UK's poor management of NFWs and the worsening drought, Maxted concluded that the NFWs were unsatisfied and unmotivated in their roles. In turn, the quality of their work deteriorated.[120] Maxted argued that had SCF UK valued its local NFW staff members more, the quality of their life-saving work would have improved, and, resultingly, more Ethiopians could have been saved during the famine.[121] SCF UK did eventually take steps to improve conditions for local Ethiopian staff. By 1991, the NSP had removed the role of expatriate nutritionists and adjusted the roles of Ethiopian NFW supervisors to take on more tasks.[122] By 1992, SCF UK had expanded its training program for Ethiopian NFW staff members and provided leadership training for Ethiopian managers.[123] While these steps were much needed, the foundation of the NSP lacked principles of local ownership. The program's decision-

[119] Maxted, "The Save the Children Fund (U.K.) Nutritional Surveillance Programme Wollo Province Ethiopia," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/79, pp. 19, 24.
[120] Maxted, "The Save the Children Fund (U.K.) Nutritional Surveillance Programme Wollo Province Ethiopia," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/79, p. 29.
[121] Maxted, "The Save the Children Fund (U.K.) Nutritional Surveillance Programme Wollo Province Ethiopia," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/79, p. 53.
[122] "Annual Project Report," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/91 (1991) p. 3.
[123] "Annual Project Report," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/98 (1992), pp. 3-4.

making remained with higher-level expatriates and its managers continued to disparage the work of NFWs, despite the NFWs' challenging working circumstances and low pay.

In the late 1980s, SCF UK expatriate staff began seriously considering the process of removing expatriate staff and handing over control of the NSP to the Ethiopian government. The Ethiopia field director regularly mentioned the idea of reducing expatriate presence when corresponding with the SCF UK head office. In 1987, the director called the NSP "top-heavy with expatriate staff" and asked the head office to initiate a discussion about reducing expatriate presence in Ethiopia.[124] It should be noted that SCF UK's intentions to replace expatriates with locals were not always principally to increase local ownership. In some programs, SCF UK noticed that expatriates with graduate educations were doing low-level work, with a principal objective to closely oversee the "shoddy work" of local staff. Consequently, SCF UK questioned the usefulness of employing such highly educated expatriates in low-level roles.[125]

In 1989, the SCF UK's expatriate staff met to discuss the possibility of phasing out expatriates from their NSP and hiring Ethiopians in their place. The group sent their proposal to the head office in the UK, explaining that they planned to recruit local university graduates to train with the expatriate nutritionists. Should that process go well, the Ethiopian staff would replace the nutritionist posts but continue to be supervised by expatriate supervisors. They also committed to sending senior Ethiopian staff members to short training courses in Kenya.[126] The group of expatriate staff members decided that, eventually, they would only have one expatriate post in Ethiopia. That person would be a Programme Head, based in Addis Ababa, whose role would be to check on Ethiopian staff throughout the different regions. The group stipulated that

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[124] Correspondence, SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/80 (December 29, 1987 and January 7, 1988).
[125] "Nutrition Surveillance Project," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/75, p. 3.
[126] Correspondence, SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/76 (March 10, 1989) p. 2.

the Programme Head should have complete decision-making power to adjust the program.[127] The group's proposal offers some steps towards local ownership, such as the replacement of expatriate positions with Ethiopians, and the increased training for Ethiopian staff. Nevertheless, even in its projected scenario of a locally run NSP, SCF UK ensured that full program control would remain with a non-Ethiopian through the post of an expatriate Programme Head.

In its programming, SCF UK did not often embody the principles of local ownership. In 1987, an expatriate NSP nutritionist supervisor reported that she had visited a small town that had received inconsistent aid from various INGOs. One INGO had funded and built a school that had degraded into poor physical condition. The nutritionist described that a town administrator "begged" her to find funding to fix the school, explaining that the town had no other school for the children to attend. The nutritionist replied that she would ask around if other organizations could support the project, but that SCF UK did not fund such projects.[128] As an INGO with substantial funding and freedom to implement programs, this case study exemplifies a wider pattern of SCF UK's disregard of community participation in its program decisions.

In 1995, SCF UK successfully applied for funding from the UK government's Overseas Development Administration (ODA) for a health project, meant to improve local government health services. When preparing the proposal, the SCF UK Deputy Field Director expressed disillusionment with having to write the proposal according to what he called "ODA speak" to ensure funding.[129] This gripe substantiates Mawdsley et al.'s conclusion that large INGOs' fluent development jargon helps them in funding competitions, while small LNGOs often struggle. The

[127] "Minutes: Nutritional Surveillance Programme," (March 6, 1989) p. 2.
[128] "Hararghe Nutrition Programme, Monthly Report for August 1987," SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/75 (September 3, 1987) p. 3.
[129] Memorandum, SCF/OP/4/ETH/8/51 (May 29, 1995).

ODA's feedback reveals how SCF UK's use of jargonized "ODA speak" ensured their funding, despite their failure to display a sincere engagement with local ownership.

At the time, the ODA was especially concerned with the implementation of a popular term in development discourse called community participation, and closely examined SCF UK's proposal through this lens. Like the many other terms related to local ownership, community participation referred to the practice of beneficiaries willingly participating in development programs.[130] Though SCF UK had emphasized that they would prioritize community participation, the office wrote that the proposed project was "not very convincing" in its commitments to the practice.[131] The ODA evaluators felt that community participation was compartmentalized to one section of the proposal and not holistically incorporated throughout. The evaluators questioned why community members and beneficiaries were not included in SCF UK's project planning, evaluation, and decision-making. In one comment, evaluators poignantly asked, "what is meant by participation of the community in terms of water and sanitation projects: are they only the providers of free labour or is it broader than this?"[132] Bizarrely, despite their incisive critiques of SCF UK's poorly planned implementation of community participation, the ODA concluded that the project proposal was "well thought through," and endorsed funding of the project.[133]

The conclusions of the ODA are puzzling. By focusing so intently on community participation, the office positioned itself as a bastion of reforms to old development practices and

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[130] "Report on a Review Visit to JFS Co-Funded NGO Projects in Ethiopia and Kenya 2-20 October 1995," *Overseas Development Administration,* SCF/OP/4/ETH/8/20, p. iv.
[131] "ODA Comments – Project Proposal 95/96" SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/75, p. 1.
[132] "ODA Comments – Project Proposal 95/96" SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/75, p. 2.
[133] "ODA Comments – Project Proposal 95/96" SCF/OP/4/ETH/5/75, p. 3.

a promoter of local ownership. Its reports point out numerous flaws and shortcomings in SCF UK's implementation of community participation. Yet, its summarizing comments are overwhelmingly benevolent towards SCF UK, concluding that SCF UK's programs were well developed and deserving of funding. This pattern presents the possibility that neither SCF UK nor the ODA was truly invested in community participation. While the ODA vocally committed to local ownership, and SCF UK engaged more shallowly in the discourse, neither followed through on implementation. Ostensibly, the degree to which an organization engages in discussions of local ownership does not indicate its implementation of local ownership.

Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) Case Study

LNGOs in Ethiopia take up a unique space in the development sector that wholly differs from large INGOs. The Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) was a local Ethiopian NGO offering community-based family planning services throughout Ethiopia.[134] FGAE exemplifies a large LNGO which relied on international funding, partnered with the Ethiopian government, and served an unmet need in its communities. While FGAE's strengths lay in its position as a cultural insider in Ethiopia, some of its most palpable limitations were equally caused by its embeddedness in the local culture.

In 1966, FGAE was founded with a mission to support Ethiopians in accessing family planning services. The founders of FGAE recognized that maternal mortality was high in Ethiopia, partly due to women's inability to space out their children. At the time, family planning was illegal in Ethiopia, and FGAE was forced to operate unofficially and informally. FGAE's name was selected carefully for this reason. Rather than making an overt reference to

[134] "50 Years of Dedicated Services," *in the possession of the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (hereafter FGAE),* (August 2016) p. 15.

contraceptives, the founders chose the term “family guidance” to imply that the organization would offer an array of services in addition to offering contraceptives, including infertility treatment, child survival support, marriage counseling, support for working mothers, and more.[135] The founders were aware of social and legal norms in Ethiopia regarding family planning. Abortions and some forms of family planning, such as sterilization, were illegal. Infertility was seen as a marital failure that could result in separation. The more children one had, the more prestige and respect one commanded in society. Motherhood was seen as a sacred gift, and having children ensured that a parent would be taken care of in their old age.[136] In this social and legal climate, FGAE was cautious in setting up its work.

FGAE first set up a small clinic in Addis Ababa with one nurse on staff and occasional medical doctors volunteering their time. In 1970, FGAE became an associate member of an international reproductive health network headquartered in the United Kingdom which provided FGAE with small but consistent annual grants. FGAE began expanding its services by partnering with other NGOs and government health clinics in the city. As the years passed, government institutions began slowly and unofficially permitting family planning services. In 1975, FGAE became legally registered as an NGO with the government of Ethiopia, enabling the organization to become a full member of the international reproductive health network and obtain more substantial annual grants. The Ministry of Health even contracted FGAE to train some of its nurses and health professionals in family planning. Still, though, the provision of family planning services was not legally allowed in Ethiopia. FGAE’s ability to maneuver in a civil society where

[135] “The Role of the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) in the Promotion of Family Planning Programmes in Ethiopia,” *in the possession of FGAE* (September 1992), pp. 20-21.
[136] “The Role of FGAE in the Promotion of Family Planning Programmes in Ethiopia,” pp. 16-18.

its work was illegal showcases its exceptional position as an LNGO with an understanding of and willingness to challenge Ethiopian social norms and public policies.

Throughout the 1970s, FGAE set up branch offices and new clinics throughout the country. The organization was committed to collaborating with other NGOs and governmental agencies and even set up offices within the Ministry of Health's regional offices.[137] FGAE also set up its organization to rely on volunteers and members. They formed committees to direct various areas of the organization's programming and administration. FGAE also invited federal government representatives from various ministries to join FGAE's executive board. They also invited delegates from the Addis Ababa municipal government, worker's unions, and farmer's, women's, and youth associations to join the board. FGAE's commitment to collaborate with governments and various demographics of Ethiopian society contributed to its success. In 1982, the Ethiopian government officially invited FGAE to operate under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and legally provide its services.

FGAE made efforts to share their roles as educators with diverse populations. The organizations consistently worked with youth to develop their programs. In one case, FGAE partnered with a prominent youth association to establish a center for young people to access contraceptives. More importantly, FGAE trained youth from the center as peer counselors to educate other youth on family planning. In the 1990s, FGAE intentionally hired young graduates of Addis Ababa University, who brought with them ideas of community-based development.[138] FGAE also delegated responsibilities to men, combatting the idea of family planning as solely a women's issue. FGAE facilitated discussions with men in positions of authority in their

[137] "Twenty Five Years of Family Planning Services in Ethiopia: Special Issue Commemorating the Silver Jubilee of FGAE," *in the possession of FGAE* (November 1991) pp. 1-5.
[138] "50 Years of Dedicated Services," p. 15.

communities, such as leaders of religious groups, peasant associations, youth groups, and others, so that they could disperse the ideas of family planning to their communities. In these examples, FGAE shared the role of family planning education with young people and men, two principal beneficiary demographics of their work, thus adding a layer of local ownership to their programs.

As the years passed, Ethiopian policies and cultural attitudes increasingly accepted family planning services. Between 1970 and 1986, the rate of health institutions in Ethiopia offering family planning services increased from 22 to 553.[139] FGAE's services and volunteer base also grew, and the organization felt it was unable to adequately address the needs of the communities it served outside of the capital city. Its leaders decided to establish branch associations in eight regions in Ethiopia. Each branch association established its own system of governance and sent two delegates to the national council. The national council met annually to approve budgets and programming, leaving most other decisions to the branch association.[140] FGAE's decision-making had always been in the hands of Ethiopians. As the organization grew, its decision-making became even more locally owned through the organization's process of decentralization.

In the 1990s, FGAE implemented a system of community-based distribution (CBD) to increase family planning services. CBD is a development practice aimed at increasing community engagement in development programs. Unlike the many vague terms of development discourse, CBD offers a clear process of implementation. The development NGO trains beneficiary community members to carry out development services in their own communities, rather than sending outsiders to carry out the services. FGAE employed the technique of CBD to increase the accessibility of their family planning services. They did this by training non-health

[139] "Twenty Five Years of Family Planning Services in Ethiopia," p. 6.
[140] "Twenty Five Years of Family Planning Services in Ethiopia," p. 5-8.

professionals selected by their beneficiary communities to raise awareness about family planning and distribute contraceptives. FGAE discovered that CBD workers were more accepted and well-liked by their communities than outsider health professionals, which led to an uptake in FGAE's family planning services.[141]

In 1992, FGAE launched a health project that relied entirely on CBD. The organization trained 24 community health agents to offer family planning services, basic health services, and medications to their communities. These health agents were beneficiary community members, chosen by FGAE based on their level of literacy and acceptability to the community. By the end of the five-year project, beneficiary communities' use of contraceptives had risen from 1.3 percent to fifteen percent.[142] Despite its success, FGAE's implementation of CBD had its share of critiques.

All the health agents chosen by FGAE were men except for one.[143] Since FGAE's selections were partly based on the community's acceptance of the health agents, it is difficult to pinpoint whether this reflects an FGAE bias against women, a community-level bias, or both. Regardless, this skewed demographic is an example of how FGAE operated within Ethiopian social norms, to the point that they neglected to incorporate women beneficiaries' voices. The Overseas Development Agency evaluating SCF UK's programs in Ethiopia also visited FGAE's CBD projects and noted the lack of women health agents. The evaluators concluded that FGAE

141 "50 Years of Dedicated Services," 16-19.
142 "50 Years of Dedicated Services," 17.
143 "Mid-Term Project Assessment: the Jimma FP CBD Project," *in the possession of FGAE* (June 1994) p. 20.

should consult with women beneficiaries regularly to incorporate their needs and encourage them to take part in the CBD process.[144]

When interviewed during the project's mid-term evaluation in 1994, the health agents consistently objected to the lack of compensation for their work. They were volunteers and were only provided a per diem when completing training courses. Many struggled financially and chose to dedicate more time to their typical income-earning activities and spent less time on their volunteer duties for FGAE. FGAE was aware that incentivizing health agents with salaries was a contested practice, producing varying results in other CBD programs, but noted the health agents' concerns in their mid-term report.[145] Other than their financial complaints, the agents felt satisfied with the quality of their annual refresher course provided by FGAE and asked for an increased frequency of bi-annual refresher training.[146] They also performed well in their roles, with FGAE considering this particular project its most successful CBD program.[147]

FGAE's positioning as an LNGO still gave it a unique strength in the development sector. In 1992, a staff member of FGAE, Yonas (pseud.), completed his PhD dissertation about the role of FGAE in family planning programs in Ethiopia. FGAE had granted Yonas a leave of absence to study, paid his tuition fees, and covered his living expenses while studying. This was not unusual for FGAE, who often encouraged their staff to continue their educations by granting study leaves and scholarships.[148] For example, in 1993, FGAE nominated three of its staff members involved with CBD programs to attend a three-week community-based family planning

[144] "Report on a Review Visit to JFS Co-Funded NGO Projects," SCF/OP/4/ETH/8/20, p. 13.
[145] "Mid-Term Project Assessment: the Jimma FP CBD Project," *in the possession of FGAE*, pp. 20-21.
[146] "Mid-Term Project Assessment: the Jimma FP CBD Project," *in the possession of FGAE*, p. 23.
[147] Minutes of Management Committee Meeting," *in the possession of FGAE* (July 15, 1992) p. 2.
[148] Minutes of Management Committee Meeting," *in the possession of FGAE* (July 15, 1992) p. 2.

training in Kenya.[149] In his dissertation, Yonas effectively summarizes how many of FGAE's successes can be attributed to its status as an LNGO. Yonas calls FGAE a pioneer in family planning, explaining that its staff and founders navigated Ethiopian society's mostly traditional views on childbearing while introducing concepts of family planning.[150] In one instance, an FGAE-trained government nurse was able to adapt to cultural norms by noticing that young, single women were uncomfortable when picking up contraceptives, so she began distributing contraceptives hidden inside envelopes. This simple shift resulted in an increase of women accessing contraceptives at her clinic.[151]

Yonas applauded FGAE's ability to attract volunteers, explaining that, in 1990, the organization had 115 employees and 3000 volunteers.[152] In the same year, political scientist Kassahun Berhanu had reported that few NGOs in Ethiopia relied on local volunteers. In 1995, SCF UK expressed difficulties in finding willing Ethiopian volunteers for their programs.[153] Considering this climate of volunteerism, it is impressive that FGAE was amassing Ethiopian volunteers on such a large scale. To Yonas, FGAE was also exceptional in allowing its beneficiaries to direct the course of their treatment, with FGAE simply providing them with options and resources to do so.[154] According to Yonas' assertions, FGAE was practicing concepts of local ownership in its relationships with beneficiaries and its engagement of local Ethiopian volunteers.

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[149] "Draft Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting" *in the possession of FGAE* (April 7, 1993) p. 4.
[150] "The Role of FGAE in the Promotion of Family Planning Programmes in Ethiopia," p. 21.
[151] "The Role of FGAE in the Promotion of Family Planning Programmes in Ethiopia," 23-24.
[152] "The Role of FGAE in the Promotion of Family Planning Programmes in Ethiopia," 26.
[153] "Report on a Review Visit to JFS Co-Funded NGO Projects," SCF/OP/4/ETH/8/20, pp. 10-11, 30-31.
[154] "The Role of FGAE in the Promotion of Family Planning Programmes in Ethiopia," 25-26.

Although FGAE was forward-thinking in its family planning work, implementation of community-based distribution, and engagement of volunteers, its work was restricted to the parameters of Ethiopian social norms. The organization only worked with heterosexual Ethiopians, as homosexuality was and continues to be illegal in Ethiopia.[155] In 1989, FGAE published a school curriculum, co-written by a representative of the Ministry of Health. The curriculum reveals the traditional gender roles and sexuality norms held at the time. The curriculum defines marriage as "an association between a man and a woman," the nuclear family as "a man, his wife and children," and the father as "traditionally the head of the family unit."[156] Though FGAE's work was visionary in providing family planning services when it was illegal to do so in Ethiopia, the organization did not entirely stray from social norms.

FGAE's dedication to working with government institutions further limited its ability or willingness to engage in political or social activism. Having been founded in 1966, FGAE worked closely with the imperial government of Ethiopia, the Derg government, and the EPRDF government. In fact, the founder of FGAE was working within the imperial government when he established FGAE. Although family planning was illegal, the founder approached the royal family to request support in establishing FGAE, to which the Emperor responded that "if this is important to my people, as you explained, just keep silent and go ahead."[157] The endorsement of the Emperor was monumental, and exemplifies FGAE's unique position as both a challenger of Ethiopian social norms and collaborator with Ethiopian governments. In 1986, FGAE printed a full-page photo of the military head of the Derg regime in its 20th-anniversary brochure,

[155] Serawit B. Debele, Of Taming Carnal Desire: Imperial Roots of Legislating Sexual Practices in Contemporary Ethiopia. *History of the Present* 1 April 2020; 10 (1): 91.
[156] "Curriculum Guidelines for Family Life Education," *in the possession of FGAE* (May 1989) pp. 36, 39.
[157] "50 Years of Dedicated Services," p. 4.

signifying the organization's alignment with each changing government.[158] Following the 1991 government change, FGAE was invited to participate in drafting the National Population Policy of Ethiopia.[159] Since its founding, FGAE cemented its position as a collaborator rather than a competitor with established government health services.[160] As localization advocates highlight, when an NGO complements government efforts, it typically benefits the average Ethiopian beneficiary. Similarly, FGAE's government ties allowed it to operate within Ethiopia's public health system and serve the masses of Ethiopians. On the other hand, to maintain good relations with governments, FGAE was bound by apoliticism. The organization did not engage in serious public critiques of Ethiopian governments.

Not only was FGAE beholden to Ethiopian government expectations, but it was also bound by donor requirements. In 1989, FGAE noticed an increase in unemployed high school graduates in Addis Ababa. In response, FGAE established a youth center offering sports, art, and drama programs to attract and engage unemployed youth. They also integrated reproductive health education programs to increase the youth's awareness about safe sex practices. In time, the center grew to include a library and vocational training courses in partnership with government and education organizations. The organization noticed that some youth beneficiaries gained employment after completing FGAE's vocational training. Unfortunately, FGAE's donors intervened and restricted the organization's use of their funding, resulting in FGAE discontinuing its vocational training courses. The donors argued that the youth center's mission had strayed from its family planning mission and that it was the Ethiopian government's role,

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[158] "Special Issue Commemorating the 20th Anniversary of the FGAE," *in the possession of FGAE* (May 1986) p. iv.
[159] "50 Years of Dedicated Services," p. 51.
[160] "The Role of FGAE in the Promotion of Family Planning Programmes in Ethiopia," p. 22.

rather than FGAE's, to support unemployed youth. FGAE was not in a financial position to refuse funds. In 1989, FGAE's total budget was Birr 3,972,570, of which their largest funder contributed Birr 2,975,190, other international funders contributed Birr 785,930, and FGAE locally fundraised only Birr 211,450.[161] In the example of the youth center, it is evident that FGAE was attempting to adapt to a societal need and embodying the principles of local ownership.

The donors' unwillingness to offer unrestricted funding to FGAE hampered its attempts to meet local needs. At around the same time, FGAE's largest donor encouraged the organization to avoid cycles of dependency on donors.[162] Interestingly, the donors' worries about dependency resulted in them suppressing local ownership initiatives, a move that Lempert would view as increasing dependency. In his dissertation, FGAE staff member Yonas cautioned against NGOs creating dependency in communities and proposed clear directives to avoid the pattern. He argued that FGAE should avoid overtaking local community initiatives. He also highlighted the need for FGAE and other NGOs to continue to create positive relationships with beneficiary communities.[163] Yonas's suggestions align with Lempert's framework of counteracting dependency through local ownership. Finally, he suggests that different family planning NGOs coordinate to avoid duplicating services and recommends that the coordination be monitored by the Ministry of Health. In this example, Yonas counteracts the pattern of NGOs competing with government efforts and instead suggests collaboration with governments.

FGAE represents the strengths and shortcomings of a local organization. The organization was limited by its reliance on restricted international funding, its adherence to social

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[161] "Twenty Five Years of Family Planning Services in Ethiopia," pp. 17-18.
[162] "50 Years of Dedicated Services," pp. 19-23.
[163] "The Role of FGAE in the Promotion of Family Planning Programmes in Ethiopia," pp. 72-73.

norms, and its ties to Ethiopian governments. On the other hand, its position as a cultural insider gave it relative freedom and know-how to navigate Ethiopian civil society. Not only did it engage with the principles of local ownership, but FGAE implemented many local ownership measures as well. FGAE is not an example of the small, grassroots LNGOs that engage in political activism, as described by Sangeeta Kamat and Aziz Choudry. Rather, it is an example of a large LNGO that operated within the defined social norms of Ethiopian society, while still attempting to subvert damaging development practices and achieve local ownership.

London Conference (LC) Case Study

The London Conference (LC) is a small Canadian organization that implemented a development self-help program in Magala Mukha (pseud.), a rural farming community south of Addis Ababa. The LC was a regional conference of the United Church of Canada, a Christian denominational church in Canada, and it represented various presbyteries of the Canadian province of Ontario.[164] In the 1980s, LC members encountered the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC DICAC).[165] In 1982, an LC staff member visited Ethiopia and witnessed EOC DICAC's projects. This visit set into motion years of visits between the LC and the EOC. In 1990, after numerous annual visits between the organizations, the EOC officially invited the LC to take part in a farming development program in the rural community of Magala Mukha, in Ethiopia.

[164] "Administrative History," United Church of Canada Archives (hereafter UCC), United Church of Canada London Conference Fonds (hereafter UCC LC Fonds), Photographs, Kingsville 1997, President Sheila Duffin.
[165] "Final Report to Partnership Africa Canada of 1990 Ethiopian Feasibility Study of Small Scale Rural Development Project By the London Conference of the United Church, The Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 1995 153c, 10-5, p. 1; UCC, "The London Conference Ethiopian Development Program," UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-14, p. 1.

In the early 1990s, Magala Mukha had a population of 1,100. Most of its residents were subsistence farmers, meaning that they grew food for their families with no surplus. The community had experienced numerous droughts in the years before the LC's development project, resulting in a lack of oxen needed for farming.[166] Before accepting the EOC's invitation, the LC sent a study team to consult the Magala Mukha community to determine their needs. The team interviewed members of the farmer's association, elders, women, and young people, and discerned that each demographic prioritized the same needs: safe water, health services, farming support, and reforestation. They also noted that the village was experiencing high infant mortality rates and that women and children were responsible for many village tasks. By consulting the community, the LC exhibited a commitment to local ownership, which was also evident in its mission and philosophy.

In 1991 the LC accepted EOC DICAC's partnership invitation. Its intention was that the project would be sustainable, "if and when outside help and EOC withdraw."[167] The LC set up a management team to manage operations, and an advisory committee to direct the mission of the management team.[168] The LC's mission was to practice self-help, a philosophy relating to the principles of local ownership. The LC defined self-help as a process wherein beneficiaries participated in finding their own development solutions by taking active roles in the program's design, implementation, and evaluation processes. More succinctly, the LC believed that "God helps those who help themselves."[169] As a religious organization, the LC's model of self-help

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[166] "Narrative to the Slide Presentation Reporting the 1990 Feasibility Study Team's Trip to Ethiopia," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-3, p. 2.
[167] "Narrative to the Slide Presentation Reporting the 1990 Feasibility Study Team's Trip to Ethiopia," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-3, p. 4.
[168] "Minutes of Future Directions Sub-Committee Meeting," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-3 (April 23, 1993) p. 1.

[169] "Ethiopia Assessment Report," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (March 4-20, 1994) p. 51.

was influenced by liberation theology. They understood liberation theology to not only be a call to serve the marginalized and oppressed, but a mandate to include them in decision-making about development programs.[170] The model of self-help development was ideal to the LC since it would prevent dependency.[171] The LC's approach aligned with David Lempert's argument that locally owned programs would be less likely to become dependent on outside assistance.

In 1990, LC applied for funding from Partnership Africa Canada (PAC), a funding mechanism for NGOs working in sub-Saharan Africa. In the LC's 1990 application to PAC, they requested CAD 1,614,000 for their project cycle of 1992 to 1997. The application revolved around the LC's commitment to achieving self-help and the principles of local ownership.[172] The application was denied precisely due to PAC's lack of trust in the LC's ability to carry out self-help development and include beneficiary voices in their work. PAC sent the LC a letter detailing their concerns with the LC's approach to partnership and participatory development. The letter wrote that the proposed project was too ambitious and complicated for the LC to achieve. PAC was concerned that the project design was not well thought out and lacked beneficiary input. Finally, PAC examined the budget and asked why "the costs of the expatriate salary by year four exceeded the total costs of all the interventions in the field." [173] PAC concluded their feedback by recommending that the LC submit a scaled-down application in the future.

[170] "Project Application, Public Participation Program; Appendix III: A Theological Rationale," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 2-6 (1991) pp. 1-2.
[171] "Appendix A: Self Help," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 1995.153C, 10-5 (July 16, 1990) p. 13.
[172] "Application Form for Funding Proposals," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 1995.153C, 10-5, pp. 8-10.
[173] Correspondence, "Re: UCC-07-A: Farmer Development Programme (Ethiopia)," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-2 (December 18, 1991).

The LC team extensively discussed their proposal's rejection, and, in these discussions, remained committed to ideas of local ownership.[174] The team resolved to ask their partner, EOC DICAC, to write a letter of support to forward to PAC, to convey local endorsement of the project.[175] An LC advisory team member who had attended a PAC annual meeting shared more about the funding process. She had discovered that funding applications to PAC were read by thirty people, of whom half were African. This comment indicates that the LC was aware of their profiles as cultural outsiders in Ethiopia, and the possible barriers caused by this. She also reported that a PAC representative had suggested that the LC increase the Magala Mukha community involvement in their programs. The LC member concluded that she was supportive of PAC's philosophy of community participation.[176] An LC management team member stated that she had read the 10-year plan of their Ethiopian partner, EOC DICAC, which had emphasized that Ethiopians had all the tools needed to execute their own development. The member concurred with this statement and philosophized that what EOC DICAC needed was simply money.[177] In suggesting this, the member was proposing the practice of localization, although the term had not yet been coined. In their responses to the funding rejection, the LC team continued to align themselves with the practices of local ownership. Notwithstanding, the rejection of their application reveals that they were unable to convincingly implement local ownership in their program plans.

[174] "Comments from Contacts Re: PAC's Decision," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-2.
[175] "Ethiopia Project Management Committee Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-2 (January 17, 1992).
[176] "Ethiopia Advisory Committee Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 1995.153C, 10-7 (November 28, 1992) p. 2.
[177] "Ethiopia Management Team Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-2 (November 12, 1992) p. 1.

In 1992, EOC hired a staff member, Ibsa (pseud.), to run the Magala Mukha project. In the LC's program proposals, this staff member's role was titled "project director." However, when it came time to hire Ibsa, the LC began to refer to the staff member as a "community worker." The role's name change was intentional on the LC's part, to communicate to the community of Magala Mukha the bottom-up approach that the LC was taking to the development project.[178] When read with a different perspective, however, the role's name change minimizes the importance of Ibsa's work in Magala Mukha. Indeed, Ibsa was not only a valuable member of the project who was well-accepted by the local community, but he was also an advocate for local ownership. In 1994, Magala Mukha beneficiaries told a program evaluator that they wanted Ibsa to spend more time in Magala Mukha. Ibsa did not live in Magala Mukha, and the program did not provide him with adequate transportation options. Furthermore, the LC and EOC DICAC did not fully invest in Ibsa's professional development.[179] In 1993, Ibsa requested the opportunity to attend an eight-month training in Japan. The LC did not approve the request and hoped to find a shorter course, closer to Ethiopia.[180] The LC's hiring of Ibsa reveals the value of employing Ethiopian staff in high-level positions, but also exposes their lack of support in terms of transport and professional development opportunities. In this case, the process of indigenization lacked an investment of resources into Ibsa's professional well-being.

The same year that Ibsa was hired, the LC faced competition with another INGO operating in Magala Mukha. The competing INGO was offering food aid to the community and planned to work with its farmer's association, set up child sponsorships, and establish food-for-

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[178] "Ethiopia Project Management Committee Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 1995.153C. 10-7 (April 14, 1992) p. 1.

[179] "Ethiopia Assessment Report," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (March 4-20, 1994) pp. 19-20.
[180] "Ethiopia Advisory Committee Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-13 (September 11, 1993) pp. 1-2.

work programs. The LC management team felt concerned that this INGO's approach was short-term, lacking community participation, and enabling dependency.[181] According to an LC member, the difference between the two organizations was that Ibsa was accepted and welcomed by the community of Magala Mukha, while the competing INGO was employing outsider experts who were unfamiliar to the community.[182] This statement attests Ibsa's importance as the implementor of the LC's community participation goals. It also shows that the LC operated with David Lempert's understanding that to prevent dependency, programs should increase local ownership. The LC also incorporated similar ideas presented by Yonas from FGAE to coordinate amongst NGOs rather than to compete. In March 1993, the LC management team entered discussions with the competing INGO about an inter-organizational agreement to divide tasks.[183] The LC's objections to their competitors' lack of indigenization and dependency prevention, and their collaborative action, demonstrates the LC's own commitments to local ownership.

In 1992, in addition to hiring Ibsa, the LC established an intermittent Canadian presence in the Magala Mukha community. The LC began funding Nancy (pseud.), a United Church of Canada ministry candidate living in Addis Ababa, to occasionally travel to Magala Mukha and send reports to the LC management team.[184] Nancy saw herself as a diplomatic and neutral middleman between the EOC and the LC, assuring the LC that she was aware of how to navigate the dynamics of the partnership.[185] Despite her assurances, Nancy's letters betray how the LC's

[181] "Ethiopia Advisory Committee Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 1995.153C, 10-7 (November 28, 1992) pp. 1-2.
[182] "Minutes Ethiopia Advisory Committee Meeting," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-1 (March 25, 1993) p. 2.
[183] Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-13 (March 5, 1993) pp. 2-3; "Ethiopia Management Team Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-13 (March 8, 1993).
[184] "Ethiopia Project Management Committee Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 1995.153C. 10-7 (April 14, 1992) pp. 1-2.
[185] Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-14 (December 2, 1992) p. 1.

position as cultural outsiders in Ethiopia impeded local ownership and partnership with EOC DICAC.

In 1993, Nancy reported that gender inequality was endemic to Ethiopia, and especially to Magala Mukha.[186] Indeed, many of Nancy's letters revealed her concern with what she saw as the unfair treatment of women in Magala Mukha. On a visit to Magala Mukha, she had been angry to learn that most of the women in Magala Mukha were illiterate because they had dropped out of school to get married.[187] On another visit to Magala Mukha, Nancy learned that the local women had five children on average. Nancy questioned the women about family planning and described their responses as open at first, then increasingly defensive as Nancy encouraged them to limit the number of children. Nancy explained that, with fewer children, the families would have more resources, their children could attend school, and mothers would have more free time. The women replied that their children were important to them and would care for them as they aged. If their children attended school, they were more likely to leave the village after graduating and not return. Upon hearing that Nancy only had two children, the women agreed that foreigners viewed child-raising differently, needing excessive luxury to care for children, while Ethiopians only needed food for their children.[188] The women were pointing out the crux of the conversation's tension, which was that Nancy, on behalf of the LC, was a cultural outsider in the community. As such, her approach to conversations about family planning was off-putting.

[186] Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-14 (December 2, 1992) pp. 2-3.
[187] Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.007C, 9-2 (November 21, 1993) pp. 1-2.
[188] Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-14 (December 2, 1992) pp. 2-3.

In the same conversation, Nancy also discovered that childbirth could be risky in Magala Mukha. Ibsa, the community staff worker, thought it could be possible to train some of the women as childbirth attendants through the Ethiopian Ministry of Health. However, Ibsa reminded Nancy about the processes of community-based development. Before beginning any initiative, they should consult the wider community.[189] Ibsa's gentle reminder to Nancy of the importance of community decision-making customs proves his valuable role as a cultural translator between foreign LC representatives and local Magala Mukha residents. Nancy was one of many LC visitors in Magala Mukha, as the LC offered Canadian members the opportunity to visit Magala Mukha, meaning that Ibsa was regularly playing the role of cultural mediator. In 1994, an evaluator visited Magala Mukha and noted that some interviewees felt that the funding for exchange visits should be allocated to the program instead. The LC's position, in response, was that the visits were an integral part of their program plans, and that the visit funding could not be reallocated.[190] In this instance, the LC was unwilling to shift their plans to address a community suggestion. To the credit of the LC, their hiring of Ibsa, a cultural insider committed to community-based development, legitimized the LC's work, even when its representatives lapsed in implementing the values of local ownership.

In one letter to the LC, Nancy relayed how she had indirectly prompted EOC DICAC to pay more attention to the project, feeling that EOC DICAC was not acting in true partnership with the LC. [191] To Nancy, the EOC was not a grassroots development

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[189] Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-14 (December 2, 1992) pp. 2-3.

[190] "Ethiopia Assessment Report," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (March 4-20, 1994) pp. 14-15.

[191] Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 8-14 (December 2, 1992) p. 1; Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (November 21, 1993) pp. 2-3.

actor, but rather an oppressive and hierarchical institution.[192] This observation contained truth. Not only was the EOC a massive institution, but it also historically held immense influence in Ethiopian governments, with Ethiopia scarcely differentiating between the roles of church and state.[193] Because of its institutional structure, the LC did not consider EOC DICAC to be engaged with ideas of local ownership. When the LC began its partnership with EOC DICAC, they expressed that the concept of self-help was absent in Ethiopian development discourse. The LC derided the work of EOC DICAC in responding to drought in Magala Mukha, pointing out that EOC DICAC had sent supplies without consulting the community or following up afterwards.[194] In 1992, an LC representative attended several EOC meetings and noted that EOC DICAC was decentralizing its structures to adopt a more grassroots approach. According to the representative, these changes would do little to achieve self-help. The representative explained that EOC DICAC's development programs were meant to serve the needy, with no intention to empower beneficiaries to become self-sufficient.[195] With a goal to implement self-help development that would subvert traditional development practices, the LC's choice to partner with one of the most powerful institutions in Ethiopia was peculiar.

In spite of its powerful position in Ethiopian politics and society, EOC DICAC expressed a relative openness to ideas of local ownership. It implemented numerous programs including

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[192] Correspondence, UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (November 21, 1993) p. 3.
[193] Kebede, "Transnational Educational Leadership," 112.
[194] Project Application, Public Participation Program," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 2-6 (1991) p. 8-9.

[195] "Trip Report Ethiopia," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (May 1992) pp. 2-3.

forestation, seed distribution, fishery, water access, family development, and flour milling.[196] It even established a department dedicated to women in development. In fact, the LC representative who attended the 1992 EOC meetings reported that EOC DICAC had paid "more-than-lip-service" in their establishment of the women in development department with skillful staff, despite pushback from church leaders.[197] When EOC had sufficient funding, it supported its staff to attend professional training abroad in the United Kingdom, Holland, United States, Canada, and Kenya. EOC DICAC hoped that, through their study experiences, their staff would learn new ways of thinking in different cultural contexts.[198] This process reveals both the EOC's investment in their staff's development as well as an openness to incorporating different practices of development. In its 1992 annual report, EOC DICAC lamented that some of its programs lacked local community participation in program decision-making, demonstrating that they measured their progress towards local ownership.[199] In 1996, an EOC DICAC staff member attended a two-day training for Ethiopian NGOs about participatory project planning. The participants learned about how to ensure that all stages of a project, from its planning to execution to evaluation, consider and include beneficiaries' needs and voices.[200] EOC DICAC was certainly not a grassroots activist LNGO, but it did commit to ideas of local ownership and, to an extent, implemented practices to achieve it. The LC's consistent critiques of EOC DICAC's lack of local ownership ring hollow when the LC freely chose to partner with the expansive

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[196] "Annual Progress Report 1992," *in the possession of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter Church Aid Commission (hereafter EOC DICAC)* (March 1993) pp. 1-12.

[197] "Trip Report Ethiopia," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (May 1992) p. 3.

[198] "Report on the Proceedings of the Workshop on Gender and Development: Organized by Women in Development (WID) Section of Ethiopian Orthodox Church and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC/DICAC)," *in the possession of EOC DICAC* (November 9-11, 1993) p. 28.

[199] "Annual Progress Report 1993," *in the possession of EOC DICAC* (March 1994) p. 12.

[200] "OOPPP and Beyond Report of a 2 Day Training Course for Facilitators Who Train Ethiopian NGOs in Project Management Techniques," *PACT Ethiopia, in the possession of EOC DICAC* (June 12-13, 1996).

institution, and the LC was repeatedly critiqued about its own failures to implement local ownership.

Despite the LC's critiques of EOC DICAC, the organizations continued to collaborate. In 1994, the LC commissioned an external evaluator, Graham (pseud.), to evaluate their program, and he found the partnership between the two organizations to be relatively healthy. Graham discovered issues with the LC's commitment to the partnership, and not with EOC DICAC. He warned against the pattern of the LC making promises to the Magala Mukha community pre-emptively, without first consulting with EOC DICAC.[201] Other than the LC's weaknesses in partnership, Graham's key concerns were with the LC's failures in implementing local ownership.

To Mawdsley et al., external evaluators are inefficient in properly evaluating projects. The researchers find the practice especially contradictory for NGOs who pay "lip service to all the trendy fashions in terms of project practice," yet hire external evaluators.[202] Evaluators and consultants are often flown into project sites for brief visits, lack context on the intricacies of the community, therefore relying on stereotypes and preconceived notions, and charge exorbitant fees which take up large sums of projects' budgets. Worse, Mawdsley et al. argue, the voices of beneficiaries are sidelined in external evaluators' reports, and only included in surface-level consultations.[203] The LC reserved CAD 8,000 for Graham's report in their budget, an amount surpassed only by Ibsa's salary of CAD 9,500, and contributions to Magala Mukha at $12,000

[201] "Ethiopia Assessment Report," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (March 4-20, 1994) p. 12.
[202] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas*, 142.
[203] Mawdsley et al., *Knowledge, Power and Development Agendas*, 142.

CAD.[204] In hiring an expensive outside evaluator, the LC did not adhere to Mawdsley et al.'s concept of locally owned evaluation processes. Ironically, Graham's report largely critiques the LC's shortcomings in implementing local ownership.

To Graham, the LC team's internal dynamics profoundly impeded their vision of self-help development. He discovered numerous interpersonal disagreements and ill feelings harboured between LC members. Furthermore, many were overly invested in the Magala Mukha project and driven by personal motivations. Graham deemed these relational and personal issues to be negatively affecting the project and the people of Magala Mukha. He also discouraged what he viewed as the LC's patronizing attitudes and saviour complexes and hoped that Magala Mukha residents would initiate their own development projects to evade the degradation of the LC's work.[205]

Graham concluded that the LC and EOC DICAC should exit and transfer ownership of the project to the Magala Mukha residents. He added that the LC should ensure that Magala Mukha and Ibsa would do well after the LC withdrew.[206] Following the 1994 report, the LC agreed that in 1995, they would re-evaluate their involvement.[207] By June 1996, the LC was still operating in Magala Mukha, though they had slowed their work and had begun to focus on a new water project in a nearby region. The LC expressed their misgivings about whether they should continue the project, they were still needed in the community, the community could act independently, and Magala Mukha truly understood the LC's goal of self-help.[208] The LC's

[204] "Ethiopia Development Project Schedule of Revenues and Expenditures: 4 Months Ended April 30, 1994," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-2.

[205] "Ethiopia Assessment Report," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (March 4-20, 1994) p. 50.
[206] Ethiopia Assessment Report," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2000.007C, 9-2 (March 4-20, 1994) p. 52.
[207] "Ethiopia Advisory Committee Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-2 (April 30, 1994).
[208] "Ethiopia Advisory Committee Minutes," UCC, UCC LC Fonds, 2001.085C, 3-4 (June 9, 1996) p. 2.

slowness to exit Magala Mukha evidences their difficulty in carrying out local ownership, despite their fervent commitment to its principles. It is unsurprising that the LC doubted whether the community of Magala Mukha understood their concept of self-help. Earlier on in the project, the LC had expressed their view that an understanding of self-help was absent in both Ethiopian development discourse and EOC DICAC's work. These comments construct a narrative that the LC was importing the concept of self-help to Ethiopians, who were unable to comprehend and implement it. Ironically, the LC themselves struggled to implement the concept, as multiple evaluators pointed out.

The LC is a thought-provoking example of an INGO being both intensely committed to local ownership and unable to implement its goals in practice. Funding proposal reviewers and program evaluators found the LC to be lacking in its implementation of self-help. Though the LC hired Ibsa, a staff member who skillfully counteracted Canadian LC visitors' cultural missteps, the organization did not fully invest in his career development. The LC team outwardly committed to the principles of local ownership, but saviour dynamics still emerged. Although the LC chose to pursue a local partnership with an Ethiopian organization, they chose a massive institution with deep-rooted ties to the Ethiopian government. In many respects, the LC had the potential to truly implement a locally owned development program but failed to do so.

Conclusion

> *The fact that so many real, often well-intentioned efforts have borne such pitiful fruit, and in some cases led to actual regression, should give food for considerable thought. When the solution to a problem starts to crumble, should it not be asked whether it was wrongly posed in the first place?*[209]

Development organizations in the 1980s and 1990s were well aware of the principles of local ownership, meaning that beneficiaries took the decision-making roles in their development programs. To idealists, processes like indigenization, community participation, decentralization, self-help, rights-based development, participatory development, and dependency prevention could undo the harms of colonialism and harmful development practices. To critics, the terms were simply buzzwords, designed to indulge donors and the public without propelling any true shifts to development practice. It is not possible to fully determine the intentions of the three NGOs presented in the case studies as they engaged with ideas of local ownership. It is possible and valuable, however, to assess their implementations of local ownership practices. The organizations' positions as large or small international or local NGOs affected this assessment. I conclude that the LNGO was the most willing and able to implement local ownership.

The large INGO, SCF UK, implemented few concrete actions to achieve local ownership. Its expatriate staff was paid and employed at high levels, its low-level Ethiopian staff were mostly dissatisfied with working conditions and expatriate attitudes, its handover of program control to the Ethiopian government was slow, and its programs rarely incorporated beneficiary input. The organization did not engage frequently with discourse about local ownership, and when it did, its staff and leadership were reluctant to implement changes to its programs. SCF UK also closely worked with Ethiopian governments and did not critique the political parties in

[209] Rist, *The History of Development* (London: Zed Books, 2014), 239.

power. The organization did not seriously engage in discourse about local ownership, nor did it implement its practices.

The small INGO, the LC, was vocal in its commitment to local ownership. Its philosophy of self-help was centered around beneficiaries taking charge of their own development. Even so, the LC was plagued by issues of Global North saviour dynamics, slowness to transition out of Magala Mukha, cultural differences with the community, and a failure to fully implement self-help. It struggled in its collaboration with its large and institutional partner, feeling disconnected from grassroots development. Its best enactor of local ownership was its Ethiopian staff member, but the INGO failed to provide him with professional development opportunities and basic transport. Although the LC was outspoken in its commitment to enact local ownership, it was unable to truly implement the philosophy.

Based on my analysis of FGAE, I propound that LNGOs can best and most fully implement local ownership, all while navigating the social and political norms of Ethiopia. The large LNGO case study, FGAE, represented both the advantages and pitfalls of an NGO in an insider position in Ethiopian society. Its successful collaboration with Ethiopian governments allowed it to function in a social climate where its work ranged from illegal to unacceptable. As Ethiopians, FGAE's leadership, staff, and volunteers navigated the complexities of their work in the Ethiopian context with relative ease. In its programming, FGAE practically implemented local ownership through CBD models. Its main challenge was restrictive funding requirements which prohibited the organization from adapting its programs to meet beneficiary needs. A principal downfall of FGAE's position as an LNGO was its avoidance of serious critique of the government. However, the INGO case studies were equally silent on political matters. In Ethiopia, both LNGOs and INGOs are limited by an inability to engage in political advocacy and stray from societal norms. The repression of civil society in Ethiopia is more indicative of a larger political problem, experienced by both local and international NGOs. Despite its apoliticism, FGAE engaged in discourse about local ownership and, in many of its programs, it achieved this goal.

Although no small LNGO is represented in the case studies, an analysis of such an organization would enhance this topic. A small LNGO would likely engage with ideas of local ownership differently than each of the NGOs represented in these case studies. It would presumably struggle to receive funding, connect more profoundly with local communities, and possibly engage with Ethiopian governments more critically than INGOs and large LNGOs, among other differences. A small LNGO could potentially implement local ownership more fully than any other form of NGO, while also struggling with distinct barriers related to its small size. Further historical treatment of small, grassroots LNGOs would be invaluable in discussions of local ownership.

Based on the case studies presented, a future of complete local ownership in international development is only possible with the extraction of foreign INGOs from the Global South. As the case studies exhibit, INGOs are unlikely, and often unwilling to implement local ownership. Meanwhile, LNGOs are well-suited to achieve local ownership but are limited by funding restrictions. Logically, if the development sector wishes to achieve local ownership, LNGOs should receive full support and funding from the international community. More precisely, as localization proponents specify, LNGOs should receive unrestricted and direct funding from the Global North, allowing them full control over their programs and the flexibility to better serve beneficiaries.

In assessing the case study organizations' implementations of local ownership, this thesis does not intend to simply applaud the work of one organization and denigrate the work of another. Nor is it concluding by overly promoting the adoption of localization by the modern development sector. Rather, the findings of these case studies are meant to contribute to the historiography of global interventions in addressing poverty, injustice, and inequality in Africa. Since the beginnings of missionary movements in Africa, the case study INGOs are the latest in a long line of guests on the African continent engaging in development work. By historicizing the development context of the 1980s and 1990s, this thesis intends to provide the necessary historical context for new generations of African activists as they question the long history and continued presence of Global North actors in Africa.

An enactment of the modern concept of localization seems to have the potential to spark a legitimate upheaval in the development system, but the term has been coopted and misused by powerful institutions. Moreover, the case studies reveal the chronic failures of INGOs in the 1980s and 1990s to implement the then-popular terms of local ownership. Based on this history, a logical prediction is that Global North organizations will continue to be slow and unmotivated to genuinely achieve the newest form of local ownership, localization. One may wonder, why is a sector so outwardly committed to local ownership unable or unwilling to achieve it?

Several critics and scholars have denounced the international development sector's immanent colonial, saviour-like, capitalist, and self-serving tendencies. Such critiques are useful in deducing the cause of the sector's repeated failures to enact local ownership. Fundamentally, each term relating to local ownership strips a level of power from donors and INGOs and places it in the hands of beneficiaries. Past processes of local ownership have offered local beneficiaries varying degrees of autonomy and decision-making, but never a full handover of power, knowledge, and resources. At its core, the modern concept of localization proposes that Global North organizations dispense considerable funding without economic, social, or political advantages to the donor. If past processes of local ownership, which only allotted limited power and resources to beneficiaries, failed, it is unlikely that localization, which proposes a total relinquishment of resources to LNGOs, would be implemented. As the scholars critiquing the innate capitalist and colonial nature of development would likely argue, it is dubious that an INGO or Global North donor would release unrestricted funds to a Global South LNGO, with no resultant benefit. As seen in sectoral resistance to the justice approach's implication of forced giving, the current system of development hinges on INGOs and donors offering resources voluntarily and on their own terms.

Though Kevin O'Sullivan advised against overanalyzing intentions, there may be merit in determining the motivations of Global North organizations when engaging with ideas of local ownership. Were the case study INGOs entering discussions of local ownership expecting to genuinely implement its processes? Are contemporary INGOs pledging to enact localization prepared to cede all control and direction of how their funds are used by Global South organizations? This paper is not intended to simply critique INGOs' atomized failures to implement local ownership but to broadly question whether INGOs are sufficiently motivated to radically transform a sector that has historically advantaged the Global North by renouncing any benefit derived from funding Global South NGOs. The findings of this analysis would be greatly complemented by investigations of the economic, social, and political intentions of past and present INGOs when engaging with notions of local ownership.

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