

Working Paper: Between finance,
logistics and expertise:
A development management
perspective on localization

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Overview

- Methods and Objectives
- Externally driven locally-led development and autonomous design
- Localization, peacebuilding and development
 - The Asia Foundation's Dialogue Program
 - Two Case studies
- Spheres of localization
- Tools for localization
- Localization or subsidiarity
- Conclusion

Methods and Objectives

- Active Participant-Observation
- Close to three years of intermittent field visits
- Cocreation and codesign of program designs

Objectives and limitations

- Development Management perspective on localization.
- Grounded frameworks to think about localization
- External validity limited to programs implemented through NGOs and CBOs; development management perspective can be extended to direct government support as well.

Externally-driven-locally-led development and autonomous design

DFAT (2021):

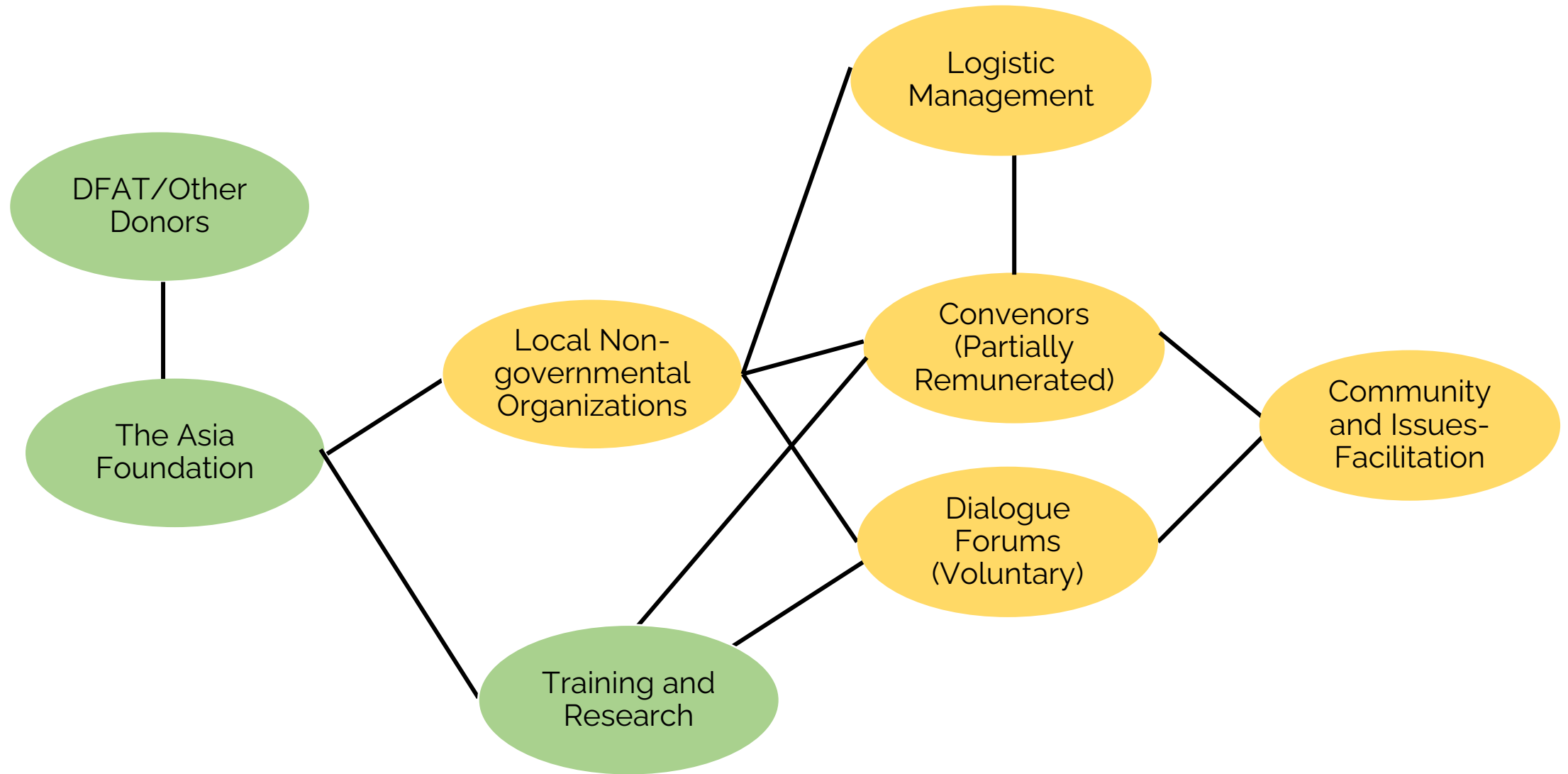
“method to drive more effective development outcomes by improving the agency of affected people and local actors (including partner governments) so that development action is locally informed, locally led and meets the needs of local people.”

Features of Autonomous Design (Escobar, 2018):

“Every community practices the design of itself: its organization, its social relations, its practices, its relation to environment. If for most of history communities practiced a sort of “natural design” independent of expert knowledge, contemporary situations involve design based on both detached and embodied forms of reflection.”

Localization, peacebuilding and development

- The Asia Foundation, Nepal's Dialogue program influenced by the local turn in peacebuilding.
“building on local and available resources fosters self-sufficiency and helps sustain development and change over time (Lederach, 1996)”.
- Local ownership over activity completion; flexible budget for regionally prominent NGO.
- Works on conflict transformation – many issues related to latent conflict and structural injustice.



Case Studies:

- Conflict between two groups of free-bonded labourers over legal ownership of a land– Bardiya, Western Nepal
 - Successfully resolved.
- Rehabilitation of around 1500 families displaced during the expansion of a National Park – Shuklaphanta, Kanchanpur, Western Nepal.
 - Conflict has been managed but remains unresolved.

Spheres in localization

- Bidirectionality of constraints (and opportunities) by parallel spheres.
- Important to look at coercive agency

Spheres	Interaction with the local
Sub-national sphere	Proximate to the local; might not align with the interest with target but the local can be expanded across sub-nations through intervention; Coercive agency through political legitimacy, militancy or its attachment with national sphere.
National Sphere	Major axis for development partners (authorization); most important to the extent localization can happen; national regulations limit the extent to which local resolutions are possible
Transnational Sphere	International treaties, foreign policies but also global norms; Coercive agency either comes through national regulation, cultural shifts or at extreme through support of sub-nations and undermining of nations.

Tools for localization

- Emphasis on allocation of resources but not just financial but also logistical and expert.
- At what levels or through which entities are these resources allocated.

Primary resource remains finance:

- Cost-effectiveness is secondary
- Fiduciary risks associated with appetite for risk.
- Direct support to CBOs can be counterproductive; dependency rather than sustainability.
- Finance as a means to allocate other resources.

Logistical:

- Logistics key in development design.
- Local actors primarily require access to these logistics.
- Flexibility in program implementation emanates from flexibility in logistical allocations.

Tools for localization

- Expertise and knowledge:
 - Prioritizing 'technical' or 'contextual' expertise?
 - Role of 'vernacular' expertise- that have domain expertise as well as contextual ones
 - Despite emphasis over local knowledge, legacy of unequal development will persist; expatriate and national experts prominent in local minds
 - External experts' role in becoming allies of the local at national and transnational spheres
 - What knowledge can and should be transferred to the local? Requires demystifying different types of knowledge and expertise

Localization or Subsidiarity?

- Tying oneself into knots
- Spheres and tools for localization might assist in making decision but does not resolve the question of problem identification or sustainability.
- Development programs signal; while local actors seek support.
- The selection of a cause/issue, nature of resources and the decision to engage intermediaries is local actors' call.
- Better approximation of this process, might be subsidiarity rather than localization.

Conclusion and recommendations

- Inducing sustained endogenous processes with exogenous support
- Head start in peacebuilding offers authoritative case studies for localization
- Choice also of what aspects to localize: finance, logistics and expertise (requires further unpacking)
- How can we be part of locals 'embodied forms of reflection'?
 - We might need subsidiarity instead of localization?