Prosjekt Vendepunkt – innspill til hvordan lokalt ledet utvikling kan operasjonaliseres

SOS-barnebyer Norge har invitert lokale partnere til å komme med konkrete forslag til hvordan norske myndigheter kan operasjonalisere lokalt ledet utvikling. Vi har mottatt innspill fra 9 partnere fra Nigeria, Etiopia, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Mosambik, Ghana, Peru og Ukraina.

Vi har særlig etterspurt forslag til hvordan norsk bistand kan organiseres og forvaltes slik at lokale aktører får større innflytelse over prioriteringer, beslutninger og ressursbruk, samtidig som lokale institusjoner styrkes over tid.

Partnerne er gjennomgående samstemte om behovet for større lokal beslutningsmyndighet og investeringer i institusjonell bærekraft. Flere har også foreslått konkrete finansieringsmekanismer som kan prøves ut innenfor norsk utviklingssamarbeid.

Vi har nedenfor valgt å fremheve forslag som kan bidra til videreutvikling av eksisterende finansieringsordninger og forvaltningspraksis, fremfor generelle anbefalinger om tiltak som allerede inngår i norsk bistand.

Innspillene fra ni land viser at våre lokale partnere ikke utelukkende etterlyser mer finansiering. De peker også på konkrete løsninger for hvordan bistandsmidler kan fordeles, forvaltes og brukes på måter som sikrer bærekraftige resultater over tid.

Under følger anbefaling fra 9 lokale partnere til hvordan lokalt ledet utvikling kan operasjonaliseres.

1. Pilot country-level funding mechanisms with differentiated funding windows

Partners of SOS Children's Villages Norway propose funding arrangements adapted to different types of local organisations and nationally identified priorities.

A country-level mechanism could combine:

- Direct institutional grants to established national organisations.
- Locally governed pooled funding for smaller and emerging civil society organisations, including community-based groups supported by national mentors, as proposed by Mozambique.
- Thematic or regional funding windows through which locally led consortia develop responses to priorities identified by local communities and national stakeholders.
- Innovation and scaling grants with action research attached to test locally developed solutions and support their eventual adoption by public institutions.
- Support initiatives to build capacity to track results systematically and share learning among relevant actors in the region.

Such arrangements could be piloted in selected partner countries, with locally anchored governance and differentiated funding requirements.

2. Give local actors decision-making authority before funding priorities are established

Partners propose changing how donors define priorities and design funding calls.

Norway could establish structured country-level consultations with local civil society, affected communities, national authorities and other relevant stakeholders before funding priorities are finalised.

Local actors could also be represented in the governance and allocation decisions of country-level funding mechanisms.

The Ukrainian partner proposes systematic beneficiary-needs assessments to inform annual donor priorities and funding decisions.

3. Establish pre-positioned, locally accessible crisis funding

Partners from Zambia and Mozambique propose dedicated funding arrangements enabling local organisations to respond rapidly to emerging crises.

Norway could pilot a pre-positioned crisis window within country-level funding mechanisms, accessible to qualified national and community-based organisations.

Funding could be activated in response to cyclones, floods, drought, conflict or health emergencies, based on agreed criteria and locally identified needs.

This could strengthen locally led humanitarian preparedness while connecting immediate crisis response with longer-term community resilience.

4. Invest in sustainable local financing models

Partners from Nigeria, Ukraine, Mozambique, Zambia and Peru propose moving beyond project financing towards mechanisms that help local institutions build lasting financial capacity.

Concrete proposals include:

- Matching funds: Norway could match resources mobilised through local philanthropy, businesses, individual donors and other domestic sources. Matching contributions could gradually decline as locally generated income increases.
- Transition to public financing: Support locally developed solutions that can eventually be adopted, scaled and financed through national or local government systems, as proposed by Peru.

These mechanisms could be tested with clear sustainability milestones, focusing on reduced financial dependence and the continuation of effective services beyond individual grants.

5. Introduce harmonised due diligence across donors

Partners from Nigeria and Mozambique propose a common due diligence assessment recognised by multiple donors.

Norway could initiate cooperation with other donors to develop a shared assessment or *due diligence passport* covering financial management, governance, safeguarding and institutional capacity.

Assessments could be proportionate to the size and risk of funding, with qualified local organisations able to reuse approved documentation across participating funding mechanisms.

This could reduce administrative costs for both donors and recipients, while making funding more accessible to smaller local organisations without compromising accountability.

6. Measure whether decision-making power and institutional capacity are actually shifting

Partners recommend that progress towards locally led development be assessed through more than the proportion of funding channelled to local organisations.

Norway could introduce a limited set of indicators measuring:

- The share of funding and budgets under local decision-making authority.
- Local participation in setting funding priorities and designing programmes.
- Progression of local organisations into lead grant-holder and governance roles.
- Growth in locally generated income and diversified funding sources.
- The extent to which locally developed solutions are sustained or adopted by public systems.

Such indicators could be incorporated into existing results frameworks to assess whether financing reforms are strengthening local leadership and long-term sustainability.

A practical opportunity for Norway

The strongest proposals could be tested through a limited number of country-level pilots, combining locally determined priorities, differentiated funding arrangements, institutional sustainability financing and simplified donor requirements.

The key opportunity for Norway is to move from financing locally implemented programmes towards funding mechanisms in which local actors increasingly determine priorities, manage resources and sustain results.