

## Private Sector Engagement in Humanitarian Financing, Logistics and Technology and Implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects in Kenya

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### Abstract

Humanitarian crisis across the globe continue to increase in size, frequency, and complexity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century challenging the ability of Organizations in disaster relief to save lives of persons in distress. This has been a challenge in Countries prone to natural disaster as well as those prone to human conflict such as Syria, Southern Sudan, Central Africa Republic, Yemen, Somalia and Democratic Republic of Congo. In Kenya, humanitarian crises have occurred in the form of recurrent drought, floods, malnutrition and food security, disease outbreak, post election violence; resource based inter-communal conflicts as well as terror attacks. These crises often require immediate response in order to save lives, as a result there is increasing need to engage private sector in humanitarian logistics, financing and technology when implementing humanitarian aid projects. The objective of this study was to examine the influence of combined private sector engagement and the implementation of humanitarian aid projects. The paradigm guiding the study is pragmatism and the study employed a cross sectional-survey design. The sample was drawn from Organizations in disaster relief programmes using both probability and non-probability sampling technique. Both primary and secondary data was utilized in data collection. Primary data was collected using self administered questionnaires, Key Informant Interview, and Focus Group Discussions Guides. Questionnaires issued were 117 out of these, 85 which is 72.6% were returned for analysis. The data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive analysis, mean, percentages and frequencies were used. For inferential analysis, correlations and regressions were used. For  $p < 0.05$ ,  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_1$  accepted. For the strength of the relationships,  $r$  values were considered where:  $+0.10 < r < +0.29$ ; weak correlation  $+0.30 < r < +0.49$ ; moderate correlation  $+0.5 < r < +1.0$ ; Strong correlation. The qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. The study findings indicate that combined private sector engagement influence on implementation of humanitarian aid projects in Kenya. The study concludes that combined private sector engagement is critical in implementation of humanitarian aid projects and there is need to put more emphasis on collaboration. The study recommended that there is need for more academic research on humanitarian aid.

**Keywords:** Humanitarian Logistics, Humanitarian Financing, Humanitarian Technology, Implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects, Private Sector Engagement

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### Introduction

#### **Background of the Study**

Private Sector engagement in Humanitarian Aid Projects has been instrumental in improving implementation of humanitarian aid projects locally and globally (Benedek, 2014). Several Researchers argue that there is a burgeoning of new technologies and fresh ideas in

humanitarian aid which offer new perspectives in implementation of humanitarian aid projects (Hoxtell, Norz, and Teicke, 2015). Even though the Private Sector has been playing a great role in humanitarian aid project implementation during disasters, they have hardly been recognized as key players in the Humanitarian sector. However recently this has been changing and private sector is getting more and more engaged (Hoxtell, Norz, & Teicke, 2015). Zyck and Kent (2014) argue that these relationships between Organizations and the Private sectors can be both voluntary and collaborative, where participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose. Bendell and Muphy (2010) argue that where there is mutual agreement partners share risk, benefits as well as responsibilities, therefore private sector teaming up with the humanitarian sector combines efforts and achieves humanitarian gains. These gains benefit persons in distress during disasters. For instance, creating innovative products, processes and services that improve efficiency, effectiveness and quality of aid (Ramalingam, Scriven & Foley, 2009). This research focuses on three key roles of Private Sector engagement that influence implementation of humanitarian aid projects: humanitarian logistics, humanitarian funding and humanitarian technology. The study argues that when these three services are combined, the Organizations in disaster relief are able to deliver better services to persons in distress.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Over the past decade, humanitarian crises have doubled and continue to rise increasing humanitarian need. Conversely, the implementation of humanitarian aid projects in Kenya continues to be faced by difficulties. This can be attributed to untimely implementation of humanitarian aid projects by organizations in disaster relief after the onset of disasters or human conflicts often due to lack of access to logistics expertise and transportation means. Also, humanitarian logistics is faced by lack of recognition, performance measurement, professional staff and inadequate technologies. Poor resourcing and availability of funding resulting in aid workers choosing which lives to save and which lives to let go yet funding humanitarian crises is critical to a country's development, as crises immediately disrupt the ability of a country's continuity in engaging in economic development. Organizations have remained laggards in adopting new technology mainly because, even when applying technology, they must comply with the fundamental humanitarian principles. Kenya Vision 2030 Mid Term Plan II on aid effectiveness has laid down implementation framework requirements for effective aid to be achieved. The National Disaster Operation Center (NDOC) under the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government is expected to ensure better humanitarian projects are implemented after a disaster takes place. However, they have faced challenges due to increasing disasters resulting in thousands of persons in distress. These challenges can be addressed by injecting the Private Sector who have expertise in logistics, have funds set aside for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and are risk takers in innovation and adopting new technology that can help improve disaster response. Previous studies indicate that in engaging the private sector, there are opportunities as well as constraints, but these constraints can be overcome. Failure to engage the private sector may result in Organizations in disaster relief becoming less relevant as their ability to respond to disasters and conflict continues to diminish due to overwhelming needs. As such this study is both timely and relevant and seeks to close the gap in research by examining the influence of combined private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects in Kenya.

### ***Research Objective and Hypothesis***

The study objective:

1. To assess the extent to which the Private sector engagement influences the implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

The study hypothesis:

H<sub>1</sub>: Private sector engagement has a significant influence on the implementation of humanitarian aid projects

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Private Sector Engagement and Implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects***

The empirical literature critically examines studies done in relation to the objectives of this study. Torres (2010) asserts that the humanitarian context is rapidly changing and that even veterans in humanitarian aid are evolving albeit slowly. On humanitarian logistics, several scholars agree that it is an emerging field (Heaslip and Barber, 2014; Sandwell, 2011; Totham and Spens, 2011). These studies revealed that humanitarian logistics is under researched and according to Heaslip and Barber (2014) little has been done on cooperation, coordination and collaboration in humanitarian logistics. In order to be timely Organizations in disaster relief have often relied on speedy delivery from the Private sector, mainly because in humanitarian crises speed is highly valued in order to save lives. These findings from past studies reaffirm the importance of further research in humanitarian logistics. Humanitarian crises have remained unfunded, underfunded and sometimes forgotten as argued by (Scotts, 2015).

The trend of financing humanitarian crises has been the responsibility of governments through their foreign policy, public foundations as well as international organizations. However, this trend is changing because of donor fatigue and ever-increasing crises in numbers and need. Altinger and Totella (2007) reviewed published information sources on humanitarian agencies from 1995-2005 and found out that funding flow was volatile. The private sector has been found to be one of the avenues that can ease the humanitarian financing burden. Nevertheless, as Stoianova (2012) asserts much of the private sector funding is not consistently reported and as Walker and Pepper (2007) asserted, it was impossible to discern funding directed to the humanitarian sector due to poor coordination. The trend in humanitarian funding by the private sector continues to demonstrate that they will become more involved in the future to influence effectiveness in implementation of humanitarian aid projects. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has brought a dramatic increase in utilization of technology in Organizations in disaster relief, but they have been stragglers in adopting technology and this has affected their ability to be more effective quicker. According to Sandvick, Jumbert, Karlsrund and Kaufman (2013) humanitarian technology is shaping relief distribution and reshaping the relationship between the helper and the helped. So far there are various technologies innovated to benefit Organizations in disaster relief including digital information, identification technologies, crises mapping, virtual distributions, and resource mobilization. However, Belliveau (2016) asserted that care must be taken to ensure technology does not foster more technocrats, less empathetic inappropriate humanitarian aid implementation that could course harm to persons in distress. Engaging private sector is one of the ways to move forward and improve delivery of humanitarian aid services.

#### ***Gaps in Knowledge on Private Sector Engagement***

This study has revealed several gaps in knowledge in the study area of private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects. In a study done by Walton, May

and Haselkorn (2011) on humanitarian logistics there was an overview of speed, but no indication of the time needed for response in cases of emergency. While the study done by Sandwell (2011) failed to give the challenges. It also failed to give any solutions to the raised problems which are often necessary for improvement of service in the field. On the other hand Kovac and Spens, (2011) stated that so far there are few education programmes on humanitarian logistics and there is need to consider educating people in the subject for better humanitarian response. In addition, there are limited discussions around humanitarian logistics performance measurements and there is need to improve this for the sector. Davidson (2006) asserted that there was less interaction between the private sector and the humanitarian sector which has created gaps in humanitarian logistics. Engaging them could improve the sector as some of the private sector players are more experts in the area of logistics. There is therefore need to put more effort in improving the field of humanitarian logistics in academic circles and also in improving the practice to ensure better implementation of humanitarian aid projects. Humanitarian financing happens within NGOs by the private sector however this funding is hardly recorded as argued by Altinger and Totella (2007). Also, little attention has been paid to private sector financing particularly local and none UN. This failure to record gives a misconception on private sector engagement in humanitarian aid projects. Stoddard (2012) stated that with lack of records it is difficult to know the contribution of the private sector. Furthermore Scott (2015) argued it was also difficult to know what the NGOs had done with the funding. There is therefore need to keep records of private sector funding in the humanitarian sector. Through the gained funding there is still need to know how the humanitarian need can be met and also maintain good quality.

Humanitarian aid projects have for a long time relied on old style implementation during disasters, with technology coming along there is need to do things differently. Meir (2011) argued that crisis affected communities were getting more and more engaged in sharing information on their challenges through the mobile phones and other technology gadgets. The study however failed to mention how information from the persons in distress is triangulated to ensure its authenticity. Sandvik, Jumbert, Karlsrund and Kaufman (2013) stated that the new field of humanitarian technology has reconceptualised the humanitarian space and the relationship between the helper and the helped. However, there is need to continue examining humanitarian technology more deeply. Even though humanitarian technology is good and has been applied by many organizations to overcome some challenges there is need to further know how utilizing it can affect the fundamental humanitarian principles. Also, there is little information on whether technology complies with humanitarian philosophies, and policies and whether it has potential to harm the persons in distress. There is therefore need for scholars to dig into the humanitarian technology to see the advantages and the disadvantages it poses in the humanitarian sector. Combined private sector engagement in humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing, and humanitarian technology has not been embraced by all NGOs and some still depend on their own to respond to disasters which according to Zyck and Kent (2014) is characterised by challenges. Engaging other actors has the capacity to build the humanitarian sector more rather than create competition among the players. Failure to engage the private sector poses challenges to the humanitarian sector as they remain incompetent in the expertise areas and the humanitarian funding continue to condense requiring more actors to engage.

### ***Conceptual Framework of the Study***

The study was guided by the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 that shows the relationship between private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid project. The study focused on private sector engagement in humanitarian logistics,

humanitarian financing and humanitarian technology. For humanitarian logistics the study focused on access to relief goods, transportation, agility and preparedness. On humanitarian financing the study focused on sufficiency of relief funds, diversification of financing, strategies of financing and accessibility to relief funds. And humanitarian technology concentration was on humanitarian innovation, use of communication technology, digital funds mobilization and digital humanitarian response. The dependent variable which was implementation of humanitarian aid projects focused on timely implementation, humanitarian coverage, efficiency, coherence, and appropriateness of intervention. The study interacted these indices to examine how they influence implementation of humanitarian aid.

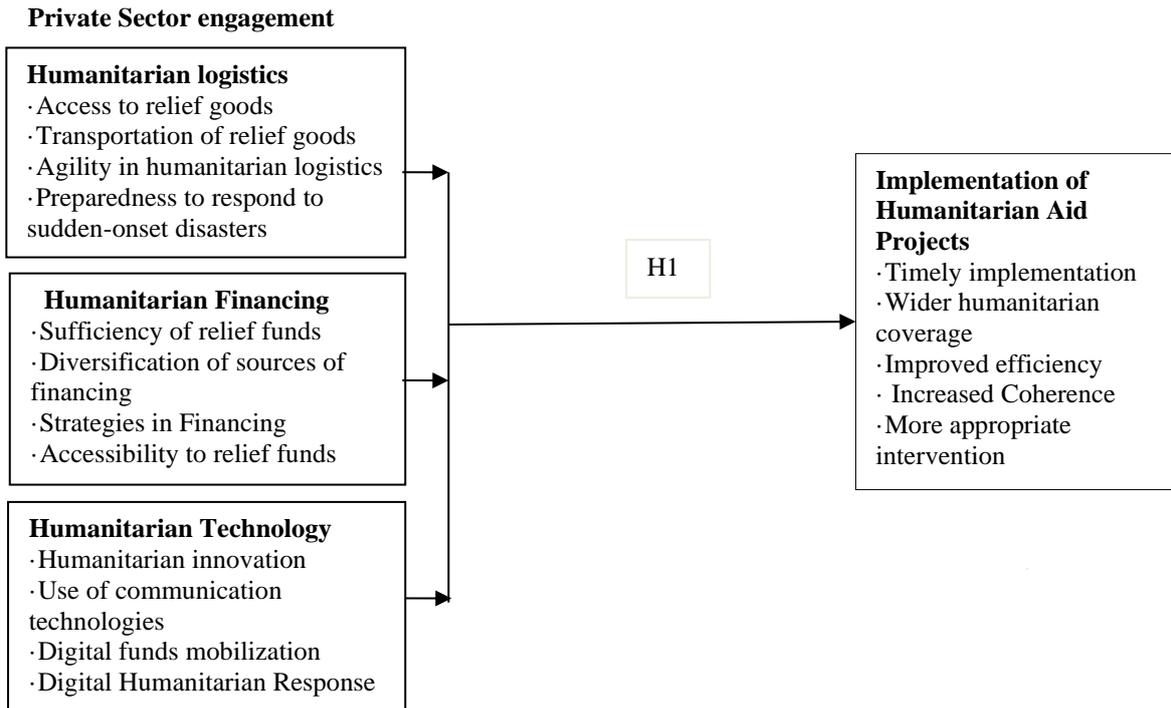


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework on Private Sector Engagement and implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects

**Theoretical Framework of the Study**

This paper anchors itself on the theory of change. Theories of change can be traced back to late 1950 by works of Kirkpatrick on four levels of learning evaluation model (James, 2011). The theory was further expounded by Daniel Stufflebeams Contexts, Inputs, Process, Product (CIPP), and the widely used Logical framework. It is not known when the term was coined but the theory has several contributors including peter Rossi, Huey Chen, Quinn Patton and Weiss Carol who were evaluation theorists and practitioners. It is Weiss who popularized it in the 1990s when looking at program evaluation. The theory can be traced from a number of academic disciplines including sociology, psychology, environment, and political science. The theory of change explains the relationship between a project and expected change in outcome. This study endeavours to examine the influence of Private sector engagement in implementation of humanitarian aid projects. In this study, the populations being served are the persons in distress and the suggested strategy for implementation is engaging Private sector in humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing, and humanitarian technology in-order to achieve the desired outcome after occurrence of a disaster. The existing strategies applied by

Organizations in disaster relief hinder them from exploiting their potential due to increasing crises and humanitarian needs. Therefore, there is a need to apply the theory of change in implementation of humanitarian aid projects and this study has introduced engagement of private sector in the three aforementioned areas. This is in line with Stufflebeam argument of context, input processes, and products to bring about change.

### Research Methodology

This study used both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was collected using peer reviewed journals, critical reviews of past discourse on private sector engagement in humanitarian aid projects implementation, published materials, annual reports, and grey literature. The study was guided by pragmatism paradigm that allowed the research to apply both qualitative and quantitative methods when conducting research as asserted by (Teddlie and Tashakori, 2010). The choice of the paradigm was informed by the ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological underpinning of pragmatism and the study problem. As argued by Krefting (1991) gathering qualitative data is important in understanding the gaps in quantitative data. The study applied survey design and the strategy of enquiry was mixed methods where the researcher utilized questionnaires, interview guides and focus group discussions to collect data. The target population was both Non-Governmental Organizations and private sector companies based in Nairobi Kenya. Seventy-seven organizations and forty private sector companies in disaster relief were sampled using stratified sampling. Stratified sampling was used to allow for the different strata. The respondents targeted were the senior humanitarian officers engaged during disasters. The questionnaires issued contained likert type scale 1 to 5 where 1 equals strongly agree, 2 equals disagree, 3 equals neutral, 4 equals agree and 5 equals strongly agree. The questionnaires were both electronic and paper-based due to the availability of target respondents. Key Informant Interviews were administered to directors and where the directors were not available assistant Directors were interviewed. Lastly Focus Group Discussion themes were administered to aid recipients. The utilization of secondary and primary data was important in triangulation of information to enrich the research. Before going to the field to collect data, the researcher sought research authorization letter from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and Nairobi City County Department of Education, Youth Affairs and Social Services Sector.

### Results and Discussions

For this study, 117 questionnaires were issued to respondents, 85 were successfully filled and returned. This represented a response rate of 72.65% which is considered statistically significant according to Mugenda (2009) which asserts that a more than 70% response rate is considered excellent for analysis and drawing of statistically significant inferences. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Response</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>72.6%</b>
<b>Non-Response</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>27.4%</b>
Total	117	100%

Source: Field Data (2019)

### Background Characteristics of Respondents

The study sought background information about the respondents as shown in Table 2 as it was important to know the characteristics of the players in provision of humanitarian aid services.

This includes; geographic scope of operation, duration of engagement, humanitarian private sector collaboration and mode of collaboration.

Table 2: Background Characteristics of Respondents

Categories of Background Information	Frequency	Cumulative Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Geographic scope of operation</b>			
International	58	58	68.2
Regional	18	76	21.2
National	9	85	10.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>		<b>100</b>
<b>Duration of engagement in the humanitarian sector</b>			
5 years and below	6	6	7.1
6-10 years	23	29	27.1
11-15 years	13	42	15.3
16 years and above	43	85	50.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>		<b>100</b>
<b>Humanitarian private sector collaboration</b>			
Yes	69	69	81.2
No	16	85	18.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>		<b>100</b>
<b>Mode of collaboration</b>			
Long term partnership	15	15	17.6
Implementing partner	18	33	21.2
Short term partnership	23	56	27.1
Adhoc partnership	29	85	34.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>		<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data (2019)

### *Descriptive and Inferential Statistics*

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

Private sector engagement in humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing and humanitarian technology had a composite mean of 3.4616 and standard deviation of 0.34677 as shown in Table 3. Since the measurements were carried out using a 5 pointer Likert Scale, a mean of 3.4616 indicates a more than average influence of private engagement in implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

Table 3: Private Sector Engagement and Implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects

Description	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Humanitarian Logistics	85	3.4141	.48896
Humanitarian Financing	85	3.5400	.41005
Humanitarian Technology	85	3.4306	.45304
Organizational Culture	85	3.5953	.43312
<b>Composite mean and standard deviation</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>3.4616</b>	<b>.34677</b>
<b>n=Total number of respondents=85</b>			

Source: Field Data (2019)

KII and FGD conducted revealed that when the three were applied together, there was improvement in how the humanitarian aid projects were implemented. One of the respondents said that private sector has big opportunities and has access to larger economic benefit. Due to their formation, private sector has higher retention rate than organizations in disaster relief.

### *Inferential Statistics*

#### Correlations

Correlation analysis was employed to establish the nature and degree of the interaction between private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects. The results obtained are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix for Combined Private Sector Engagement

		<b>Implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects</b>	<b>Combined Private Sector Engagement</b>
<b>Implementation of Humanitarian Aid Projects</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.723
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.004
	n	85	85
<b>Combined Private Sector Engagement</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.723	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.004	
	n	85	85

**Source:** Field Data (2019)

The results in Table 4 indicate that there exists a strong relationship between implementation of humanitarian aid projects and private sector engagement in Humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing, and humanitarian technology referred here as combined private sector engagement, with a correlation coefficient of 0.723. The relationship is statistically significant since the p value is 0.004 which is below the statistically accepted significance level of  $p < 0.05$ . This shows that combining the three variables improve implementation of humanitarian aid projects.

#### Regressions

The study assessed the effect of combined private sector engagement on implementation of humanitarian aid projects and obtained the model specification results as presented in Table 5

Table 5: Model Specification for Combined Private Sector Engagement

<b>Model</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>R Square</b>	<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>
<b>1</b>	.723	.523	.518	.0093

a. Predictors: (Constant), Combined Private Sector Engagement.

b. Dependent Variable: Implementation of Humanitarian Aid projects

**Source:** Field Data (2019)

The study found that combined private sector engagement as shown in Table 5 has a high correlation index of 0.723 against implementation of aid projects in disaster relief. This is an indication that there is a strongly defined relationship between the implementation of humanitarian aid projects and the private sector engagement. The coefficient of determination was 0.518, implying that combined private sector engagement explains 51.8% of the change in aid project implementation. Kenya has a favorable environment for organizations in disaster relief to operate and is also quickly welcoming the private sector to engage in humanitarian aid as they embrace their expertise in logistics, financing, and technology.

### **Conclusion**

Organizations in disaster relief have been struggling with increasing disasters, frequency and complexity, and there has been need for private sector to engage by giving their expertise. Some humanitarian organizations engage private sector in one area of expertise; however, this study has demonstrated that they could benefit more by engaging the private sector in more areas in order to improve implementation. This study is important in helping policy makers in humanitarian work get to a round table to redraft policies that are friendlier to private sector participation in humanitarian aid; this will be helpful to those at risk of being affected by both natural disasters and conflicts. In Kenya, some humanitarian organizations are already engaging private sector companies through outsourcing and they are improving their response, this move should be encouraged across the borders. Combined private sector engagement in humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing, and humanitarian technology is key to ensuring better disaster response in Kenya.

### **Recommendations**

Engaging the private sector in a combination of expertise can benefit implementation of humanitarian aid projects. This may relieve humanitarian organizations from worrying about services they can get from the private sector and therefore be able to concentrate more on growth and saving lives. When tests were done, they showed a strong relationship between combined private sector engagement and implementation of humanitarian aid projects. When humanitarian organizations focus on improving their results and impact to the societies then they are able to save more lives and have better plans to respond to disasters. Combined private sector engagement in humanitarian logistics, humanitarian financing as well as humanitarian technology on the implementation of humanitarian aid projects in Nairobi has benefited the persons in distress during disasters. There is need to create a body of private sector companies engaging in humanitarian work. The empirical study determined that currently there is no existing database in Kenya of private sector companies engaging in humanitarian aid projects. This study showed that more often than not humanitarian organizations take it alone and sometimes they are overwhelmed by the size and complexity of disasters. If they can form partnerships, then they will be able to relieve some services to the private sector and this will benefit humanitarian response. If this does not happen sooner, humanitarian organizations will risk being irrelevant as they continue to watch helplessly as people die when disasters happen. Most studies in the humanitarian field have been carried out in small numbers by organizations and a few research institutions. Also, few institutions offer skills in humanitarian aid, yet it consists of a whole ecosystem in our economic, social and political life. This study shows that if more research is done on humanitarianism then there will be better preparedness and response to disasters in Kenya. Perhaps it is time to focus on the effects of disasters and find out how they hinder our day to day development progress then the policy makers can focus their money and energy to minimize lack of knowledge in humanitarian field through investing in research.

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