UNDERSTANDING THE CAPACITY NEEDS IN REFUGEES ACROSS THE ASIA REGION

CAPACITY BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

PREPARED BY :
Asia Pacific Network of Refugees (APNOR)

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ABOUT APNOR

Asia Pacific Network of Refugees (APNOR) is a pioneer in promoting genuine refugee inclusion. We are to build a sustainable and inclusive network for refugee-led organizations in the Asia Pacific region, to set the regional agenda for refugee policy that draws on the collective voice of lived experience to influence stakeholder and decision-making priorities at the regional and global level, and to support the development of stronger national refugee-led structures that can influence national policy reform at all levels.

We are refugee lead, and seek to transform the aid sector by example, by directly funding refugee-lead organizations in the region and providing capacity-strengthening support as requested by refugees.

APNOR's current Steering Committee consists of 9 refugee-led initiatives from Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Thailand, Japan, Korea, Iran, New Zealand, and Australia. APNOR is a membership organization and current membership includes 70 Refugee Led initiatives and 200 refugee individuals as members across the region. We are supported by a wide range of pro bono and volunteer efforts – currently, we have 100 active volunteers from office and technical style support across the region.

BACKGROUND TO SURVEY

Asia Pacific Network of Refugees (APNOR) ran its first survey in early 2021 with its refugee members to explore ways that APNOR could support refugee communities and its members. One key recommendation by the refugees was providing support for strengthening their capacities. However, this survey didn't provide enough information to unpack the specific capacity areas for refugees, refugee-led organizations, and other refugee-led initiatives.

Therefore, in October 2021, APNOR engaged over 100 refugee leaders and refugee-led initiatives (RLIs) in a second survey to identify the specific capacity needs/challenges and learning opportunities and design APNOR's first annual short course. In addition to the survey, 15 refugee-led organizations were also interviewed to deepen the understanding of APNOR around mutual capacity

The Survey was developed collaboratively with the help of the steering committee. Questions were designed with the purpose of:

- Understanding capacity needs in refugee-led initiatives organizations/refugees, and their community
- Identifying skills to overcome barriers and achieve collective impact
- Identifying root causes or challenges and developing resources and opportunities to collectively address them
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This report presents the quantitative data collected in the Capacity Building Survey (the survey).

SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

The survey was distributed via the Google Form in email distribution, watsup groups, and social media channels in Oct 2021-Feb 2022. A total of 126 refugees/RLIs participated from across the Asia Pacific region.

	Total of Participants	126 Participants
Participant's role	1. Individual refugee and not presenting any organization	80 Refugee Leaders
	2. Participants serving as board members	15 Refugee Experts
	3. Participants serving as volunteers	95Refugees
	4. Refugee Led Initiatives/ Refugee Groups	52 RLIs
Organizational Type if exist	Voluntary organization	52
	Community Group	75
	Charity	0
	Faith-based	15
Organizational size	More than 2 volunteers	95 Refugees
	One full-time employee	1 RLI
	No budget	50
	All volunteers	45

Figure one:Refugee Participants

In terms of the organizational mission, the top 5 areas were selected for the survey.

- Organizational development
- Fundraising
- Communication
- Advocacy
- Diplomacy
- Leadership

CAPACITY BUILDING NEEDS

This section of the survey was aimed at exploring challenges facing refugee-led initiatives or refuge leaders that they would like to be better equipped to address to help inform our approach to offering learning opportunities.

As shown in Figure 2, communication, leadership, and diplomacy emerged as a top concern, followed closely by fundraising and campaign/strategic advocacy.

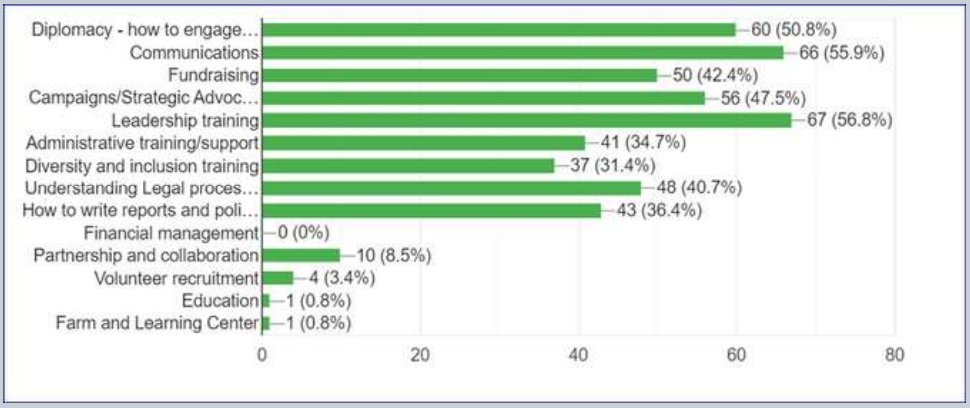
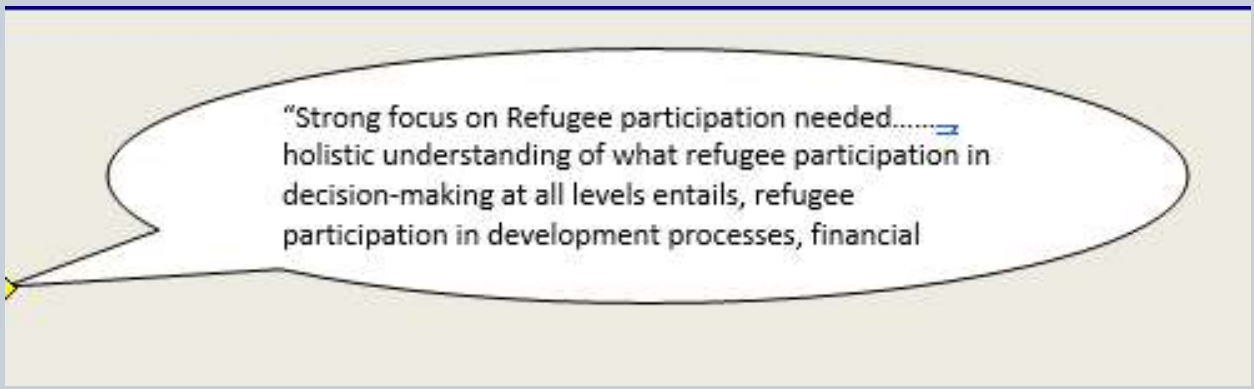


Figure Two: Capacity Needs identified by refugees

We also ran several interviews with a few Refugees Led Initiatives to dig deeper into some challenges. There was a significant positive correlation between Admin/financial management, diversity and inclusion, partnerships, volunteer recruitment, and management. This doesn't mean these topics aren't important, but other challenges such as leadership, diplomacy, communication, fundraising, etc., had a statistically significant relationship and were rated as higher priorities.

For most Refugees and Refugee Led initiatives in the Asia region, a positive significant relationship existed with challenges related to the board of directors and volunteer recruitment and management - likely since they often don't have paid staff.

In terms of challenges, refugee participants indicated again that lack of support for leadership opportunities were the greatest issue(67%) then following with diplomacy , communication and the funding models (e.g., grant-based approach, lack of operational funds, etc.) .



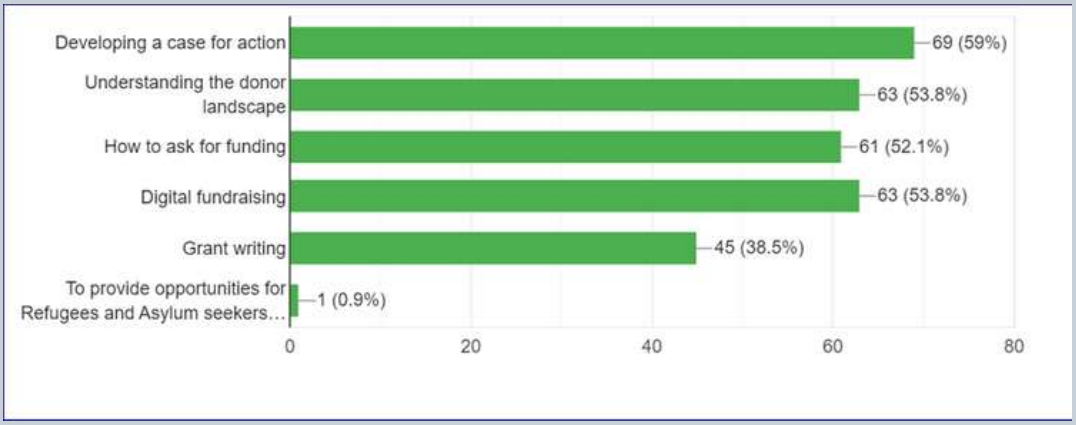
A survey participant said

Desired Learning Opportunities

Survey questions were included to help us understand specific areas of capacity needs that would be helpful for APNOR to have training opportunities for. Participants were asked to state the learning areas under each capacity category:

Participants were asked to state what areas of :

- **Fundraising /Financial** do they need to develop :



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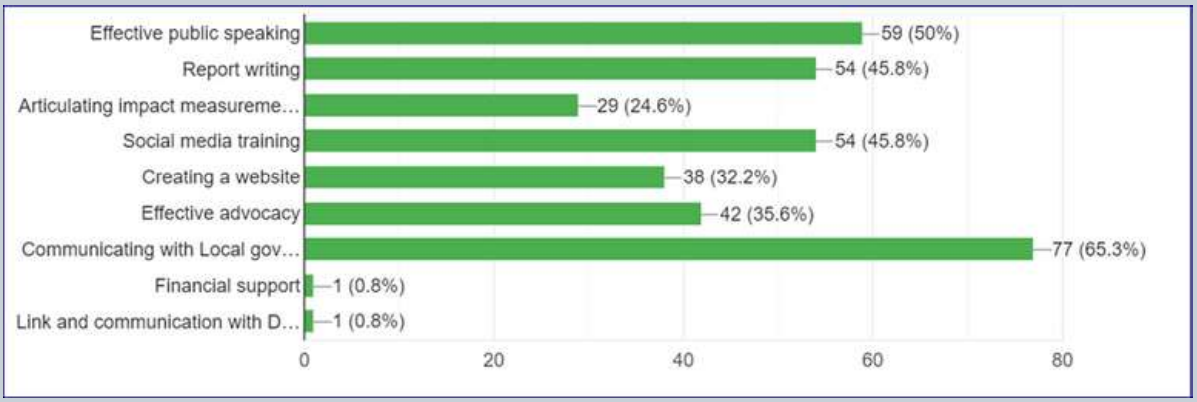
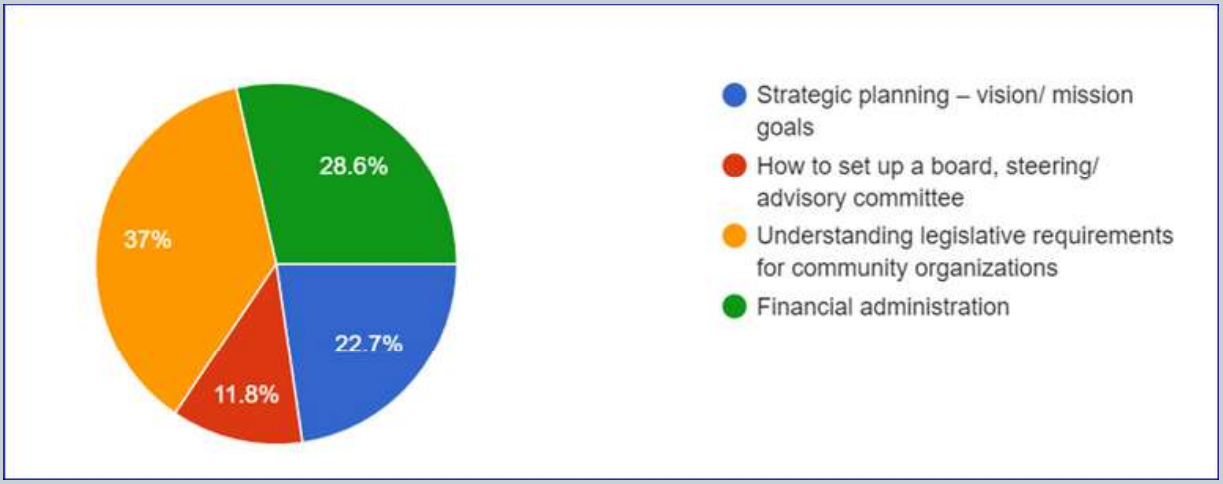
- **Communication**



- **Organisational Development**



- **Leadership** skills were asked / what refugees would benefit ? some of the most commonly used terms were

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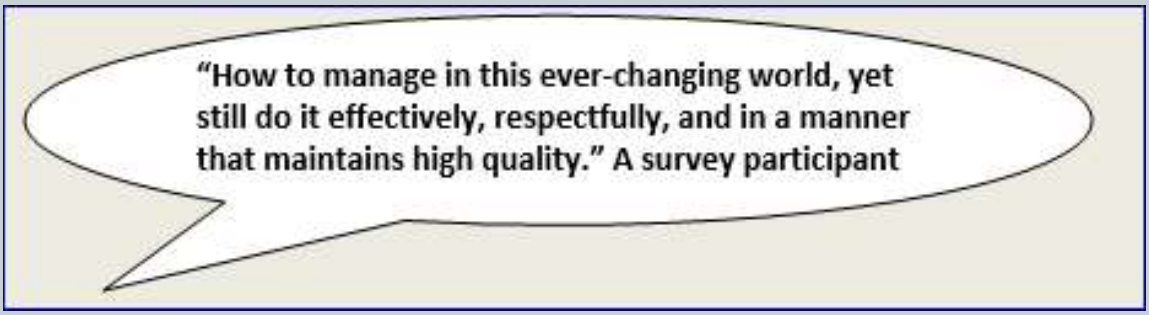
- **Few strong quotes by a few survey participants around leadership opportunities for refugees ;**



Survey participants were also asked to address any other area of interest that APNOR should include when designing their first capacity-building/short courses and participants reiterated on "communication" "fundraising" "partnership and collaboration", "leadership and advocacy" and **"consultation" and ensuring the inclusion of women and girls as a priority target group.**

We also asked survey participants if they need **assistance with building a local network and 74% of survey participants** have responded positively and required this support.

Additionally, APNOR has surveyed the importance of **mentoring and coaching support for refugees and 96.5%** of participants have responded positively and requested to be part of the mentoring program.

When asked to select which **modes of learning and delivery methods** are found to be most effective, respondents indicated that in-person (82.3%), blended learning (a mix of online and in-person) (63.5%), and collaborative problem solving (61.5%) are preferred.

Conclusion

This most recent survey suggests that for refugees to engage meaningfully, we need to provide ongoing support and resources to strengthen refugees' capacity.

As with any survey data, there are limitations associated with the point in the time at which the data was collected (during a pandemic) and the subjectivity of respondents. However, given the consistency of the answers and concerns raised about capacity building, these will be core elements of our approach to the capacity building going forward.

We appreciate the time taken and insights shared by those who participated and hope this research is useful and valuable in various contexts!

So where do we go from here?

APNOR is launching its capacity-building initiative for lived-experience individuals and organisations. This will be a combination of financial and non-financial support to uplift the capabilities of the refugee communities to respond to their own needs and lead productively in their various spheres. The survey will be valuable to shape the implementation of this initiative

We also have been mapping all the refugee-led organizations within the Asia region and creating a database to communicate with them directly once capacity building initiative is launched. We are aware that some of you have lived or living experience or you know or work with these organisations and please do let us know.

We also have realised during the one to one interviews , that manty RLIs have suggested for a " work placement/Experience " after the end of training program which we will be working on and keeping the refugee community informed.

Asia Pacific Network of Refugees