

Refugee Change Makers Network-RECAN Uganda



KYAKA II REFUGEE-LED ORGANIZATIONS NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT 2025





Executive Summary

This Needs Assessment was conducted from 14th to 16th July 2025 in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement targeting 32 Refugee-Led Organizations Founders. This report provides a comprehensive overview of the current challenges and priorities faced by refugee-led organizations within the Refugee Changemakers Network (RECAN). The analysis underscores the critical need for strengthened resource mobilization and infrastructure development to facilitate organizational growth. Key barriers include limited funding, with 81.3% of respondents citing insufficient financial resources, and restricted access to grants, highlighted by 87.5%. Infrastructure shortcomings, such as inadequate technology and a lack of skilled personnel, further impede expansion efforts, compounded by human resource management issues. Addressing these interconnected resource and infrastructure gaps is essential for enabling organizations to broaden their geographic and programmatic reach sustainably.

The report also highlights significant legal and policy barriers that restrict organizational growth. Restrictions on refugees' rights and complex regulatory environments were reported by 18.8% and 12.5% of respondents, respectively. These legal hurdles limit operational flexibility and expansion potential. Social and community-related obstacles, although less frequently cited, remain vital considerations. Stigma, language barriers, and trust issues within communities require culturally sensitive approaches and active engagement strategies to foster social inclusion and enhance community participation. Together, these factors emphasize the need for comprehensive advocacy, legal reform, and community-based approaches to support organizational development.

Respondents emphasized the importance of diversifying funding streams and strengthening infrastructure to overcome resource constraints. The need for improved access to grants and reliable financial support was a recurring theme, alongside investments in technology and skilled personnel. These measures would improve organizational capacity, operational efficiency, and scalability. Additionally, fostering strategic partnerships and advocating for policy reforms are crucial to reducing legal and regulatory barriers, creating a more enabling environment for refugee-led organizations to thrive and expand their services.

The assessment also reveals that social and cultural barriers require targeted interventions. Initiatives that promote social cohesion, address stigma, and facilitate language acquisition are vital to building trust within refugee communities. Community engagement and participatory approaches are fundamental for ensuring programs are culturally appropriate and responsive to local needs. Such strategies will strengthen community resilience, improve the effectiveness of organizational efforts, and support sustainable growth.

To further support these recommendations, it is essential for RECAN to serve as a central platform for capacity building, knowledge sharing, and advocacy. By facilitating peer learning opportunities and providing targeted training, RECAN can enhance the skills and expertise of refugee changemakers, empowering them to navigate legal, financial, and operational challenges more effectively. Additionally, RECAN should prioritize strengthening its partnership network to mobilize diverse funding sources and influence policy reforms. Establishing strategic alliances with government agencies, development partners, and civil society organizations will amplify the collective voice of refugee-led organizations and promote more inclusive and enabling policies. Ultimately, RECAN's leadership and coordinated efforts are critical to transforming the landscape for refugee changemakers and fostering sustainable, community-driven development.

In conclusion, the Needs Assessment underscores the multifaceted challenges faced by refugee-led organizations and highlights priority areas for intervention. A coordinated approach that combines resource mobilization, infrastructure development, legal advocacy, and social inclusion is essential for fostering sustainable growth. Strengthening organizational capacity through diversified funding, improved legal frameworks, and community engagement will enable these organizations to expand their influence, better serve refugee populations, and contribute to overall resilience and self-reliance within refugee communities. The findings serve as a strategic guide for policymakers, donors, and stakeholders committed to empowering refugee-led initiatives.

Thank you!

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Olivier Nkunuzwanda
Coordination Team
Refugee Change Makres Network (RICAN)



About RECAN

Refugee Changemakers Network-RECAN is a non-profit Network of Refugee leaders and refugee-led Organizations and Initiatives working to reinforce the resilience and capacity of refugees in Uganda through leadership and refugee governance training, research and advocacy to ensure they are able to lead a happy and fulfilling life that sets them up for a positive future.

Founded in 2023, RECAN vision is to be a center for authentic and servant leaders championing positive change in the region.

Context & Rationale

In Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, RLOs are integral to community development addressing various needs, promoting resilience, and advancing the localization agenda. Despite their vital contributions, these organizations face numerous challenges related to leadership, governance, resource mobilization, and sustainability. Understanding these challenges and capacities is essential to tailoring effective support.

Objectives & Expected Outcomes:

The findings from this assessment will inform RECAN's strategic planning and targeted interventions. Specifically, it will enable us to:

- Design capacity-sharing programs with RLOs' Leaders aligned with identified needs.
- Develop tailored support mechanisms to strengthen governance, leadership, and operational sustainability.
- Advocate for policies and resources that enable RLOs to fully participate in decision-making and development processes.
- Amplify the voices of refugee-led organizations in local and national dialogues.

Call to Action:









RECAN remains committed to fostering an enabling environment where RLOs in Kyaka II can thrive as autonomous, impactful, and sustainable organizations. We invite partners, donors, and stakeholders to support this vital assessment and the subsequent efforts to empower refugee changemakers.

The 2025 Needs Assessment:

To this end, RECAN's Needs Assessment of RLOs within Kyaka II aims to:

- **Profile RLOs:** Gather detailed information on their structure, functions, achievements, and community impact.
- **Identify Challenges:** Understand operational, governance, leadership, and resource-related issues hindering their effectiveness.
- **Explore Coping Mechanisms:** Document strategies RLOs use to navigate challenges and sustain their activities.
- **Assess Readiness for Localization:** Evaluate the preparedness of RLOs to take on greater responsibilities, including advocacy, resource management, and community engagement.

Brief Findings

	32	Number of RLOs Leaders participated in the Assessment
	173,696	Number of people reached by the 32 RLOs in Kyaka II in 10 years of their existence
	267	Jobs Created every year
	393	Motivated Volunteers every year
	21	Youth-Led Organizations
	10	Women-Led Organizations
	1	PWD-Led Organizations
	2015	The Year of Establishment of the first RLO in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement

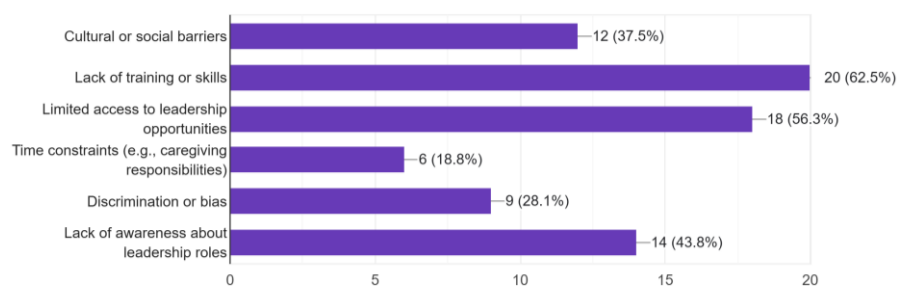


LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE



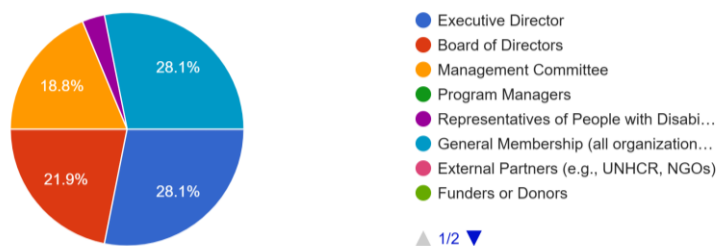
What barriers prevent diverse groups (e.g., women, youth, people with disabilities) from taking leadership roles? Purpose: Identify inclusivity gaps for RECAN's leadership training

32 responses



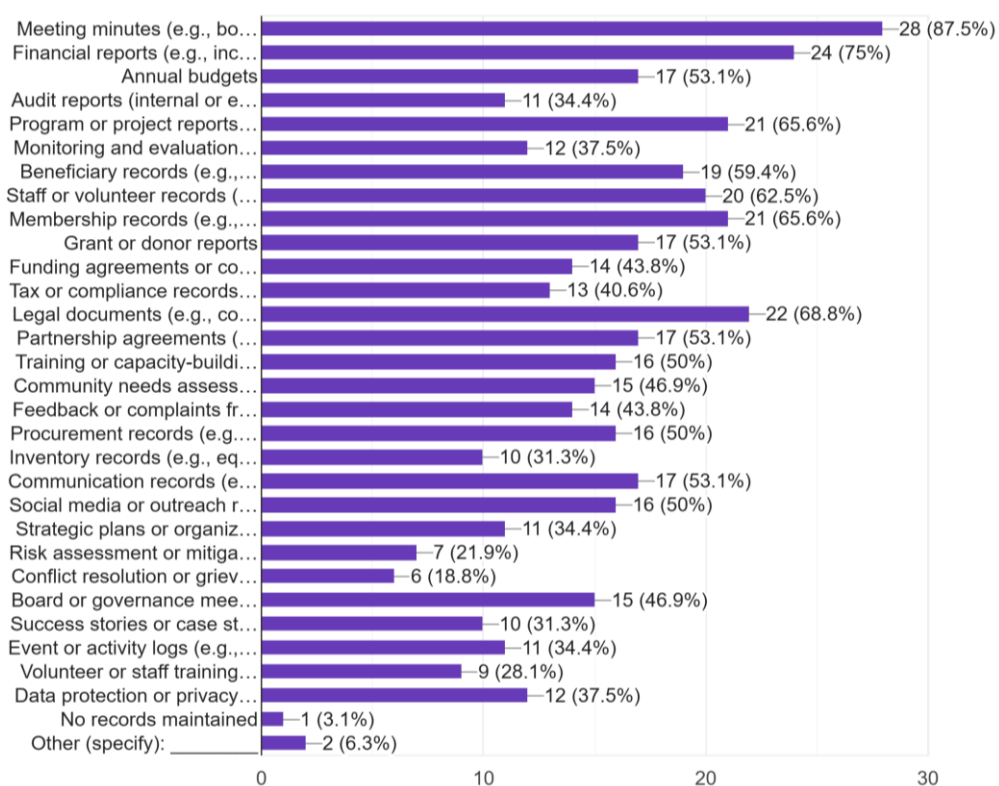
Who makes key decisions in your organization? Purpose: Identify the individuals, groups, or entities involved in decision-making to assess inclusivity, g...nities for RECAN's leadership training or advocacy.

32 responses



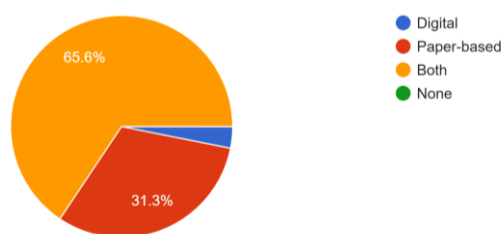
Does your organization maintain the following records? Purpose: Identify the types of records maintained by the organization to assess documentat...nical support, such as training or digitalization.

32 responses



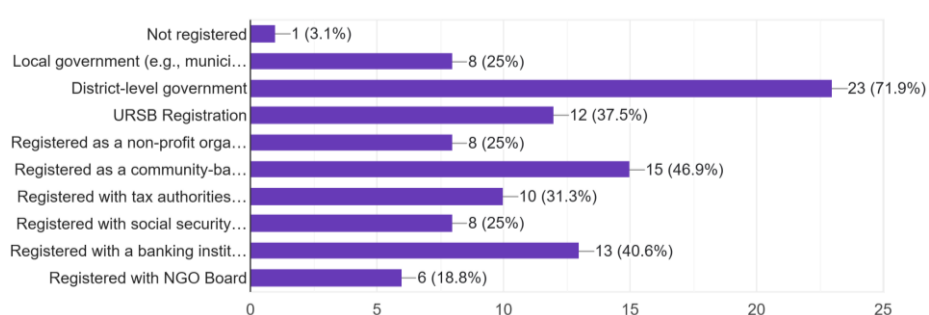
Are these records digitized or paper-based? Purpose: Assess the level of digitalization in record-keeping to identify gaps in technological cap...nt, accessibility, and efficiency in RLO operations.

32 responses



Is your organization registered, at which levels? Purpose: Identify the registration status of the organization across various levels to assess legal r...licies and support for RLOs' operational legitimacy.

32 responses



The data shows that the main barriers to diverse leadership are lack of training (62.5%) and limited access to opportunities (56.3%). Cultural and social barriers also play a significant role (37.5%), along with time constraints and biases. Additionally, many respondents (43.8%) cite a lack of awareness about leadership roles. **Addressing these issues through training, increased access, and awareness efforts is essential for promoting inclusive leadership.**

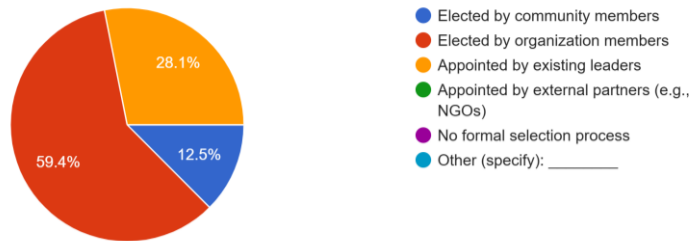
The pie chart from the needs assessment of 32 RLOs in Kyaka II refugee settlement shows that key decision-making responsibilities are shared equally between the Executive Director and the General Membership (all organization's members), each accounting for 28.1% of responses. The Management Committee plays a slightly smaller role, contributing to 18.8%, while Representatives of People with Disabilities accounts to 3.1% and Board of directors to 21.9%. **This distribution suggests an organization that values multiple perspectives in governance and strategic decisions rather than relying on a one man power.**

The data indicates that the most consistently maintained records by the organization are meeting minutes, with 87.5% (28 responses) reporting their upkeep, highlighting their importance for documentation and accountability. Financial reports are also well-maintained at 75%, whereas internal audit reports, annual budgets, and monitoring and evaluation records show moderate compliance, with 34.4%, 53.1%, and 37.5%, respectively. Conversely, records such as beneficiary records, staff or volunteer logs, and procurement records have lower maintenance levels, at around 43-50%, suggesting potential gaps in operational documentation. Notably, legal documents, partnership agreements, and communication records are maintained at higher rates (66.8%, 53.1%, and 53.1%), emphasizing their perceived importance. Smaller categories like risk assessments, conflict resolution, and data privacy are maintained by fewer organizations (around 18-28%), indicating possible areas for improvement. **Overall, the organization demonstrates strong record-keeping in meeting minutes and financial reports, but there are opportunities to enhance documentation of other operational and compliance-related records to ensure comprehensive accountability and transparency.**

The pie chart reveals that the majority of records (65.6%) are maintained in both paper-based and digital formats, indicating a heavy reliance on traditional record-keeping methods within the RLOs in Kyaka II refugee settlement. Digital records are used by a very small proportion of respondents, at only 3.1%, suggesting limited access to or adoption of digital record-keeping technologies. About 31.3% of respondents report using paper-based. No respondents reported not maintaining records at all. **This distribution highlights significant potential for improving digitalization efforts to enhance record accessibility, efficiency, and data management capabilities within the RLO operations.**

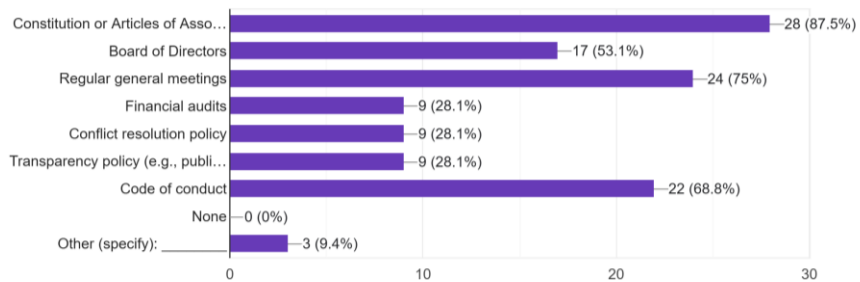
The analysis indicates that most organizations in Kyaka II refugee settlement are registered at the district level (71.9%) and with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (37.5%), reflecting a strong presence of formal registration. However, registration with local government entities and the NGO Board is comparatively lower (25% and 18.8%, respectively), suggesting gaps in comprehensive registration across all relevant authorities. Additionally, registration with tax authorities, social security, and banking institutions remains limited, ranging from 6.3% to 40.6%, which may hinder organizations' operational legitimacy and access to resources. **Overall, while many organizations are formally registered, there is potential to improve registration with other key bodies to enhance their legitimacy, stability, and capacity to access support and funding.**

How are leadership roles selected? Purpose: Identify gaps in inclusive and transparent leadership selection
32 responses



The RECAN Needs Assessment reveals that most leadership roles in refugee-led organizations (59.4%) are appointed by **Organization Members**, limiting community involvement, with only 12.5% elected directly by community members. Additionally, 28.1% are appointed internally by **Existing Leaders**, which may hinder diversity and leadership development. Many organizations lack formal, transparent selection processes, leading to variability and potential inconsistencies in leadership quality. **Addressing these gaps by promoting formal rotation of leadership procedures and establishing clear, participatory mechanisms can enhance legitimacy, trust, and ensure leadership reflects refugee communities' needs and voices.**

Which governance mechanisms are in place? Check all that apply Purpose: Pinpoint gaps in formal governance and accountability
32 responses



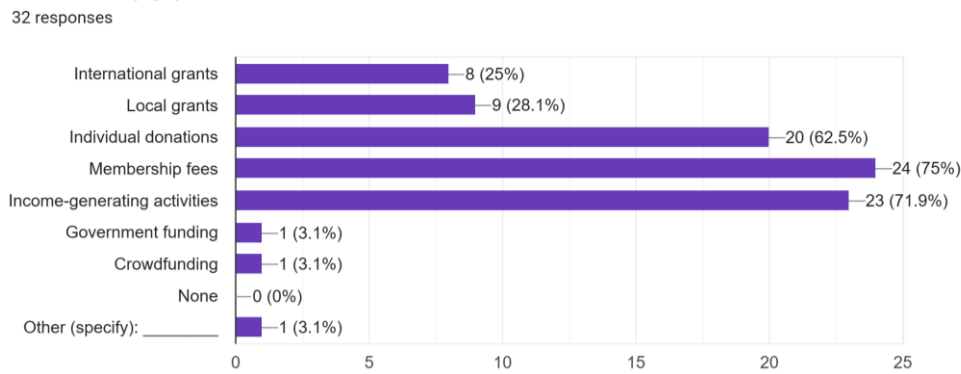
The data indicates that most organizations have foundational governance mechanisms in place, with the constitution or articles of association (87.5%) and regular general meetings (75%) being the most prevalent. The presence of a Board of Directors is moderate at 53.1%, while financial audits, conflict resolution policies, and transparency policies are less common, each reported by around 28.1%. Additionally, a significant proportion (68.8%) have a code of conduct, emphasizing ethical standards. **Notably, no responses indicated the absence of governance mechanisms, suggesting a general adherence to formal governance structures aimed at ensuring accountability and addressing potential gaps.**





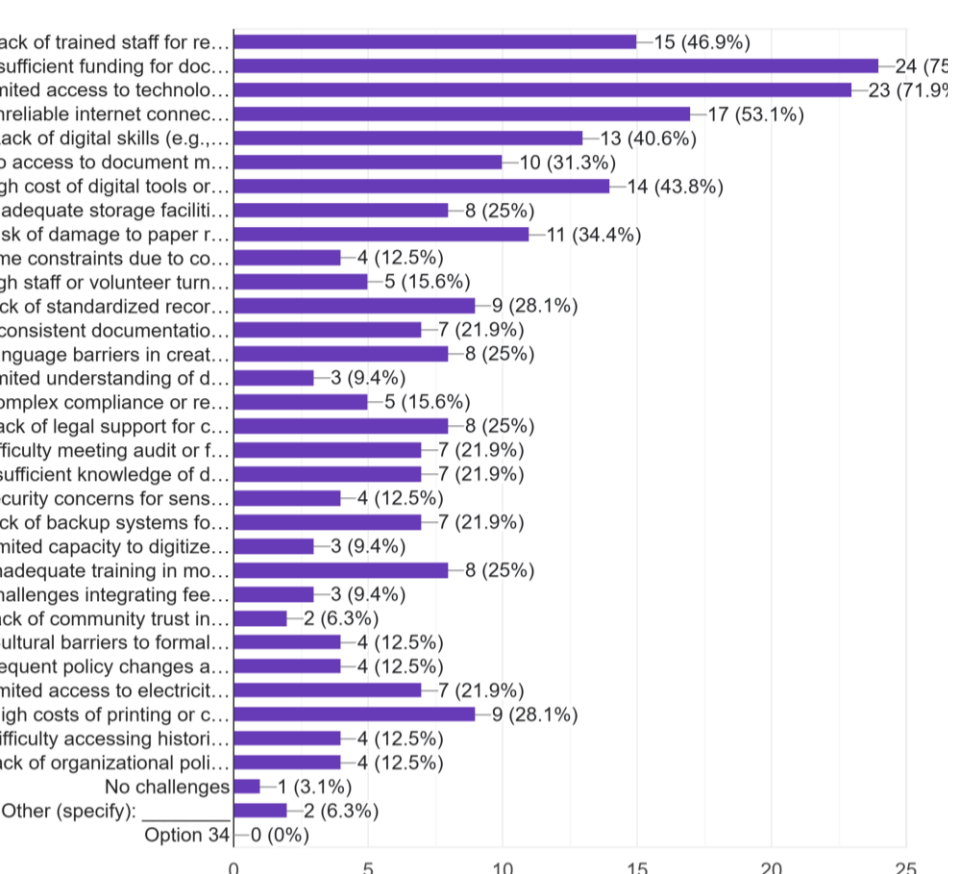
FUNDING AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

What are your organization's primary funding sources? Purpose: Assess funding diversity and sustainability gaps



The analysis reveals that while income-generating activities and membership fees are the primary funding sources, with a high reliance on individual donations (62.5%) and income-generating activities (71.9%), there is limited diversification, as international and local grants, government funding, and crowdfunding constitute a small proportion of the overall funding. To enhance financial sustainability and reduce dependency on a limited pool of sources, the organization should strategize to diversify its funding portfolio by actively seeking international and local grants, establishing partnerships for government funding, and exploring innovative fundraising methods such as crowdfunding campaigns. **Advocacy and Building capacity in grant writing and donor engagement will also be crucial to expanding these revenue streams and securing long-term financial stability.**

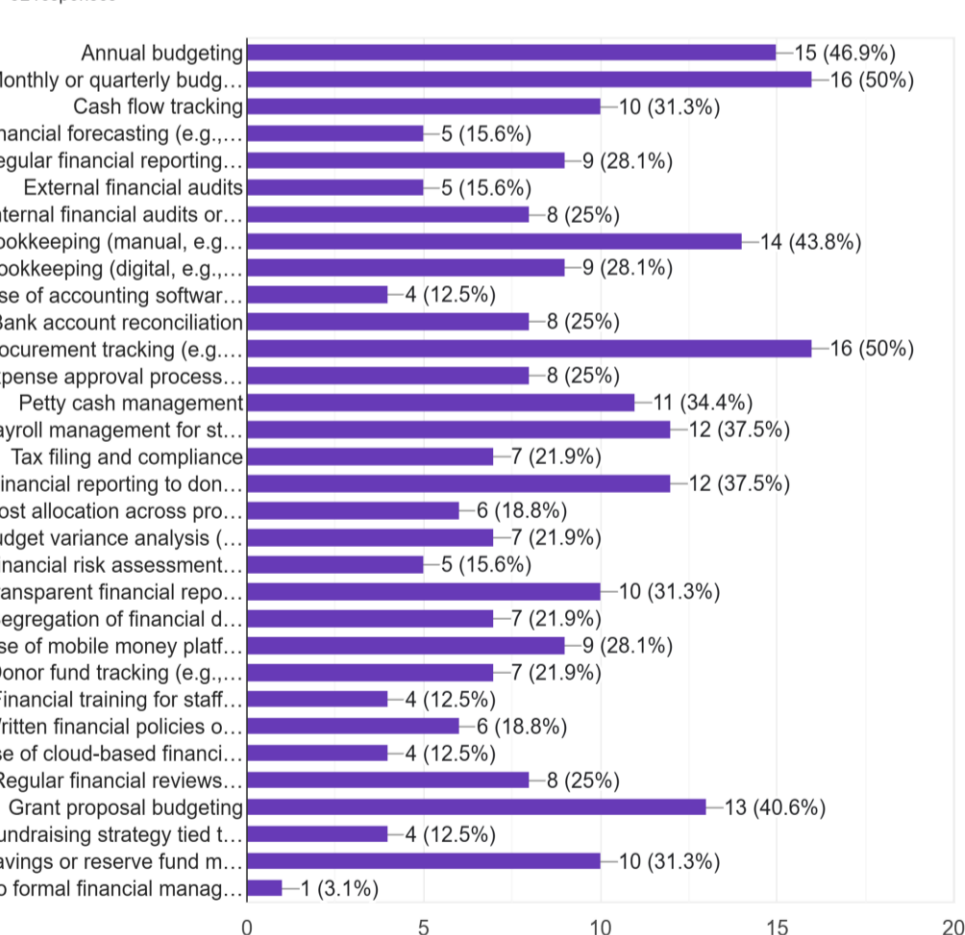
Are there challenges in maintaining documentation? Purpose: Identify specific barriers to effect record-keeping to inform RECAN's capacity-building...ng RLOs' transparency and operational efficien



The responses indicate that a significant challenge in maintaining documentation is the lack of trained staff, with 46.9% citing this as a barrier, followed by limited funding for documentation (71.9%) and unreliable internet connectivity (53.1%). Other notable challenges include limited capacity to digitize records (21.9%), inadequate storage facilities (25%), and the high cost of digital tools (43.8%). These issues highlight the need for capacity-building initiatives, improved infrastructure, and financial support to enhance documentation practices and ensure effective record-keeping within organizations.

Additional barriers include the risk of damage to paper records (34.4%), high staff or volunteer turnover (15.6%), and inconsistent documentation practices (21.9%). Language barriers and limited understanding of documentation requirements also pose challenges for some organizations. **Overall, the data underscores the importance of investing in training, infrastructure, and standardized procedures to overcome these barriers and improve the quality and consistency of record-keeping, which are vital for transparency, accountability, and organizational growth.**

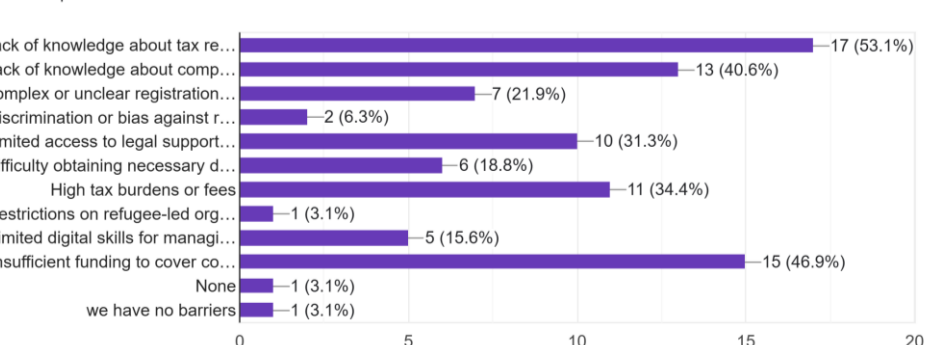
Which financial management practices does your organization currently use? Purpose: Identify the financial management tools, processes, and practi...dvocacy for improved access to financial systems.



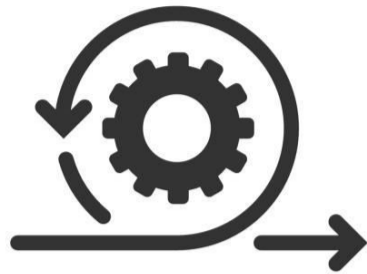
The survey reveals that organizations predominantly engage in basic financial management practices such as monthly or quarterly budgeting (50%) and grant proposal budgeting (40.6%), indicating a focus on routine financial planning and resource allocation. Additionally, bookkeeping—both manual (37.5%) and digital (28.1%)—is widely practiced, reflecting efforts to maintain accurate financial records. However, more advanced practices like financial forecasting (15.6%), external audits (15.6%), and financial risk assessment (15.6%) are less common, suggesting potential gaps in proactive financial planning and oversight. This pattern highlights the need for capacity building in strategic financial management to enhance organizational sustainability and accountability.

Other practices such as procurement tracking (50%), financial reporting to donors (37.5%), and bank account reconciliation (25%) are also prevalent, emphasizing accountability and transparency. Nonetheless, fewer organizations engage in activities like expenditure approval processes (25%) or segregation of financial duties (21.9%), which are crucial for internal control. **Notably, a small percentage (3.1%) reported having no formal financial management system, indicating that most organizations recognize the importance of these practices, though there's room for improvement in adopting comprehensive financial controls and forecasting to strengthen financial stability and compliance.**

What challenges do you face in meeting tax or compliance requirements? Purpose: Identify specific barriers to meeting tax and compliance obligations...Os' regulatory adherence and operational capacity.



The data indicates that the primary challenge faced in meeting tax or compliance requirements is a lack of knowledge about tax regulations (53.1%), followed by complexities or unclear regulations (21.9%) and limited access to legal support (31.3%). Additionally, restrictions on refugee-led organizations (3.1%) and limited digital skills (15.6%) are notable barriers, while a significant portion (46.9%) reported no barriers. **To address these challenges, the organization should prioritize capacity-building initiatives focused on tax and legal compliance, such as targeted training and workshops. Establishing partnerships with legal experts or consultants can also provide ongoing support. Furthermore, investing in digital skills development will help organizations navigate compliance requirements more effectively, ultimately enhancing their operational capacity and reducing compliance-related risks.**

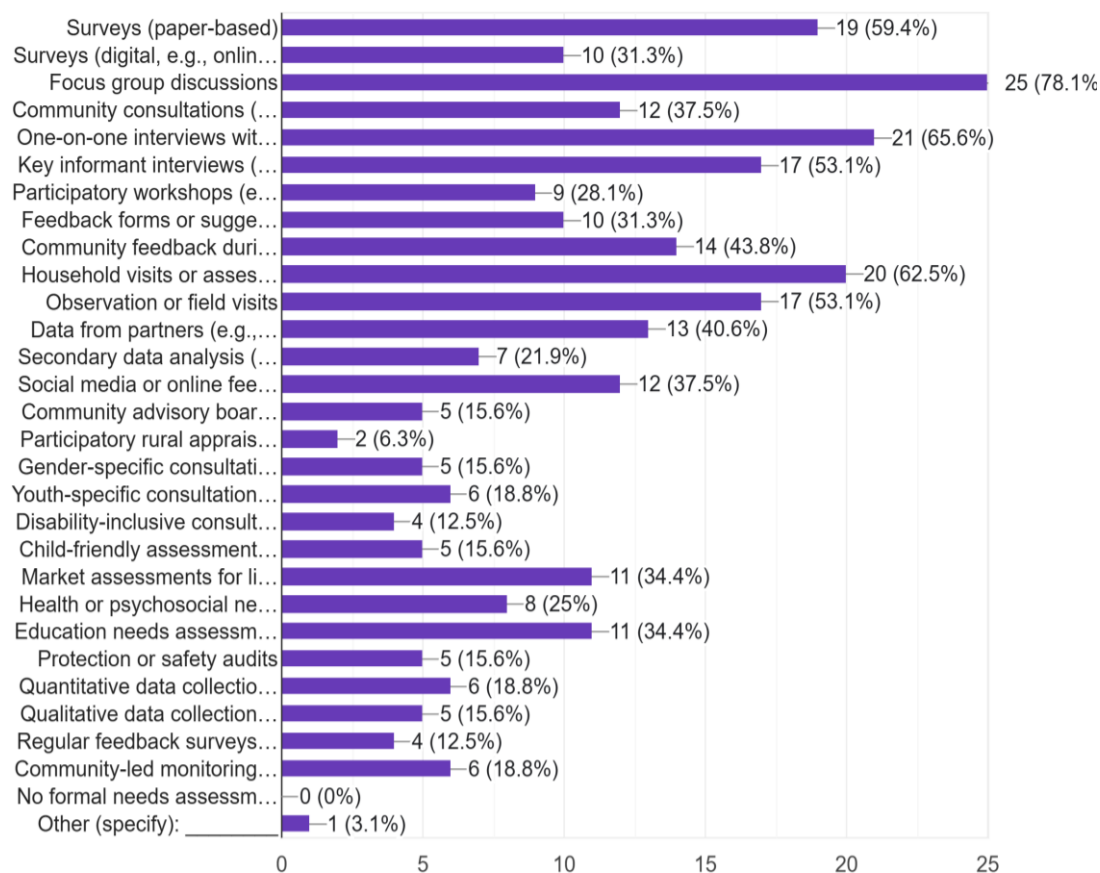


OPERATIONS AND RESILIENCE



Which methods do you use to assess community needs? Check all that apply. Purpose: Assess gaps in needs assessment capacity to inform RECA...ively address refugee and host community needs.

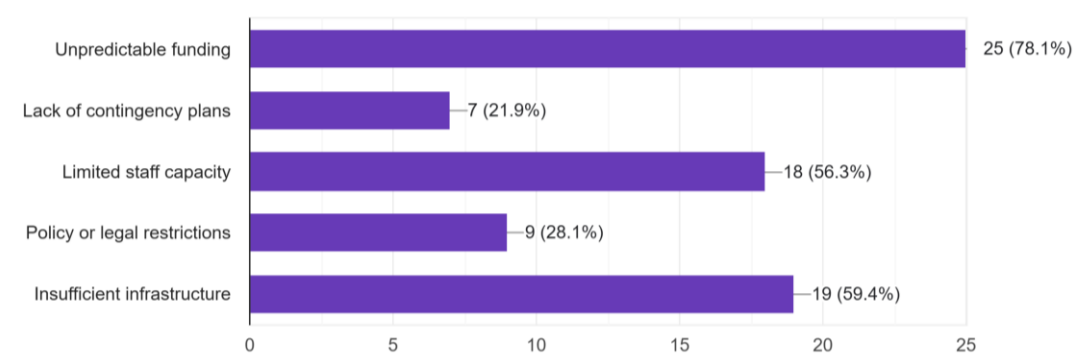
32 responses



The survey indicates that organizations mainly use qualitative methods like focus group discussions (78.1%), community consultations (65.6%), and one-on-one interviews (66.5%) to assess community needs, highlighting a focus on direct community engagement. However, there is less emphasis on quantitative methods such as surveys (59.4%) and secondary data analysis (40.6%), which can provide broader, more statistically reliable insights. While participatory workshops and household visits are also common, relying solely on qualitative techniques may limit the understanding of systemic issues that quantitative data could reveal. **To improve needs assessments, organizations should adopt a blended approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys and secondary data analysis. Building staff capacity in data collection and analysis, along with forming partnerships with local stakeholders, can enhance data quality and coverage.**

What challenges limit your organization's ability to adapt to operational changes Purpose: Pinpoint resilience gaps for RECAN's support

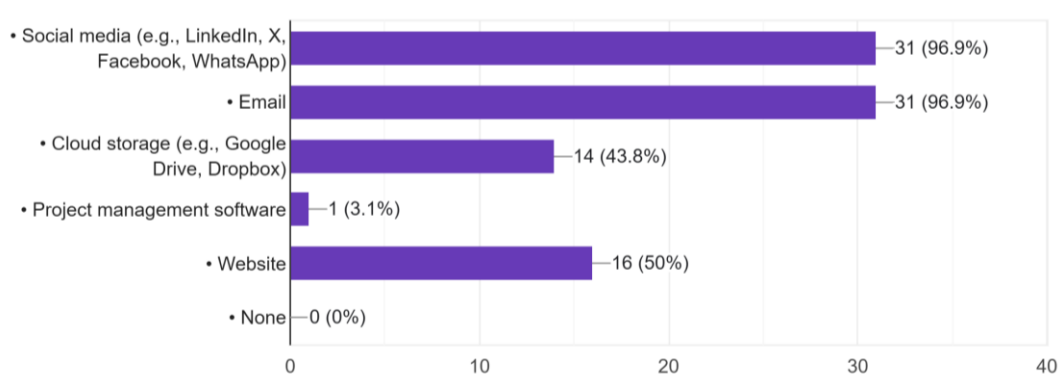
32 responses



The primary challenges that hinder the organization's ability to adapt to operational changes include unpredictable funding, which was identified by 78.1% of respondents, highlighting its significant impact. Lack of contingency plans was noted by 21.9%, indicating a need for better preparedness strategies. Limited staff capacity was a concern for 56.3%, reflecting resource constraints in human capital. Insufficient infrastructure was identified by 59.4%, emphasizing physical and technological limitations. Additionally, policy or legal restrictions were noted by 28.1%, further complicating adaptive efforts. **Overall, these factors particularly financial unpredictability and infrastructural limitations pose substantial barriers to organizational flexibility and resilience in responding to changing operational**

Which digital tools or platforms does your organization use for operations or communication? Purpose: Identify digital skills gaps for RECAN's Digital Labs initiatives

32 responses



The survey results reveal that social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, and WhatsApp are the most frequently used digital tools for operations or communication, with 96.9% of respondents indicating their use. Email is also widely utilized, with the same percentage of respondents (96.9%) relying on it for communication purposes. Cloud storage services such as Google Drive and Dropbox are used by 43.8% of organizations, highlighting a significant need for collaborative file sharing, while project management software is minimally adopted, with only 3.1% usage. Additionally, half of the respondents (50%) reported using their organization's website to support operations, whereas no organizations reported not using any digital tools at all. **This data underscores the heavy reliance on social media and email, while indicating potential gaps in the adoption of project management software and other digital platforms.**

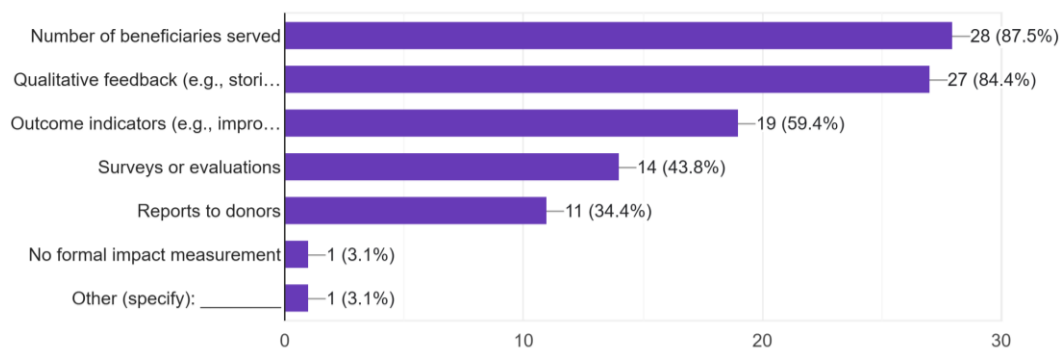




IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

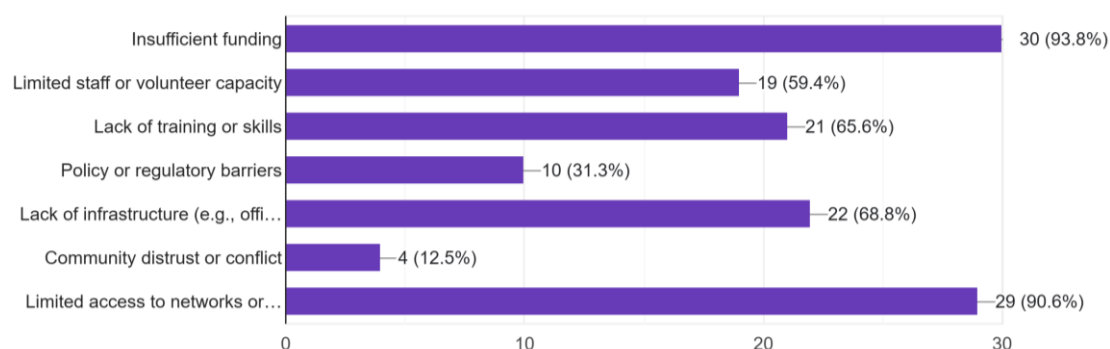


How does your organization measure the impact of its programs? Check all that apply. Purpose: Assess gaps in monitoring and evaluation capacity
32 responses



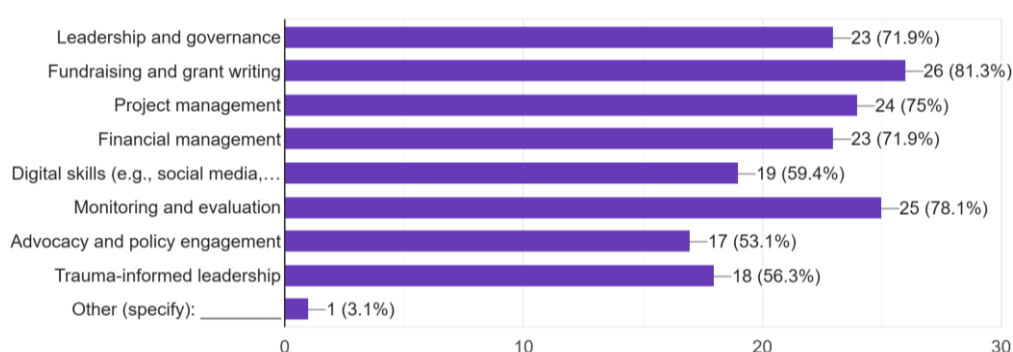
The survey results indicate that the most common method for measuring the impact of programs is by tracking the number of beneficiaries served, with 87.5% of respondents doing so. Qualitative feedback, such as stories and testimonials, is also widely used, accounting for 84.4%. Outcome indicators, like improvements or changes resulting from the programs, are utilized by 59.4% of organizations. Surveys or evaluations are less common, with 43.8%, and reports to donors are used by 34.4%. Notably, very few organizations (3.1%) reported having no formal impact measurement in place, and an equal percentage cited other methods not specified in the survey. **Overall, most organizations rely on beneficiary counts and qualitative feedback to assess program impact, while formal and quantitative measures are less frequently employed.**

What are the most pressing challenges your organization faces? Check all that apply. Purpose: Prioritize RECAN's interventions based on urgent needs.
32 responses



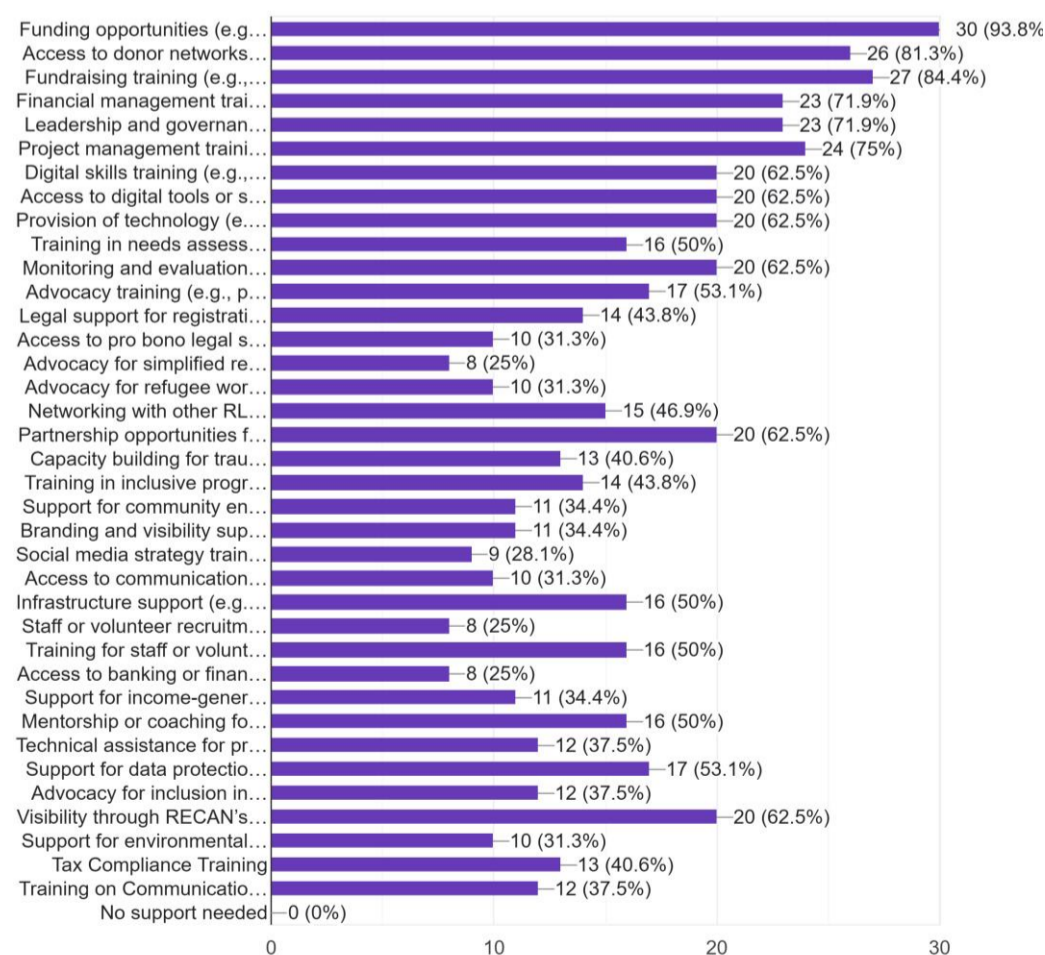
The survey results highlight the most pressing challenges faced by organizations, with insufficient funding being the top issue, reported by 93.8% of respondents. Limited staff or volunteer capacity is also a significant challenge, affecting 59.4% of organizations. Lack of training or skills is another concern, cited by 65.6%, while lack of infrastructure impacts 68.8%. Policy or regulatory barriers are less frequently mentioned, at 31.3%, and community distrust or conflict is the least common, affecting only 12.5%. Additionally, limited access to networks is a widespread challenge, noted by 80.6% of respondents. **These findings suggest that financial constraints, capacity limitations, and infrastructure issues are the most critical barriers to effective organizational operations.**

Which training areas would most benefit your organization? Check all that apply. Purpose: Identify training needs for RECAN's capacity-building programs.
32 responses



The data reveals that leadership and governance training would most benefit the organization, with 71.9% of respondents identifying it as a key need. Fundraising and grant writing follow closely, selected by 81.3%, indicating a strong demand for capacity-building in securing financial resources. Project management is also crucial, with 75% of respondents recognizing its importance. Financial management is identified by 71.9%, highlighting the need for effective fiscal oversight. Digital skills, such as social media, are less frequently cited but still relevant, at 59.4%. Monitoring and evaluation are essential for 78.1% of respondents, emphasizing the importance of measuring impact. Advocacy and policy engagement are needed by 53.1%, while trauma-informed leadership is recognized by 56.3%. **Overall, these results suggest that strengthening leadership, fundraising, project management, and evaluation capabilities are top priorities for capacity building within the organization.**

What support from RECAN would most enhance your organization's impact? Check all that apply. Purpose: Identify specific types of support ...l provision, networking opportunities, and advocacy.
32 responses



The survey indicates that the most valued support from RECAN to enhance organizational impact is funding opportunities, with 93.8% of respondents highlighting its importance. Access to donor networks and fundraising training are also highly prioritized, chosen by over 80% of participants, reflecting a strong need for financial resource development and capacity building in securing funds. Leadership and governance, project management, and digital skills training are similarly critical, with around 75% of respondents emphasizing their relevance. These insights demonstrate that organizations are primarily seeking financial support, capacity building in fundraising and leadership, and access to networks to strengthen their operational effectiveness and sustainability.

In addition to financial and leadership support, respondents also identified a need for training in areas such as monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, legal support, and communication, though slightly lower in priority compared to fundraising and leadership. Notably, support for community engagement, social media strategy, and infrastructure also featured prominently, indicating a comprehensive approach to strengthening organizational capacity. Interestingly, no respondents indicated that they do not need support, underscoring a widespread recognition of the importance of external assistance across multiple aspects of organizational development. Overall, these results suggest that targeted support in funding, capacity building, and networking opportunities would most significantly enhance the impact of these organizations.

POLICIES

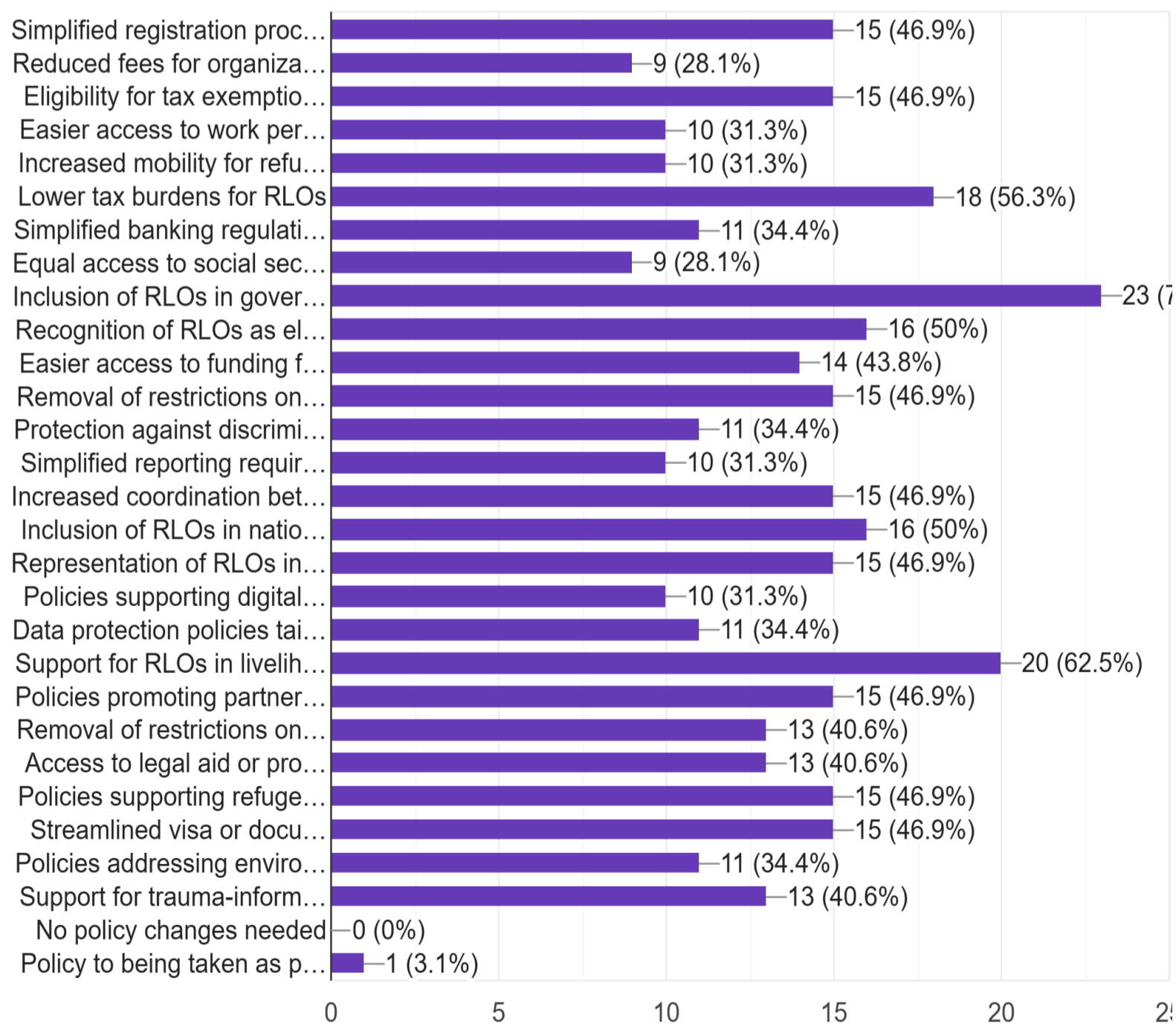
The survey results highlight several key policy changes that could significantly improve an organization's ability to operate effectively. The most frequently identified policy reform is the inclusion of RLOs (Rightful Leadership Organizations) in governance, with 71.9% of respondents emphasizing its importance. This indicates a widespread recognition of the need to integrate RLOs into organizational structures to enhance legitimacy and influence. Additionally, policies supporting digital transformation, such as policies supporting digital tools and policies supporting digital data, were also highly prioritized, each receiving around 31-34% of responses. These preferences reflect an understanding that modern policy frameworks should facilitate technological adaptation and digital engagement.

Furthermore, respondents expressed considerable support for policies that promote inclusivity and equal access, with inclusion of RLOs in national and local processes being a significant focus, each at 50%. This underscores the importance of representation and participation of marginalized or underrepresented groups within organizational and national decision-making frameworks. Policies addressing legal aid, trauma-informed support, and streamlining visa or documentation processes were also noted, with around 40% of responses, pointing to the need for legal and psychosocial support mechanisms. Interestingly, some policy areas, such as policies addressing environmental concerns, received less attention, indicating that immediate operational and governance reforms are perceived as more urgent.

The survey also reveals that a substantial proportion of respondents see value in simplifying administrative processes, such as registration procedures and reporting requirements, which can reduce bureaucratic barriers and enhance organizational agility. For example, simplified registration procedures and simplified reporting requirements each received over 45% of responses, highlighting their relevance. These reforms could help organizations focus more on their core missions rather than administrative burdens. Similarly, policies around increasing coordination and removing restrictions are viewed as vital to improve operational efficiency and foster better collaboration among stakeholders.

Another notable aspect of the findings is the emphasis on policies aimed at protecting organizational rights and ensuring fair treatment, such as protection against discrimination and removal of restrictions on activities. These areas received over 40% of responses, indicating a strong demand for policies that safeguard organizational integrity and promote a safe operational environment. Additionally, support for trauma-informed policies and policies addressing environmental concerns, although slightly less prioritized, reflect an awareness of the broader social and environmental context in which organizations operate. Overall, the responses point to a comprehensive approach to policy reform, emphasizing governance, inclusivity, legal support, and operational simplification.

What policy changes would improve your organization's ability to operate effectively? Purp
Identify specific policy reforms needed to reduce b...stemic changes and support for RLO sustain
32 responses



Advocacy Messages

1. **"Reducing Legal Barriers Unlocks Innovation and Growth in Refugee-Led Organizations"**
Explanation: Many refugee-led organizations face legal restrictions that prevent them from registering officially or operating freely. Removing these barriers enables organizations to innovate, expand their services, and contribute more effectively to their communities.
2. **"Funding Diversity Ensures Resilience and Sustainability"**
Explanation: Relying on a single funding source is risky. Diversifying funding streams—such as small grants, capacity-building funds, and unrestricted donations—helps refugee organizations remain resilient during financial downturns and plan for long-term sustainability.
3. **"Digital Infrastructure is Key to Expanding Reach and Impact"**
Explanation: Investing in digital tools (like communication platforms, data management, and online service delivery) allows refugee organizations to reach more people efficiently, improve internal management, and adapt quickly to changing needs.
4. **"Refugee-Led Organizations Know Their Communities Best—Support Their Leadership"**
Explanation: Refugee organizations have deep insights into their communities' needs. Supporting their leadership and participatory decision-making ensures programs are culturally relevant, accepted, and effective.
5. **"Strengthening Human Resources is Fundamental to Scaling Impact"**
Explanation: Building the skills of staff and leadership within refugee organizations through training and development enhances their capacity to deliver quality services and scale their impact.
6. **"Inclusive Policies Foster Social Cohesion and Reduce Stigma"**
Explanation: Policies that promote integration, language access, and anti-discrimination help build trust and social harmony between refugees and host communities, creating a more inclusive environment.
7. **"Refugee-Led Initiatives Contribute to Local Economies—Support Their Growth"**
Explanation: Refugee entrepreneurs and organizations often create jobs and stimulate local economies. Recognizing and supporting their economic activities benefits entire communities.
8. **"Strengthening Advocacy Capacities Empowers Refugee Changemakers"**
Explanation: Equipping refugee leaders with advocacy skills enables them to influence policies and public opinion, advocating for their rights and needs more effectively.
9. **"Cross-Sector Collaboration Enhances Impact and Sustainability"**
Explanation: Partnerships across different sectors (health, education, economic development) promote holistic solutions, maximize resources, and improve overall community well-being.
10. **"Data-Driven Advocacy is Critical to Achieve Systemic Change"**
Explanation: Collecting and sharing data, success stories, and evidence from the field helps build convincing arguments for policy change and attracts funding by demonstrating impact.
11. **"Refugee Narratives Matter: Tell the Stories of Change and Resilience"**
Explanation: Personal stories humanize refugees' experiences, challenge stereotypes, and illustrate the positive contributions they make, fostering empathy and support.
12. **"International Support Must Be Context-Sensitive and Respectful of Refugee Leadership"**
Explanation: External aid and policies should be tailored to local contexts and respect the leadership and agency of refugees, avoiding paternalism and promoting genuine partnership.
13. **"Empowering Refugee-Led Organizations is Essential for Sustainable Community Development"**
Explanation: Supporting refugee groups as leaders and key players is vital for building resilient, self-reliant communities that can sustain development efforts.
14. **"Access to Funding and Resources is a Right, Not a Privilege"**
Explanation: Organizations should have equitable access to financial resources and infrastructure, recognizing their rights to operate and serve their communities effectively.
15. **"Legal and Policy Reforms are Urgent to Unlock the Full Potential of Refugee Changemakers"**
Explanation: Governments need to simplify and reform laws that restrict refugee participation and organizational growth to fully harness their potential as change agents.
16. **"Investing in Capacity Building and Infrastructure Strengthens Refugee-Led Initiatives"**
Explanation: Providing training, technology, and infrastructure support enhances organizational effectiveness, scalability, and impact.
17. **"Community Engagement and Social Inclusion are Foundations for Sustainable Change"**
Explanation: Policies and programs that promote inclusion, reduce stigma, and foster trust are essential for long-term social cohesion and development.
18. **"Partnerships and Collaboration Amplify Impact"**
Explanation: Collaboration among refugee organizations, governments, donors, and civil society creates synergies, leverages resources, and promotes systemic change.
19. **"Refugees are Change Makers, Not Just Beneficiaries"**
Explanation: Challenging narratives that portray refugees solely as recipients of aid highlights their agency and leadership role in shaping their futures.
20. **"Data and Evidence Drive Effective Advocacy and Policy Reform"**
Explanation: Sharing concrete data, field feedback, and success stories strengthens advocacy efforts, influences policymakers, and demonstrates tangible impact.

Conclusion

This Needs Assessment underscores the complex and multifaceted challenges faced by refugee-led organizations within Kyaka II Refugee Settlement. Limited access to financial resources, infrastructure deficiencies, legal and policy barriers, and social and cultural obstacles collectively hinder the capacity of these organizations to expand their reach and deepen their impact. Addressing these interconnected issues requires a holistic and coordinated approach that emphasizes resource mobilization, infrastructure development, legal reform, and social inclusion. Strengthening the capacity of refugee-led organizations through diversified funding, strategic partnerships, and community engagement is essential for fostering sustainable growth and resilience. As key drivers of community development and self-reliance, these organizations hold immense potential to transform refugee communities. Therefore, ongoing support from stakeholders including policymakers, donors, civil society, and development partners is crucial to creating an enabling environment in which refugee-led initiatives can thrive, innovate, and contribute meaningfully to the broader development agenda. Ultimately, the insights and recommendations outlined in this report serve as a strategic guide to empowering refugee changemakers and advancing inclusive, community-driven development in Kyaka II and similar contexts.

Recognition

We sincerely appreciate the Kyaka II Refugee-Led Organization Network (KRLON) for their invaluable support in mobilizing all our participants and for their unwavering commitment throughout the process. Their dedication, including the numerous meetings held day and night, was instrumental in ensuring the successful completion of the Refugee Change Makers Network (RECAN)'s RLOs Needs Assessment.

RECAN also wishes to take this opportunity to recognize the active participation of Kyaka II refugee-led organizations in this important assessment. Their wholehearted engagement reflects a strong spirit of collaboration, which is vital for sustaining humanitarian efforts within Kyaka Refugee Settlement. This collective effort underscores the shared commitment to empowering refugee-led initiatives and strengthening community resilience.

