

Title: SASA Malaysia Report: Conflict, Post-Conflict, Humanitarian Protection, Modern-Day Slavery, Climate Humanities, and Women & Girls (Integrated Findings from the SASA Malaysia Workshop)

Sub-title: Integrating Findings from the SASA Malaysia Workshop

Author(s): Mahi Ramakrishnan (Beyond Borders Malaysia)
Pratheebhan Saravananathan (Ubonex Malaysia Sdn Bhd)

Date: March 13, 2025

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	6
1. Overview.....	6
2. Key Themes and Similarities.....	6
2.1 Intersectionality as a Central Framework.....	6
2.2 Systemic Challenges.....	7
2.3 Displacement and Migration.....	7
2.4 Advocacy and Empowerment.....	7
3. Challenges Highlighted.....	8
3.1 Structural Inequality.....	8
3.2 Inadequate Legal Frameworks.....	8
3.3 Environmental and Resource Mismanagement.....	8
3.4 Fear and Reprisals.....	8
4. Opportunities for Change.....	9
4.1 Leveraging Intersectionality.....	9
4.2 Strengthening Collaboration.....	9
4.3 Creative Advocacy.....	9
4.4 Policy and Legal Reforms.....	9
4.5 Climate Justice and Feminist Finance.....	9
5. SASA Malaysia Workshop Findings.....	10
5.1 Equitable Partnerships.....	10
5.2 Mobilising Knowledge from the Global South.....	10
5.3 Confluences and Connections Between Themes.....	10
6. Recommendations for Future Funding Models and Structures.....	10

6.1 Flexible Funding Mechanisms.....	11
6.2 Multi-Year Grants.....	11
6.3 Participatory Grant-Making.....	11
6.4 Blended Finance Models.....	11
7. Conclusion.....	11
INTRODUCTION.....	12
1. Background and Context.....	12
Participant Name List.....	13
2. Objectives of the Report.....	18
2.1 To Synthesise Key Themes.....	18
2.2 To Integrate Workshop Findings.....	18
2.3 To Provide Actionable Recommendations.....	19
3. Methodology.....	20
3.1 Thematic Analysis.....	20
3.2 Workshop Findings.....	20
3.3 Case Studies.....	20
4. Structure of the Report.....	21
5. Significance of the Report.....	21
Key Themes and Similarities.....	22
1. Intersectionality as a Central Framework.....	22
1.1 Understanding Intersectionality.....	22
1.2 Examples of Intersectionality in Practice.....	22
1.3 Case Study: Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia.....	25
2. Systemic Challenges.....	25

2.1 Power Imbalances.....	25
2.2 Lack of Political Will.....	25
2.3 Funding Constraints.....	26
2.4 Data Scarcity.....	26
3. Displacement and Migration.....	28
3.1 Drivers of Displacement.....	28
3.2 Vulnerabilities of Displaced Women and Girls.....	28
3.3 Case Study: Undocumented Migrant Workers in Malaysia.....	29
4. Advocacy and Empowerment.....	29
4.1 Art and Storytelling.....	29
4.2 Capacity Building.....	30
4.3 Collaboration.....	30
4.4 Case Study: Community Art Projects in the Philippines.....	30
Key Findings.....	31
a. Reflection and Analysis on Equitable Partnerships (Intra Teams) within the SASA Malaysia Project.....	31
b. Mobilising Knowledge from the Global South.....	32
c. Confluences and Connections Between the Three Themes.....	33
d. Recommendations for Future Funding Models and Structures.....	35
e. Novel and Transformative Approaches to Funding Structures.....	36
f. Novel and Transformative Approaches in Research.....	37
g. Sustainability Elements in Funding Models.....	40
h. Sustainability Elements in Research.....	41
Data and Analysis.....	43
Civil Society Organization.....	43

Organization Review.....	43
Community.....	50
Creative.....	56
Conclusion.....	65

SASA Malaysia Report

Integrating Findings from the SASA Malaysia Workshop

Executive Summary

1. Overview

This report synthesises key themes, challenges, and opportunities from three interconnected areas: Conflict, Post-Conflict, Humanitarian Protection & Modern-Day Slavery, Climate Humanities, and Women & Girls. It also integrates findings from the SASA Malaysia Workshop conducted on Nov 16, 2024, which focused on equitable partnerships, knowledge mobilisation, and transformative approaches to funding and research.

This summary provides a concise yet comprehensive overview of the interconnected issues of conflict, climate change, and gender inequality, as well as the findings and recommendations from the SASA Malaysia Workshop.

The analysis highlights the overlapping issues of systemic inequality, intersectionality, and the disproportionate impact of crises on marginalized communities, particularly women, girls, and indigenous populations. By examining these interconnected themes, the report identifies opportunities for collaboration, advocacy, and systemic change, offering actionable recommendations for stakeholders.

2. Key Themes and Similarities

2.1 Intersectionality as a Central Framework

Intersectionality is a recurring theme across all areas of analysis. Overlapping systems of discrimination—based on gender, race, class, migration status, and more—exacerbate vulnerabilities for marginalised communities.

Examples:

- Conflict: Rohingya refugees in Malaysia face hostility and exclusion due to their ethnicity and statelessness, while women and girls bear the brunt of sexual violence and limited access to resources.
- Climate Humanities: Indigenous communities and women are disproportionately affected by climate-induced displacement and resource mismanagement.

- Women & Girls: Transgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals are often excluded from gender rights discussions, despite facing heightened risks of violence and exclusion.

2.2 Systemic Challenges

Common systemic barriers include:

- Power Imbalances: Marginalised groups struggle to have their voices heard in decision-making processes.
- Lack of Political Will: Governments and regional bodies often fail to address root causes or enforce protective measures.
- Funding Constraints: Civil society organisations (CSOs) face difficulties securing sustainable funding for advocacy, research, and community support.
- Data Scarcity: Disaggregated data is often unavailable, hindering evidence-based policymaking and advocacy.

2.3 Displacement and Migration

Displacement, driven by conflict, climate change, and economic inequality, disproportionately affects women and girls.

Examples:

- Conflict: Refugees from Myanmar, including the stateless Rohingya, face hostility and lack of legal protection in host countries like Malaysia.
- Climate Humanities: Mega-projects like dams and deforestation displace indigenous communities, exacerbating poverty and resource competition.
- Women & Girls: Displaced women and girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation, and limited access to education and healthcare.

2.4 Advocacy and Empowerment

Creative advocacy tools, such as art, storytelling, and community empowerment, are essential for driving systemic change.

Examples:

- The “Kita Jaga Kita” (we take care of us) movement in Malaysia used social media and community art to foster solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Challenges Highlighted

3.1 Structural Inequality

Entrenched race-based policies and patriarchal systems perpetuate discrimination against marginalised communities.

Example: In Malaysia, race-based affirmative action policies often exclude marginalised groups like the Orang Asli (aborigines) and refugees.

3.2 Inadequate Legal Frameworks

Non-ratification of key international conventions leaves migrant workers and refugees without legal protection.

Example: Malaysia’s refusal to ratify the 1951 UN Refugee Convention leaves refugees vulnerable to deportation and exploitation.

3.3 Environmental and Resource Mismanagement

Climate change exacerbates resource scarcity, leading to militarised governance and increased competition.

Example: The construction of the Bakun Dam in Sarawak (on Borneo Island) displaced indigenous communities and destroyed ecosystems, without adequate consultation or compensation.

3.4 Fear and Reprisals

Activists and marginalised communities face fear of reprisals from state and non-state actors.

Example: Environmental activists in Malaysia have been targeted with lawsuits and harassment for opposing deforestation projects.

4. Opportunities for Change

4.1 Leveraging Intersectionality

Addressing overlapping vulnerabilities through collaborative, cross-cutting approaches.

Example: Empowered refugee women by integrating their perspectives into advocacy efforts.

4.2 Strengthening Collaboration

Building partnerships between CSOs, academics, policymakers, and the private sector.

Example: Regional networks for refugee support in Southeast Asia have improved coordination and resource sharing.

4.3 Creative Advocacy

Using art and storytelling to engage the public and challenge dominant narratives.

Example: Community art projects during the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the contributions of refugees and migrants.

4.4 Policy and Legal Reforms

Lobbying for the ratification of international conventions and the development of comprehensive protection frameworks.

Example: Advocacy efforts in Malaysia have pushed for the inclusion of migrant workers in the Employment Provident Fund (EPF), led by former lawmaker and co-chair of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), Charles Santiago and his team.

4.5 Climate Justice and Feminist Finance

Redirecting climate finance toward peacebuilding, capacity building, and inclusive governance.

Example: The Green Climate Fund has supported community-led climate adaptation projects in Southeast Asia.

5. SASA Malaysia Workshop Findings

5.1 Equitable Partnerships

Equitable partnerships are essential for fostering collaboration and shared decision-making among diverse stakeholders.

Example: Participants at the SASA Malaysia project emphasised the importance of involving refugee women in decision-making processes.

5.2 Mobilising Knowledge from the Global South

Local knowledge is critical for tailoring interventions to specific community needs.

Example: Training refugee women in advocacy and storytelling enabled them to share their experiences with policymakers.

5.3 Confluences and Connections Between Themes

Capacity building, equitable partnerships, and knowledge mobilisation are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Example: Discussions between CSOs, academics, and communities in the SASA Malaysia project amplified impact.

6. Recommendations for Future Funding Models and Structures

6.1 Flexible Funding Mechanisms

Provide flexible funding to allow organisations to adapt to changing contexts and prioritize immediate needs.

6.2 Multi-Year Grants

Offer multi-year grants to ensure stability and long-term planning for organisations.

6.3 Participatory Grant-Making

Involve community members in grant-making processes to ensure funding aligns with local priorities.

6.4 Blended Finance Models

Combine public and private funding sources to enhance investment in community initiatives.

7. Conclusion

The SASA Malaysia workshop underscores the interconnectedness of conflict, climate change, and gender inequality, emphasising the need for a holistic, intersectional approach to address systemic challenges. By prioritizing the voices of marginalised communities, fostering collaboration, and leveraging creative advocacy tools, stakeholders can work toward a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

INTRODUCTION

1. Background and Context

The world is grappling with interconnected crises of conflict, climate change, and gender inequality, each exacerbating the vulnerabilities of marginalised communities. These challenges are not isolated; they intersect in ways that deepen systemic inequalities and disproportionately affect women, girls, refugees, migrant workers, and indigenous populations. For example, the displacement of Rohingya refugees in Southeast Asia is not only a consequence of conflict but also a result of climate-induced resource scarcity and economic instability. Similarly, indigenous communities in Sarawak face displacement due to mega-dam projects, which destroy their livelihoods and ecosystems while exacerbating poverty and inequality.

In this context, the SASA Malaysia workshop was convened to address these interconnected challenges through a focus on equitable partnerships, knowledge mobilisation, and transformative approaches to funding and research. The workshop brought together 58 participants from diverse backgrounds, including academics, civil society organisations (CSOs), activists, LGBTQ+ leaders, representatives from the Women's Ministry in Malaysia, refugees, artists, and migrant workers. The participants also came from Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak on the Borneo Island, Thailand and Indonesia. This diverse participation ensured that the discussions reflected a wide range of perspectives and experiences, enriching the workshop's outcomes and recommendations. And the participants were joined by Gregory Meredith and Konrad Mould from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC),

Participant Name List

Full Name	Email Address	Contact Number	Organization	Designation
Gavin Chow	gavin@pluho.org	60182091992	PLUHO	Co-founder and Executive Director
Nasrikah	nasrikahp@gmail.com	162097904	PERTIMIG	Coordinator
Glorene A Das	glorene.@tenaganita.net	60103603269	Tenaganita	Executive Director
Sushila Kukathas	skukathas@gmail.com	60182426960	Freelance	n/a
Nurhana Hussein	nurhana.hussein@gmail.com	012 214 3468	Beyond Borders	committee member
Ooi Kee Beng	keebeng@penanginstitute.org	163706466	Penang Institute	Executive Director
Wan Shakila Adiola binti Wan Azmi	shakilaadiela@gmail.com	601139898423	Borneo Komrad	Manager
Nicholas Mujah anak Ason	sadiahq@gmail.com	1163537040	Sarawak Dayak Iban Association	Secretary General
Ili Nadiah binti Dzulfakar	nadiah@klimatectionmalaysia.org	183582752	Klima Action Malaysia - KAMY	Programme Director
Saha Deva A Arunasalam	chambers.saha@gmail.com	123171781	BAR Council Malaysia	Lead UPR (Human Rights Committee)
Jo Kukathas	jokukathas@gmail.com	60163582035	The Instant Cafe Theatre Company	Artistic Director

LEONG CHEW WAI	vincentleongcw@gmail.com	60173638510	URI	Global At Large Trustee
Zulfikar Abdul Aziz	zulfikartujuh@gmail.com	194700357	Penang Public Transport Users Association (PeTUA)	Secretary
DR ANGIE GARET	angiegaret885@gmail.com	60138185174	Sarawak Women For Women Society(SWWS)	President
Kasthuri Patto				
Arief Hamizan	ariefhamizan@gmail.com	163510531	Panas Panas Theatre	Co-founder
Nazreen Nizam	nazreen@wao.org.my	192348671	Women's Aid Organisation	Acting Executive Director
Mimi Zarina Azmin	mimi@muslimaid.org.my	60172825330	Muslim Aid Malaysia	Head of Programmes
Charles Santiago	charlessantiago@gmail.com	193150939	MSN	Member
Anna Lissa R. Galdo	liezelgaldo82@gmail.com	1121805561	Our Journey	Filipino Community Organizer
Datin Shalini Amerasinghe Ganendra	sganendra@gmail.com	+6012 393 6669	Shalini Ganendra Advisory	Founder and Chief Executive
Putri Kanesia	pkanesia@asia-ajar.org	628151623293	Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR)	Jakarta, Indonesia
Kelvin Lee	kelvinleesk87@gmail.com	6018-386 1628	The Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall	Youth Section Chief

(KLSCAH)				
Farzana Yakta	farzanah844@g mail.com	1128597948	Parastoo theatre	Director
Yiswaree Palansamy	yiswaree@gmail .com	167278302	Malay Mail	Senior Journalist
Adrian Pereira	pereira@nsinitiat ive.net	60122900756	North South Initiative	Executive Director
Sevan	ed@suaram.net	169708370	SUARAM	Executive Director
Mohammad Syazwi Bin Mohd Rafee	syazwirafae95 @gmail.com	172085282	Yayasan Hasanah	Senior Executive
Tijah Yok Chopil	hanyc68.jaringa n@gmail.com	019- 8343831	Jaringan kampung Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia JKOASM	Chair woman
Klaus Dik Nielsen	sg.klaus@aprrn. org	+66 61 3011 020	Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN)	Co-Secretary General
Beverly Joeman	beverly.appg@f amilyfrontiers.or g	1159826297	APPGM on Children's Rights Secretariat	Project Coordinator
Nisha ayub	Nishaayub5479 @gmail.com	012 7515159	SEED Malaysia	Project Director
Mary Anne K Baltazar	annebaltazar@g mail.com	143701317	Advocates for Non- Discrimination and Access to Knowledge (ANAK)	Founding Director

Ahmad Afandi bin Nor Azmi	afandi@isis.org.my	197552419	Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia	Fellow
SITI KASIM	sitikasim@gmail.com	012-2233371	SITI KASIM & ASSOCIATES	LAWYER
Hartini Binti Zainudin	Tinizainudin@gmail.com	127907818	Yayasan cho Kit Co	founder
Jason Pandya wood				
Al Fadhil bin Syarifuddin	al.fadhil@geutanyoe.id	628126967394	Yayasan Geutanyoe	Director
Ameena Siddiqi	ameenasiddiqi.sis@gmail.com	123801049	Sisters in Islam	Communications Manager
pornpen Khongkachonkit	Noinoipornpen@crcfthailand.org	66659793836	Cross Cultural Foundation	Director
Simraatraj Kaur	simraatrajkaur@gmail.com	012-595-2135	Bait Al Amanah	Head of Social Policy & Human Rights Research Unit
Kevin Bathman	kevinbathman@gmail.com	162214552	Independent - Project Future Malaysia	Creative Producer
Angela Marianne Kugathas	angela@kryss.network	102932013	KRYSS Network	Partner-Director
Debbie Stothard	debbie.stot@gmail.com	66816861652	ALTSEAN-Burma	Founder/Coordinator
Kai Scott	kai@altsean.org	+1 (289) 214-4581	ALTSEAN-Burma	Editorial Officer
thilaga	thilaga@justicefor	60123974017	justice for sisters	executive

	orsisters.org		director
Suzana Ahmad	suempcj@gmail.122789288 com	Tokosue - indie bookstore and publisher	Owner and Creative Head
Aunger Aung	eaindraaung786 1161664962 @gmail.com	Reimagine Education (R.ED)	Co-founder
Anna Har	annahar@freed 162275757 omfilm.my	Freedom Film Network	Executive Director
Bahma Sivasubramania m	drbahmasiva810 122449742 @gmail.com	Multimedia University	Specialist
Aslam Abd Jalil	aslamaj@um.ed 199468439 u.my	Universiti Malaya	Senior Lecturer
Faribel Fernandez	faribel@komas.o123113269 rg	PUSAT KOMAS	Finance/ Operations Manager
Siti Syakirah Suhaimi	syakirah.suhaimi1116444614 @yahoo.com	Kuliah Buku (Kubu)	Secretary
Benz Ali	ilazneb@gmail.c 1127739202 om	Kuliah Buku (Kubu)	Co-Founder
Patricia Low Pek Wan	patricia@familyfr+6014-2384209 ontiers.org	Family Frontiers	Research & Policy Coordinator
Terence Toh Chee Kitt	terencetck@gm 122365838 ail.com	KULT Productions	Writer
Hannah Reshmah Jambunathan	jambunathan@ 60179623548 idcoalition.org	International Detention Coalition	Asia Pacific Programme Officer
Elroi Yee	elroiyeeg@gmail. 123450311 com	SEDARJAT	Producer
James Lochhead	penangstoptraffi - cking@gmail.co	Penang Stop Trafficking	-

m		Campaign	
Kevin Fernandez	kevin@um.edu.my 193939771	University Malaya	Senior Lecturer
Yap Swee Seng	yapsweeseng@gmail.com -	Innovation for Change - East Asia	-

The Conflict, Post Conflict, Humanitarian Protection and Modern-Day Slavery theme was led by Charles Santiago, a former Malaysian lawmaker and co-chair of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR). Klaus Dik Nielsen, co-secretary general of Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network (APRRN) based in Bangkok, Thailand led discussions on Women and Girls. And Ili Nadiyah Dzulfakar facilitated discussions on Climate Humanities.

This report builds on the insights from the workshop, integrating them with a broader analysis of the interconnected themes of Conflict, Post-Conflict, Humanitarian Protection & Modern-Day Slavery, Climate Humanities, and Women & Girls. By examining these themes through an intersectional lens, the report highlights the overlapping systems of discrimination that exacerbate vulnerabilities and identifies opportunities for collaboration, advocacy, and systemic change.

2. Objectives of the Report

The primary objectives of this report are:

2.1 To Synthesise Key Themes

- Examine the interconnected issues of conflict, climate change, and gender inequality, with a focus on their impact on marginalised communities.
- Highlight the role of intersectionality in understanding and addressing systemic inequalities.

2.2 To Integrate Workshop Findings

- Incorporate insights from the SASA Malaysia workshop, which explored equitable partnerships, knowledge mobilisation, and innovative approaches to funding and research.
- Showcase examples of community-led initiatives and their impact on advocacy and policy change.

2.3 To Provide Actionable Recommendations

- Offer practical recommendations for stakeholders, including policymakers, civil society organisations (CSOs), and funders, to address systemic challenges and drive sustainable change.

3. Methodology

This report is based on a combination of thematic analysis and workshop findings:

3.1 Thematic Analysis

- A review of key issues in Conflict, Post-Conflict, Humanitarian Protection & Modern-Day Slavery, Climate Humanities, and Women & Girls.
- Analysis of systemic challenges, such as power imbalances, inadequate legal frameworks, and funding constraints.

3.2 Workshop Findings

- Insights from the SASA Malaysia Workshop, including case studies, participant feedback, and best practices.
- The workshop brought together 58 participants from diverse backgrounds, including:
- Academics: Researchers and scholars specialising in gender studies, migration, and climate change.
- Civil Society Organisations (CSOs): Representatives from NGOs working on refugee rights, gender equality, and environmental justice.
- Activists: Grassroots leaders advocating for marginalised communities.
- LGBTQ+ Leaders: Representatives from LGBTQ+ organisations highlighting the unique challenges faced by queer and transgender individuals.
- Women's Ministry Representatives: Government officials from the Women's Ministry in Malaysia, providing insights into policy challenges and opportunities.
- Refugees and Migrant Workers: Individuals sharing first-hand experiences of displacement, exploitation, and resilience.
- Artists: Creative professionals using art and storytelling to advocate for social change.

3.3 Case Studies

- Real-world examples from Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Indonesia to illustrate key themes and challenges.
- Examples include the displacement of Rohingya refugees, the impact of mega-dam projects on indigenous communities, and the exclusion of migrant workers from COVID-19 relief programs.

4. Structure of the Report

The report is organised into the following sections:

Key Themes and Similarities: An exploration of intersectionality, systemic challenges, displacement, and advocacy.

Challenges Highlighted: A detailed analysis of structural inequality, inadequate legal frameworks, environmental mismanagement, and fear of reprisals.

Opportunities for Change: Strategies for leveraging intersectionality, strengthening collaboration, and promoting creative advocacy.

SASA Malaysia Workshop Findings: Insights into equitable partnerships, knowledge mobilisation, and collective action.

Recommendations for Future Funding Models: Proposals for flexible funding, multi-year grants, and participatory grant-making.

Novel and Transformative Approaches in Research: Methods for participatory action research, community-based research, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Sustainability Elements in Funding and Research: Strategies for long-term investment, community ownership, and ethical research practices.

Conclusion: A summary of key findings and a call to action for stakeholders.

5. Significance of the Report

This report is a call to action for stakeholders to address the interconnected crises of conflict, climate change, and gender inequality. By prioritising the voices of marginalised communities, fostering collaboration, and leveraging creative advocacy tools, we can work toward a more equitable and sustainable future.

The integration of findings from the SASA Malaysia workshop highlights the importance of community-led initiatives and equitable partnerships in driving systemic change. The participation of 58 diverse stakeholders, including academics, CSOs, activists, LGBTQ+ leaders, government representatives, refugees, artists, and migrant workers ensures that the report reflects a wide range of perspectives and experiences.

Key Themes and Similarities

1. Intersectionality as a Central Framework

As already mentioned at the beginning of this report, intersectionality cuts across all areas of analysis. It highlights how the overlap of gender, race, class, migration status makes marginalised communities that much more vulnerable.

For example, Mimi Zarina, the interim CEO of Muslim Aid and former Education Head at UNHCR says that Malaysia has been a prime target country for asylum seekers and refugees. “Together with this, climate has been worsening and women and girls are definitely the most-affected population due to a lot of cultural norms within the region as well as the limitations that they face.”

Former Malaysian Member of Parliament and co-chair of ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR), Charles Santiago accuses regional Southeast Asian governments of not investing in finding durable solutions. “This is going to exacerbate poverty, conflict and worsen the tension.”

1.1 Understanding Intersectionality

Intersectionality, a term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, emphasises that individuals experience oppression differently depending on their intersecting identities. For example, a Rohingya refugee woman in Malaysia faces discrimination not only because of her ethnicity and statelessness but also because of her gender, which exposes her to heightened risks of sexual violence and limited access to resources. And this sexual violence does not necessarily be perpetrated by the host community but by the Rohingya men as well.

1.2 Examples of Intersectionality in Practice

- **Conflict:** In Afghanistan, Pashtun women face systemic discrimination due to their ethnicity, religion, and gender. They are often excluded from decision-making processes and denied access to education and healthcare. And these women who flee to Malaysia also face the same discrimination as well as threats to their lives by

the men in their community, on top of being discriminated by donors because they are refugees.

For example, Farzana Akhtar, a woman from Afghanistan says it is difficult for her to find funds to stage her play because she is a refugee. Farzana runs Parastoo, a theatre company that specialises in the theatre of the oppressed. "Someone else always has to be our partner in order for us to be able to apply for any funds. There are questions if it is a refugee-led theatre because if it is a refugee-led organisation, how long could this last?"

- Climate Humanities: Indigenous women in Sarawak are disproportionately affected by climate-induced displacement and resource mismanagement. Their traditional knowledge is often dismissed by policymakers, resulting in top-down approaches that fail to address their needs.

During the workshop, Tijah Han Chopil, an indigenous rights activist voiced out her exasperation at the lack of rights and respect attributed to indigenous knowledge and culture. "Many of our kids in Sabah and Sarawak are still wading rivers to get to school or walking miles on end. There are no proper education facilities in their villages. When it comes to development, Orang Asli (Malay term for indigenous communities) are forced to leave their ancestral villages. For us our villages are sacred because it is where our ancestral graves are. But the government does not care. There is so much the authorities can learn from our way of life but they consider us stupid and ignorant."

Echoing her sentiments, popular lawyer Siti Kasim, points out that there is a lack of political will by the government when it comes to the rights of the indigenous communities in the country.

And interestingly, a seasoned reporter with a Malaysian daily, Yiswaree Palansamy pointed out that much of the issues relating to climate change and how it affects marginalised communities are often misreported. "The idea of climate change is so huge that the media at times finds it hard to break it down. Like, where do we start? And there is no proper guidance on how this could be reported." While admitting there are some who do investigative journalism, but it is "very very small" compared to the media organisations in Malaysia. And elaborating, she says that this means the public would not be aware of how climate change or climate emergency is affecting the lives of indigenous communities.

- Women & Girls: Transgender women and LGBTQ+ individuals are often excluded from gender rights discussions, despite facing heightened risks of violence.

- *Nisha Ayub, who was given the International Woman of Courage award by the US State Department in 2016, laments that donors however do not include the transgender community because they are not accepted as women. “When I saw the thematic issue of women and girls, my first thought was, are we trans being accepted. Why? Because most of the time, when it comes to any discussion or any projects or program or even funding, trans people are mostly not included. And the definition of what women supposed to be has always been a challenge for us, the community.”*

1.3 Case Study: Rohingya Refugees in Malaysia

Rohingya refugees in Malaysia face hostility and exclusion due to their ethnicity and statelessness. Women and girls within this community are particularly vulnerable, facing risks of sexual violence, exploitation, and limited access to education and healthcare. The intersection of their identities: refugee, stateless, female exacerbates their vulnerabilities and highlights the need for an intersectional approach to advocacy and policy-making.

2. Systemic Challenges

Common systemic barriers include power imbalances, lack of political will, funding constraints, and data scarcity.

Mimi highlights the fact that, in the context of Malaysia there is a lot of negative narratives on refugees and asylum seekers. “The way the government has been reacting is limiting the desire of people to fund. Certainly, more funding is needed.”

2.1 Power Imbalances

Marginalised groups often struggle to have their voices heard in decision-making processes. This is particularly true for women, refugees, and indigenous communities, who are frequently excluded from policy discussions and resource allocation.

According to the famous theatre director and playwright, Jo Kukathas, pointed out that artists are struggling to make art because of the lack of funding. She elaborates to say that she goes to Singapore to make the money by collaborating with other artists and brings back her earnings to make theatre in Malaysia. And Jo also points out that the Malaysian government censors the content that should be accessible to the people. She hits out at the government saying it wants to control the narrative that reaches the public. “The government is a bit suspicious always about the stories it cannot control. Artists tell another story. Artists are concerned with people around them. They are concerned about what’s going on, on the ground. Government tries to control the narrative that they want you to have.”

2.2 Lack of Political Will

Governments and regional bodies often fail to address root causes or enforce protective measures. This lack of political will is evident in the non-ratification of key international conventions, such as the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.

Refugee community leaders from Myanmar, during discussions, pointed out that Malaysia needs to do better as the incoming ASEAN Chair. “We have had many instances where Malaysia had pushed Rohingya boats back to sea. We live in fear that this government would also deport us following immigration raids. As you already know, even people with UNHCR are nabbed by immigration authorities. If sent back, we will end up dead, especially those who were members of the Civil Disobedience Movement.”

Note: Malaysia currently holds the ASEAN Chairmanship.

2.3 Funding Constraints

Civil society organisations (CSOs) face difficulties securing sustainable funding for advocacy, research, and community support. This limits their ability to address systemic challenges and implement long-term solutions. Many CSOs working with refugees and migrant workers in Southeast Asia rely on short-term grants, which hinder their ability to plan and implement sustainable initiatives.

Hannah Jambunathan who works for the International Detention Coalition says that donors are not interested in funding migration, especially arbitrary detentions. “If migration is not explored that the intersection is also not explored. There is no interest to explore, which is difficult. Lots of work on migration or any of these topics need to be long-term. Lots of the resources, lots of the funding is coming from white people to speak plainly. There is racism all across the migration and people do not want to fund them.”

Concurring with Hannah, Kelvin Lee who heads the youth section of the Kuala Lumpur Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall says funds are limited, while there are many issues that need to be worked on. He calls this a challenging situation and says there has to be a “bottoms up approach” in assessing funding needs so that “donors know what’s happening on the ground and what the people need.”

2.4 Data Scarcity

Disaggregated data is often unavailable, hindering evidence-based policymaking and advocacy. Without accurate data, it is difficult to understand the specific needs of marginalised communities and design targeted interventions.

Example: The lack of data on the experiences of LGBTQ+ refugees in Malaysia makes it challenging to advocate for their rights and access to services.

“If we have no funding to ensure healthcare access for the trans community, how would we find funds to conduct research that would enable us to gather data. Funding is crucial

but as I pointed out, donor organisations are not forthcoming to fund trans-led civil society organisations,” said Nisha.

3. Displacement and Migration

Displacement is a recurring issue driven by conflict, climate change, and economic inequality. Women and girls are disproportionately affected, facing heightened risks of violence, exploitation, and limited access to education and healthcare.

Reporter Yishwaree says the lack of expertise in reporting about climate change often leads to journalists contextualising their stories in a way that ends up denying climate change or climate emergency. “This is cheaper, easier. Denying is easy to understand.” But she also warns that this denial comes with a cost.

3.1 Drivers of Displacement

- **Conflict:** The ongoing conflict in Myanmar has displaced thousands of Rohingya refugees, who face hostility and lack of legal protection in host countries like Malaysia.
- **Climate Change:** Climate-induced displacement is a growing concern, particularly for indigenous communities in Southeast Asia. Mega-projects like dams and deforestation exacerbate resource scarcity and force communities to relocate.
- **Economic Inequality:** Economic instability and lack of opportunities drive migration, particularly for women and girls seeking better livelihoods.

3.2 Vulnerabilities of Displaced Women and Girls

Displaced women and girls face unique challenges, including:

- **Sexual Violence:** Women and girls are at heightened risk of sexual violence in conflict and displacement settings.
- **Exploitation:** Migrant workers, particularly women, are often exploited in low-wage jobs with poor working conditions.

“Exploitation of migrant workers is so prevalent in ASEAN member countries. We have so many reports about the systemic abuse they continue to face in Malaysia. This needs political will from not just the Malaysian government but all ASEAN governments because there are cross-border movements of migrant workers within ASEAN. And of course, you have a huge population of migrant workers from Bangladesh, Nepal and India. The most vulnerable are the women, who are usually gig workers,” said Charles.

- **Limited Access to Education and Healthcare:** Displaced women and girls often have limited access to education and healthcare, perpetuating cycles of poverty and inequality.

3.3 Case Study: Undocumented Migrant Workers in Malaysia

During the COVID-19 pandemic, undocumented migrant workers in Malaysia were excluded from government relief programs, leaving them without access to healthcare or financial aid. This exclusion highlights the systemic discrimination faced by migrant workers and the need for inclusive policies that protect vulnerable populations.

A migrant community leader, who wants to remain anonymous, pointed out that there were increases in road blocks and police check points during the Covid-19 pandemic. “On top of the fact that we received no aid from Malaysia, we were also terrified of going out in the event we would be arrested by the police or immigration. And I know many women were sexually abused in detention. We were grateful you sent us cooked meals,” she said to Mahi Ramakrishnan, the co-lead for the SASA Malaysia workshop and a refugee rights advocate.

The women leader also pointed out that the Malaysian government went back on its words and arrested workers who turned up for health screening and vaccination. She said that the images of women and even children in shackles following widespread immigration raids continue to haunt her till today.

4. Advocacy and Empowerment

Creative advocacy tools, such as art, storytelling, and community empowerment, are essential for driving systemic change.

4.1 Art and Storytelling

Art and storytelling can engage the public and challenge dominant narratives, raising awareness about the experiences of marginalised communities. For example, the “Kita Jaga Kita” movement in Malaysia used social media and community art to foster solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign highlighted the contributions of refugees and migrant workers, challenging negative stereotypes and promoting inclusivity.

Jo also says the arts changes public narratives and connects activists to the public realm. “And that is through story-telling. Whether it is through music, through dance, through songs, through documentary theatre, through documentaries, to events, through musicals,

through TV, through sitcoms, to films- these are the ways public perception changes because the public is emotionally invested in the story.”

4.2 Capacity Building

Capacity-building initiatives empower marginalised communities to advocate for their rights and access resources.

4.3 Collaboration

Building networks between CSOs, academics, policymakers, and the private sector amplifies impact and drives systemic change. This is evident in how regional networks that work on Myanmar and refugee support in Southeast Asia, such as the ASEAN Parliamentarians for Human Rights (APHR) have improved coordination and resource sharing among stakeholders.

4.4 Case Study: Community Art Projects in the Philippines

In the Philippines, the Women’s Legal and Human Rights Bureau (WLB) uses theatre and storytelling to raise awareness about gender-based violence and advocate for policy reforms. These creative advocacy tools have empowered women to share their stories and demand accountability from policymakers.

Agreeing that theatre plays a pivotal role, Farzana says while she believe any form of art is important, “theatre is the best form to talk about issues because within that one hour or one and a half hours, you are sitting down and you are seeing all sides of the story.”

Key Findings

The SASA Malaysia workshop brought together 58 participants from diverse backgrounds, including academics, civil society organizations (CSOs), activists, LGBTQ+ leaders, representatives from the Women's Ministry in Malaysia, refugees, artists, and migrant workers. The workshop focused on three key areas: equitable partnerships, knowledge mobilisation, and collective action. This chapter synthesizes the key findings from the workshop.

a. Reflection and Analysis on Equitable Partnerships (Intra Teams) within the SASA Malaysia Project

1. **Definition and Importance:** Equitable partnerships refer to collaborative relationships in which all members contribute equally, share decision-making processes, and have access to the same resources and opportunities. In the SASA Malaysia workshop, fostering these equitable partnerships was seen as vital for creating an enabling environment that values the unique insights and contributions of each thematic group.
2. **Diversity of Perspectives:** The SASA Malaysia project brought together various marginalised communities, including refugees, women, and indigenous groups. This diversity of perspectives is crucial in ensuring that project objectives are relevant and resonate with the needs of all stakeholders. By effectively engaging with diverse voices, the project enhanced creativity and innovation, leading to more effective and inclusive solutions.
3. **Capacity Building and Empowerment:** The thematic groups have underscored the role of equitable partnerships in enhancing capacity building. For example, many civil society organisations (CSOs) excel in their initiatives but often lack skills in effectively documenting achievements and managing donor relationships. Addressing these gaps empowers group members to articulate their successes, secure funding, and sustain their initiatives.
4. **Meaningful Participation:** There is a pressing need to foster meaningful participation and accountability among all stakeholders. Ensuring that every member feels a sense of ownership and commitment enhances engagement in collective actions. This dynamic is crucial for maintaining momentum, especially when financial constraints threaten the sustainability of projects.
5. **Collective Action:** The discussions within the thematic groups highlighted the importance of creating collaborative frameworks that allow CSOs and diverse community members to work together, share resources, and leverage their collective strengths. By engaging in collective action, teams can overcome individual barriers and address systemic challenges more effectively.
6. **Challenges to Equity:** While the ideal of equitable partnerships is essential, challenges such as power imbalances and resource distribution disparities persist. Regular assessment of these challenges is necessary to ensure that all voices are acknowledged and that no group feels marginalised or overshadowed.

7. **Sustaining Partnerships:** For equitable partnerships to endure beyond the SASA Malaysia workshop, establishing mechanisms for ongoing communication, feedback, and recognition of contributions is crucial. Regular check-ins and transparent decision-making processes help maintain balance and foster a culture where all members feel valued.

b. Mobilising Knowledge from the Global South

1. **Importance of Local Knowledge:** Mobilising knowledge from the Global South is essential for tailoring projects and initiatives that resonate with local contexts and realities. The thematic groups emphasised that local insights are critical for addressing specific community needs and enhancing the relevance and impact of interventions.
2. **Diverse Knowledge Systems:** The Global South is rich in diverse knowledge systems, including traditional ecological knowledge, indigenous practices, and community narratives. These forms of knowledge contribute significantly to understanding complex social challenges and fostering innovative solutions that reflect cultural values and practices.
3. **Capacity Building Needs:** The thematic groups note that many organisations in the Global South lack adequate skills in areas such as documentation, monitoring, and advocacy. This gap has limited their ability to effectively mobilise and share their knowledge. Initiatives aimed at capacity building can empower these organisations to better articulate their successes and engage with broader networks.
4. **Resource Accessibility:** Financial constraints present a significant barrier to knowledge mobilisation. Many community organisations struggle to secure funding necessary for conducting research, disseminating findings, and implementing knowledge-driven initiatives. Enhancing access to financial resources and creating sustainable funding mechanisms is crucial for overcoming these barriers.
5. **Recognition of Local Expertise:** There is often a tendency to undervalue knowledge generated within the Global South, particularly in international forums. The thematic discussions highlighted the need to advocate for greater recognition and integration of local knowledge into policies and wider strategies, ensuring that Southern voices are included in global conversations.
6. **Building Collaborative Networks:** Collaborative networks that connect organisations in the Global South with international allies and stakeholders can facilitate knowledge exchange. Such networks help amplify local voices and share innovative practices, leading to more comprehensive approaches to social challenges.
7. **Addressing Systemic Barriers:** Effective mobilisation of knowledge must also confront systemic barriers that hinder the participation of marginalised communities. Advocacy efforts should focus on promoting inclusive decision-making processes that allow diverse groups to share their knowledge and experiences.
8. **Engagement Strategies:** The thematic groups emphasise the importance of developing meaningful engagement strategies that promote accountability and participation. Ensuring all stakeholders can contribute to knowledge creation and

mobilisation is essential for building trust and maintaining momentum in collaborative efforts.

9. **Enhancing Visibility:** Increasing the visibility of knowledge generated by grassroots initiatives can help bridge the gap between local practices and global perspectives. Documenting and disseminating successful case studies can provide valuable insights and illustrate the effectiveness of community-led approaches.

c. Confluences and Connections Between the Three Themes

1. Interdependence of Capacity Building and Equitable Partnerships:

- The thematic discussions highlight how effective capacity building serves as a foundation for establishing equitable partnerships. Organisations that invest in skills development, particularly fundraising, advocacy, and documentation, position themselves to engage meaningfully with other stakeholders. This relationship fosters a more supportive environment where knowledge, resources, and experiences can be shared equitably.
- Additionally, building capacities enhance trust and understanding among partners, leading to more collaborative and respectful relationships. The success of partnerships often hinges on the capacity of organisations to communicate and work together effectively.

Academic Jason Pandya-Wood of Nottingham University of Malaysia says that there is “a real opportunity for the Global North right now to consider how funding a research in the Global South has a benefit to all of us. Most of the issues we are discussing in this workshop and in similar forums like this are interconnected. Despite people living thousands of miles away the world is becoming increasingly small. If we don't begin to address issues of migration, climate change in mitigation in one part of the world we will have consequences elsewhere. And actually, that learning is so important for the Global North as well. So, if we want to see great community development flourish in places like London, we need to be looking to Kuala Lumpur for what it has done really well around these issues.”

2. Knowledge Mobilization as a Catalyst:

- Mobilising knowledge from the Global South is pivotal for enhancing both capacity-building and partnering efforts. The thematic groups emphasised the need for local knowledge to inform training programs that address specific community needs, thereby making capacity-building initiatives more relevant and impactful.
- Such mobilisation not only allows organisations to learn from successful local practices but also empowers them to contribute their insights to the collective knowledge pool, promoting mutual learning among partners.

3. Advocacy for Inclusivity Across All Themes:

- A recurring motif throughout the themes is advocacy for inclusivity. Each thematic group stressed the importance of engaging marginalised voices, whether in capacity-building workshops, partnership dialogues, or knowledge-sharing sessions. Ensuring inclusivity enriches discussions and leads to more comprehensive solutions that reflect the perspectives of all community members.
- Inclusivity in these areas highlights the need to elevate the voices of women, youth, and other marginalised groups, ensuring their experiences and needs are recognised in every aspect of project implementation.

4. Collective Action and Solidarity:

- The themes collectively reinforce the necessity of collective action. Capacity building equips organisations to work collaboratively, while equitable partnerships lay the groundwork for coordinated efforts. The sharing of knowledge supports joint initiatives aimed at addressing systemic injustices.
- Through established networks and collaborative frameworks, organisations can mobilise resources and support more effectively, leading to broader impacts on the issues they are addressing collectively.

5. Addressing Structural Inequities:

- A critical intersection among the themes is the recognition of systemic barriers that impede progress. The thematic groups discuss how issues such as limited funding, lack of access to decision-making processes, and underrepresentation of local knowledge collectively hinder the effectiveness of capacity building and equitable partnerships.
- Acknowledging these interconnected barriers allows stakeholders to develop strategies that address the root causes of exclusion and inequity, paving the way for more equitable and sustainable outcomes.

6. Empowerment as a Central Theme:

- Empowerment emerged as a central goal interwoven throughout all three themes. The capacity-building efforts aim to empower organisations to take action, equitable partnerships foster shared decision-making, and mobilising local knowledge enables communities to advocate for their rights effectively.
- This focus on empowerment emphasised that all three themes work synergistically to create an environment where marginalised communities can assert their rights, influence policy, and drive meaningful social change.

d. Recommendations for Future Funding Models and Structures

1. Flexible Funding Mechanisms:

- Future funding models should embrace flexibility, allowing organisations to prioritise their immediate needs and adapt to changing local contexts. By providing flexibility in how funds can be used, organisations can respond to unforeseen challenges, enhancing their resilience and effectiveness.

2. Implementation of Multi-Year Grant Opportunities:

- Securing multi-year grants can offer organisations the stability they need for long-term planning and implementation. This steady financial support allows for capacity-building efforts, community outreach, and sustained impact without the disruption of annual funding cycles, which often require organisations to constantly seek new funds.

3. Prioritisation of Capacity Building:

- Funding structures should prominently feature resources dedicated to capacity-building initiatives. By focusing on training workshops and skill development in areas such as funding acquisition and advocacy, organisations can enhance their operational effectiveness and advocacy capabilities.

4. Inclusive Decision-Making Processes:

- It is essential to involve marginalised communities in the decision-making processes related to funding allocations. By integrating the voices of those most affected by funded initiatives, funders can ensure that resource distribution aligns with the real needs and challenges faced by communities, advancing equity and inclusivity.

5. Encouragement of Collaborative Initiatives:

- Future funding frameworks should incentivize collaboration among various organisations. By supporting cross-sector partnerships, funds can be used more efficiently, pooling expertise and resources to address systemic issues more holistically and increase the collective impact of initiatives.

6. Investment in Technology and Innovation:

- Allocating funds for technology adoption is critical for organisations striving to enhance their operations. Digital tools can facilitate efficient knowledge

sharing, data collection, and impact evaluation, enabling organisations to leverage technology for greater advocacy and community engagement.

7. Micro-Grants and Community-Led Funding:

- The introduction of micro-grants can empower grassroots initiatives by providing small, targeted funding that focuses on community-led projects. These micro-grants can support innovative solutions tailored to local challenges, fostering ownership and involvement within communities.

8. Focus on Outcomes and Impact Measurement:

- Funding structures should shift focus from merely tracking outputs to measuring outcomes and long-term impacts. Encouraging organisations to establish clear evaluation metrics demonstrates accountability and supports the continuous improvement of projects.

9. Adaptation to Local Contexts:

- Future funding models must acknowledge the diversity of local cultural, social, and economic conditions. Funders should seek to understand these contexts to ensure that resources are relevant, effective, and tailored to the specific challenges faced by communities.

10. Strengthening Accountability Mechanisms:

- Establishing robust accountability frameworks is essential for fostering trust between funders and recipient organisations. Clear criteria regarding fund management, reporting, and feedback mechanisms can promote transparency and encourage recipients to stay committed to their goals.

E. Novel and Transformative Approaches to Funding Structures

1. Participatory Grant-Making:

- Involve community members and local organisations in the grant-making process to ensure that funding priorities reflect the actual needs of the community. This participatory approach empowers stakeholders, fosters ownership, and enhances the relevance of funded initiatives.

2. Blended Finance Models:

- Utilise blended finance, which combines public and private funding sources to enhance investment in community initiatives. By leveraging resources from various sectors, organisations can overcome funding gaps while attracting private investment in social outcomes.

3. Social Impact Bonds (SIBs):

- Implement Social Impact Bonds that tie funding to measurable social outcomes. SIBs enable public entities to pay for services based on the achievement of specified outcomes, encouraging innovative solutions and accountability in addressing social challenges.

4. Innovative Crowdfunding Initiatives:

- Encourage community-based crowdfunding efforts that allow local populations to invest in their own initiatives. This method can build community solidarity and ensure that projects reflect the priorities of the people they aim to serve.

5. Hybrid Funding Models:

- Explore hybrid funding models that combine grants, social enterprises, and other revenue-generating activities. This diversified funding approach increases resilience while enabling organizations to fund their operations sustainably.

6. Data-Driven Funding Decisions:

- Incorporate data analytics to inform funding decisions and impact assessments. By harnessing data, funders can identify effective initiatives and allocate resources where they are most likely to produce positive social change.

f. Novel and Transformative Approaches in Research

1. Participatory Action Research (PAR):

- Emphasise participatory action research methods that actively involve community members in all stages of the research process. This approach ensures that the voices and experiences of the communities being studied are central, leading to findings that genuinely reflect their needs and challenges.

2. Community-Based Research (CBR):

- Implement community-based research initiatives that prioritize local knowledge and expertise. By partnering with local organisations, researchers can co-create knowledge that is contextually relevant and actionable. This collaboration fosters trust and empowers communities to utilise research findings for advocacy and change.

3. Interdisciplinary Research Collaborations:

- Encourage interdisciplinary approaches that bring together diverse fields of study, such as sociology, environmental science, health, and economics. Collaborating across disciplines allows for a more holistic understanding of complex social issues and can yield innovative solutions that address multiple facets of a problem.

4. Use of Technology and Digital Tools:

- Leverage technology, such as mobile data collection apps, online surveys, and data visualisation tools, to enhance research efficiency and accessibility. Utilising technology can empower communities to participate in data collection and analysis, thereby increasing their engagement and ownership of the research process.

5. Longitudinal Studies:

- Conduct longitudinal studies that track changes over time. This approach helps researchers understand the long-term impact of interventions and policies, providing insights into effective strategies for capacity building and community empowerment.

6. Systems Thinking Approaches:

- Incorporate systems thinking to analyse complex social issues. By understanding the interconnections and interactions within systems, researchers can identify leverage points for effective interventions and design more sustainable solutions.

7. Actionable Knowledge and Policy Engagement:

- Focus on producing actionable knowledge that informs policy and practice. Researchers should engage with policymakers and practitioners throughout the research process to ensure that findings are relevant and can influence decision-making.

8. Ethical Research Practices:

- Uphold ethical research practices that prioritise consent, confidentiality, and community benefit. Establishing ethical guidelines ensures that research respects the rights and dignity of participants, fostering trust and cooperation.

9. Empowerment through Research Training:

- Equip community members with research skills through training programs. By empowering individuals to conduct their research, communities can generate knowledge that reflects their realities and advocate for their rights more effectively.

10. Feedback Loops and Continuous Engagement:

- Establish feedback loops where research findings are shared with the community for reflection and input. Continuous engagement allows communities to contribute to research narratives, ensuring that their perspectives are acknowledged and valued.

g. Sustainability Elements in Funding Models

1. Long-Term Investment Strategies:

- Adopt long-term funding strategies that focus on sustained impact rather than short-term gains. This includes providing multi-year funding commitments that allow organisations to plan and implement their initiatives more effectively.

2. Capacity Building for Financial Sustainability:

- Invest in capacity-building initiatives that equip organisations with skills in financial management, fundraising, and resource diversification. This training can help organisations develop robust financial strategies to ensure their sustainability.

3. Integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Criteria:

- Funding structures can integrate ESG criteria to promote practices that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsible, and economically viable. Emphasising ESG considerations ensures that funded initiatives have a long-term positive impact on communities and the environment.

4. Partnerships with Private Sector and Philanthropy:

- Foster partnerships with the private sector and philanthropic organisations to create shared value and sustainable investment opportunities. Collaborations can leverage corporate resources and expertise while addressing community needs.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation for Continuous Improvement:

- Establish robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks that not only assess impact but also support continuous improvements in funded initiatives. This feedback loop enables organisations to adapt and refine their approaches for greater effectiveness and sustainability.

6. Community Ownership and Engagement:

- Ensure that communities own and are actively engaged in their initiatives. Empowering local populations to take charge of projects can enhance sustainability, as community members are more likely to invest in and sustain initiatives they feel connected to.

7. Scalability and Replicability:

- Focus on funding models that promote scalability and replicability of successful initiatives. By identifying and supporting practices that can be adapted to different contexts, funders can extend the impact of their investments beyond initial projects.

h. Sustainability Elements in Research

1. Long-Term Impact Assessment:

- Incorporating mechanisms to assess the long-term impact of research findings is crucial. Researchers should track not only immediate outcomes but also the sustained effects of their work on communities, ensuring that interventions lead to lasting change.

2. Community Involvement and Ownership:

- Engaging communities in the research process fosters a sense of ownership over the findings and the implications for their lives. This involvement ensures that research is relevant to the community's needs and that the benefits of the research are preserved beyond the study's completion.

3. Capacity Building for Local Researchers:

- Providing training and skill development for local researchers and community members enriches the local research landscape and ensures that communities have the expertise to continue research activities in the future. This empowerment supports sustainable knowledge generation and advocacy.

4. Ethical Considerations:

- Sustaining ethical research practices is essential. This includes obtaining informed consent, respecting confidentiality, and ensuring that research benefits the participants involved. Upholding ethical standards establishes trust, enabling ongoing collaboration with communities.

5. Integrating Local Knowledge:

- Acknowledging and integrating local knowledge into research processes enhances relevance and sustainability. By valuing indigenous and experiential knowledge, researchers can develop culturally appropriate interventions that are more likely to be accepted and sustained by local populations.

6. Interdisciplinary Approaches:

- Encouraging interdisciplinary research can lead to more holistic solutions to complex problems. By drawing from multiple fields—such as health, education, and environmental science—research can address broader social issues sustainably.

7. Adaptive Research Design:

- Employing adaptive research designs allows for flexibility in response to changing contexts and community feedback. This approach enables researchers to modify their methods and objectives based on ongoing insights, thus ensuring the research remains relevant and impactful.

8. Collaboration and Partnerships:

- Building partnerships with local organisations, government agencies, and other stakeholders can enhance the sustainability of research. Collaborative efforts can ensure that research findings are effectively communicated to decision-makers and integrated into policy and practice.

9. Funding for Long-Term Initiatives:

- Securing funding that supports long-term research initiatives is essential for sustainability. Stability in funding allows for ongoing data collection, evaluation, and the ability to implement follow-up studies that measure the enduring impact of interventions.

10. Dissemination and Knowledge Sharing:

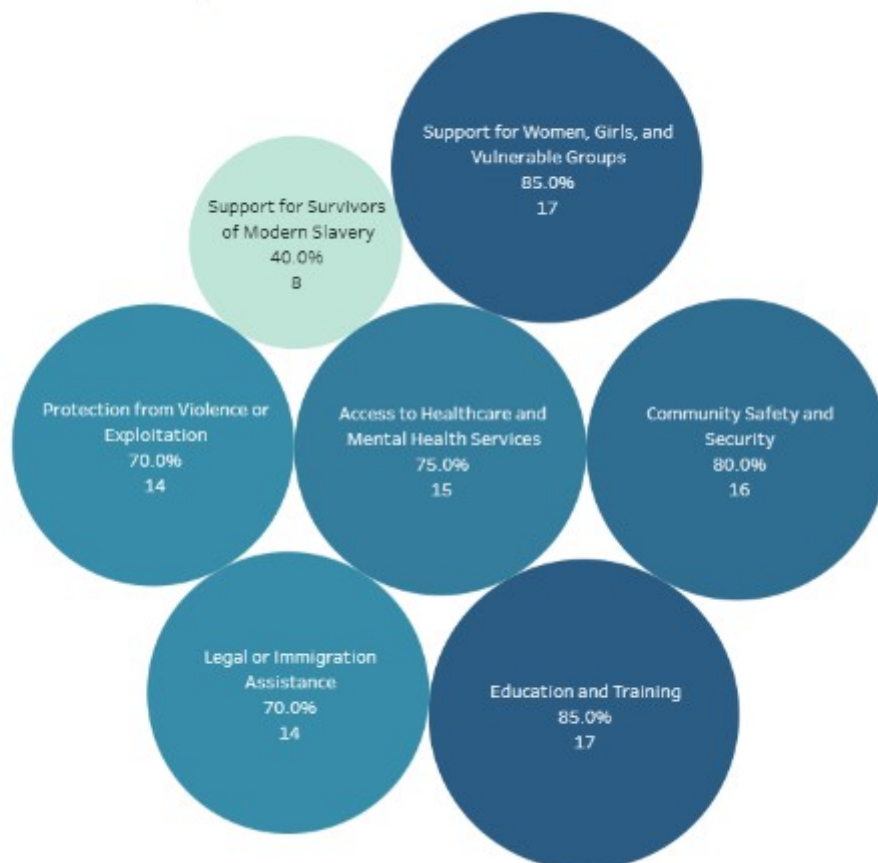
- Developing strategies for effective dissemination of research findings ensures that knowledge is shared with a broader audience, including policymakers, practitioners, and community members. Open-access publications, community workshops, and other outreach methods enhance visibility and implementation of research outcomes.

Data and Analysis

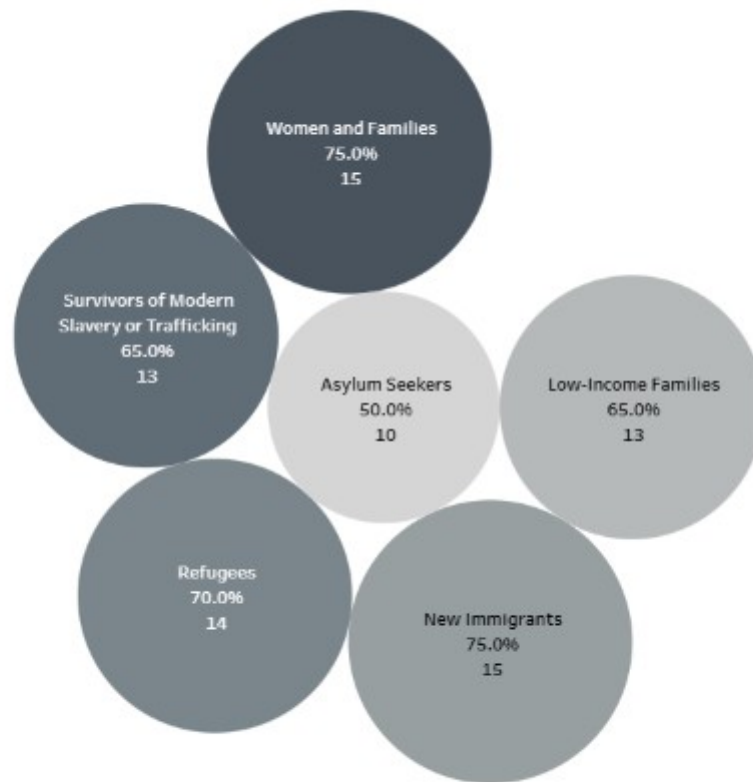
Civil Society Organization

Organization Review

Main Needs and Challenges

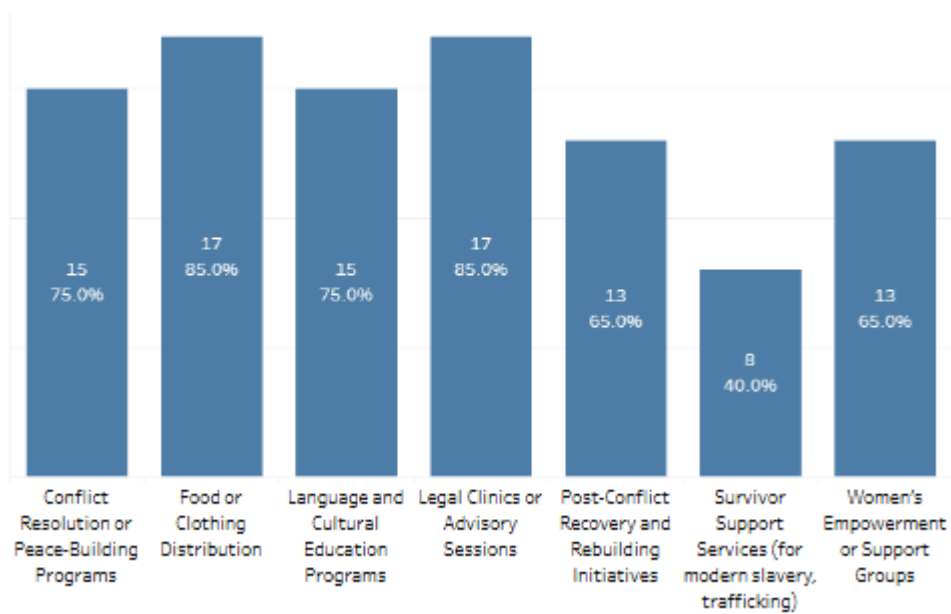


Primary Groups



Community Initiatives and Efforts

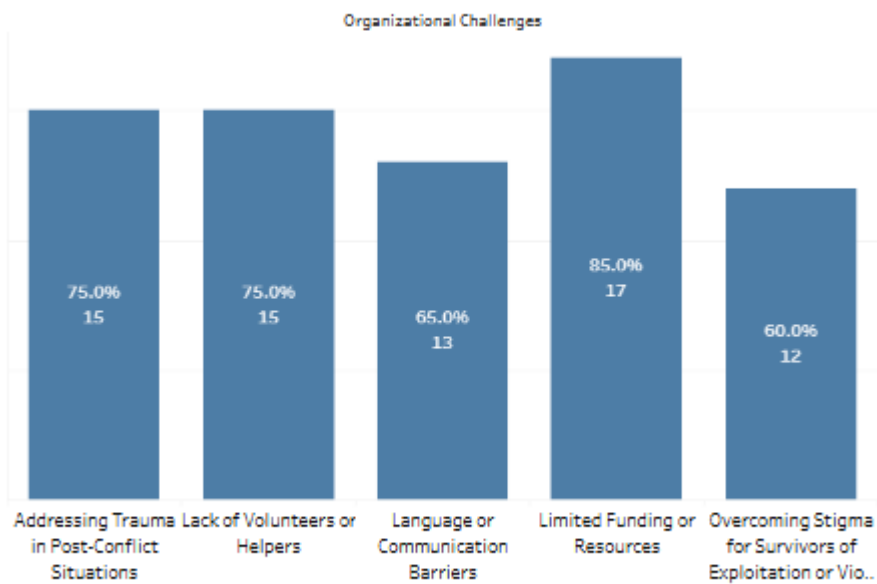
Types of Activities



Identifying Priorities

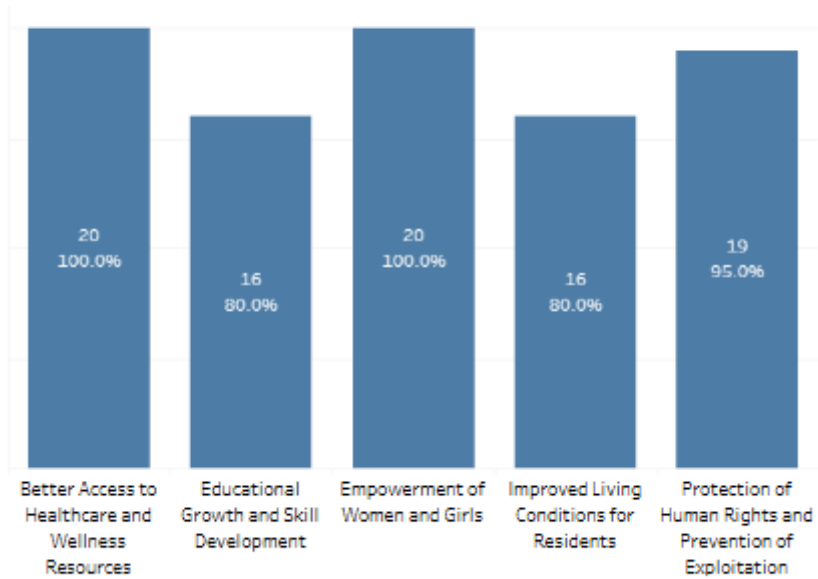


Organizational Challenges



Community Impact and Goals

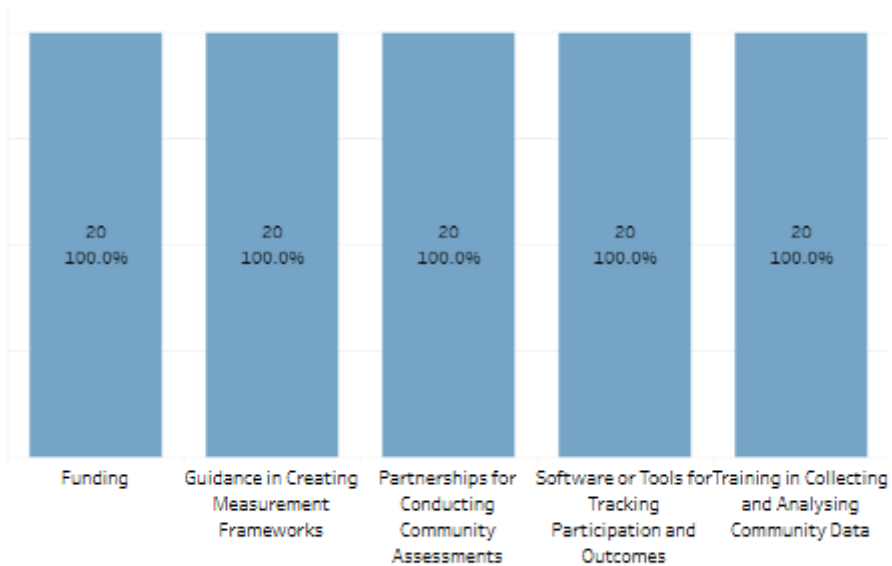
Organization Goals



Success Measure

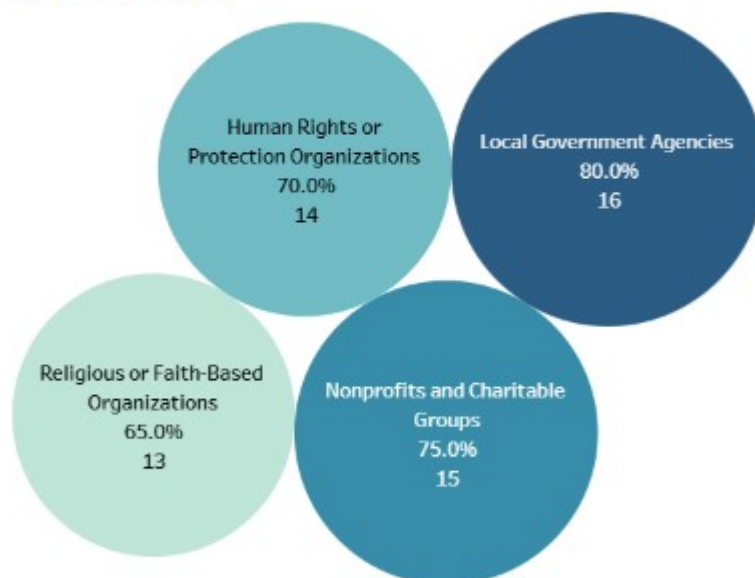
Empowerment Outcomes for Women and Girls	100.0%	20
Feedback from Community Members	100.0%	20
Improvement in Living Standards	100.0%	20
Participation Numbers in Activities or Events	100.0%	20
Reduction in Exploitation or Incidents of Violence	100.0%	20

Resources for Impact Assessment



Partnership and Collaboration

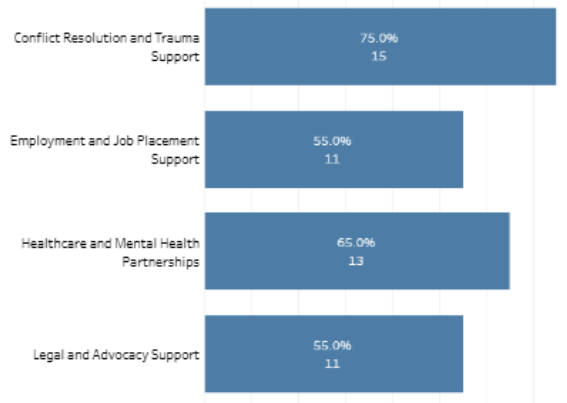
Existing Partnership



Partnership Challenges

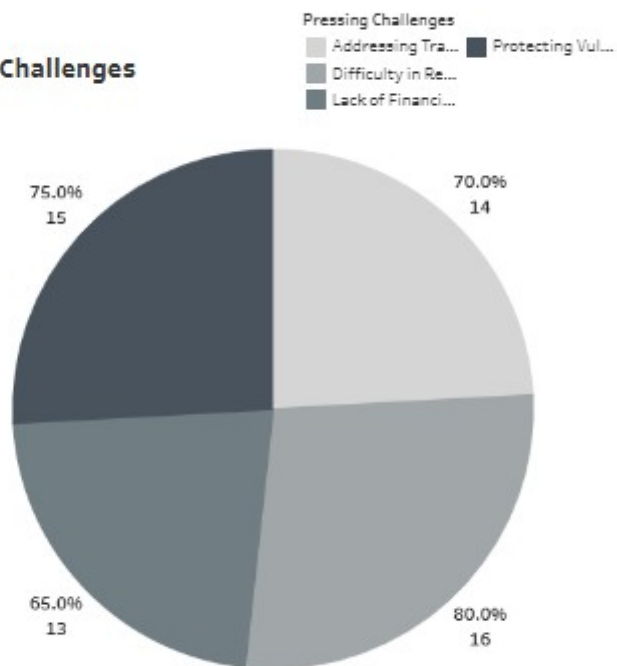


Desired Partnership

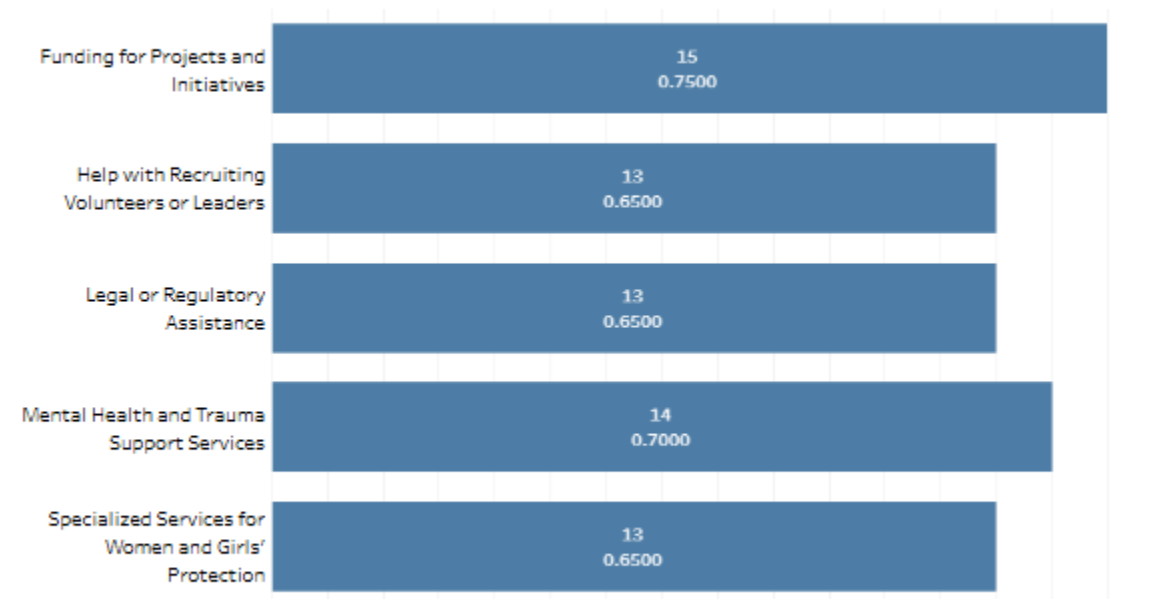


Partnership and Collaboration

Pressing Challenges

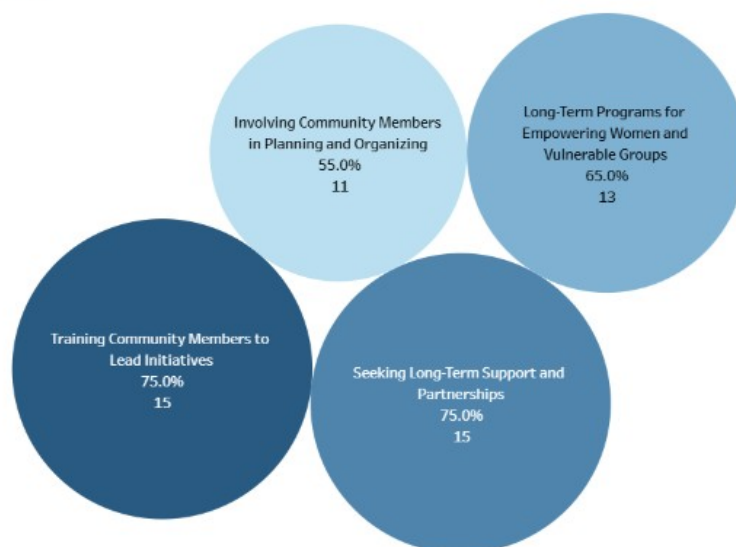


Support Needs



Sustainability and Innovation

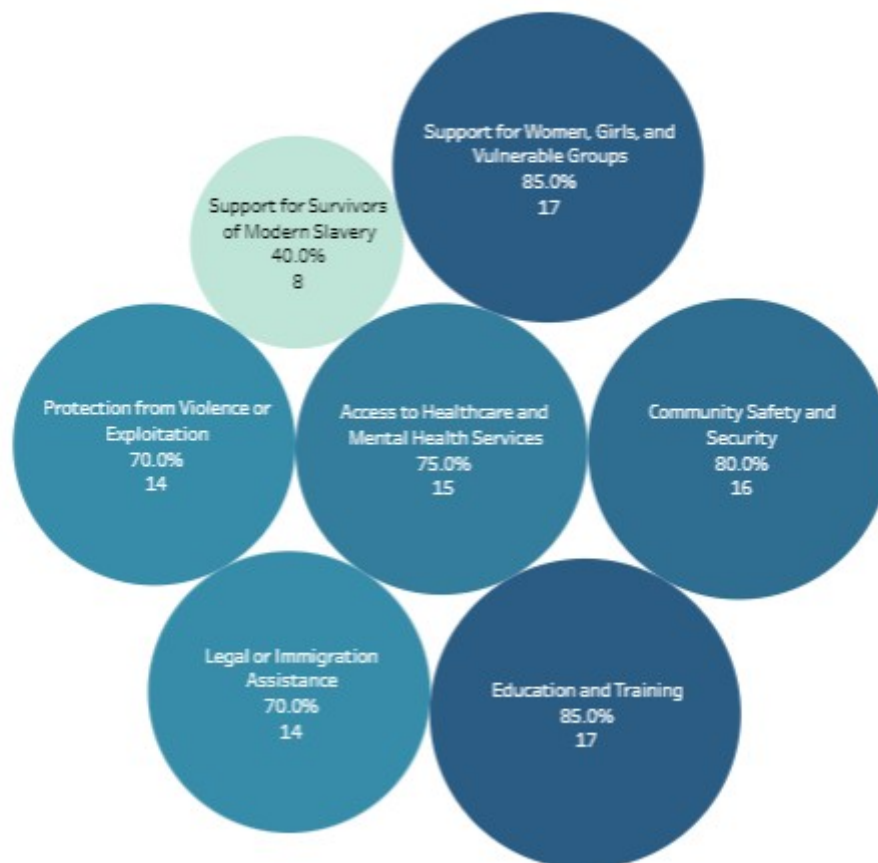
Sustainability Practices



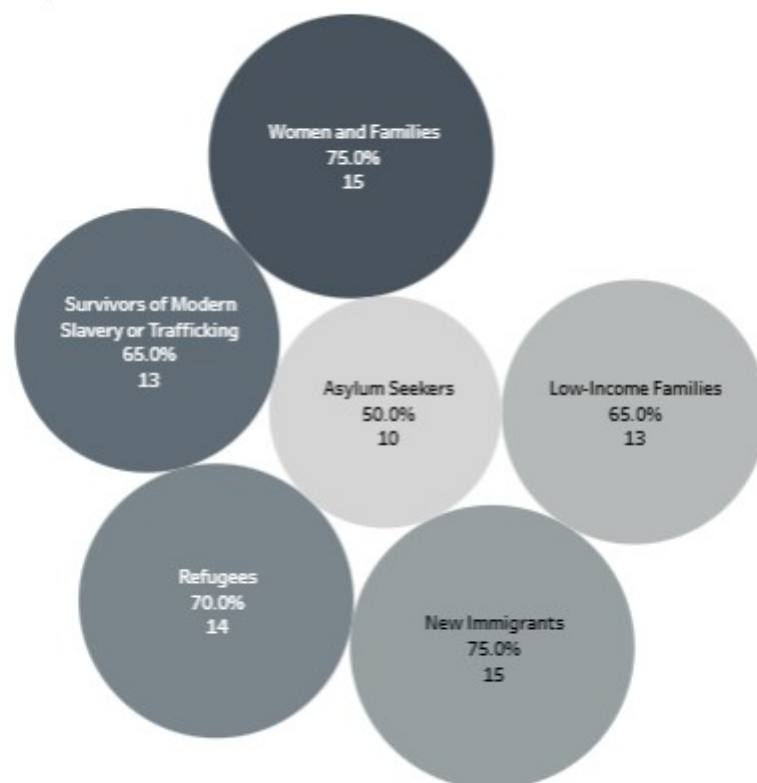
Community

Community Overview

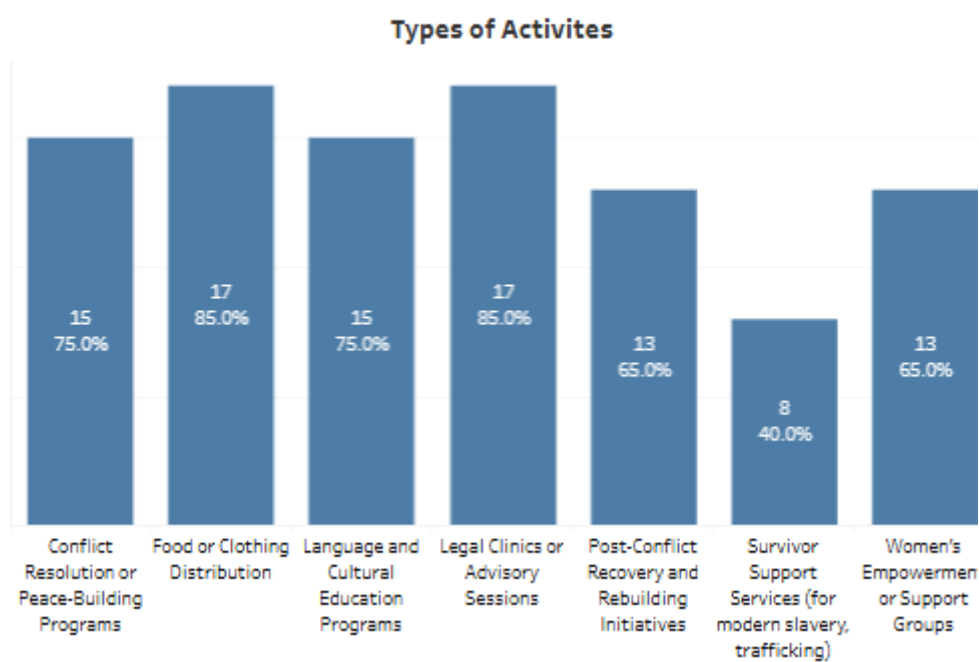
Main Needs and Challenges



Primary Groups



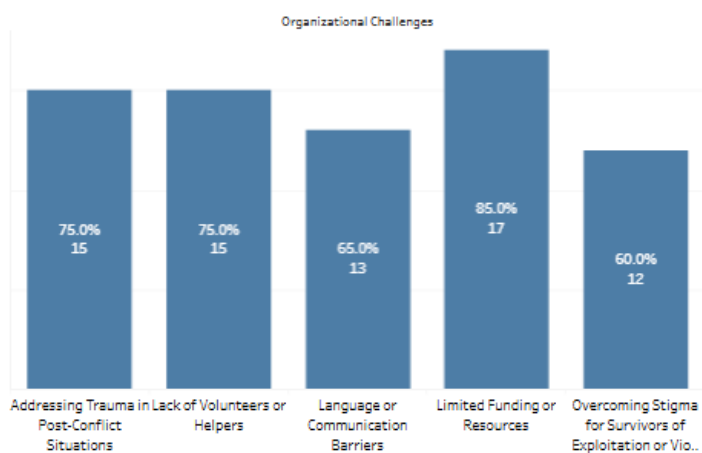
Community Initiatives and Efforts



Identifying Priorities

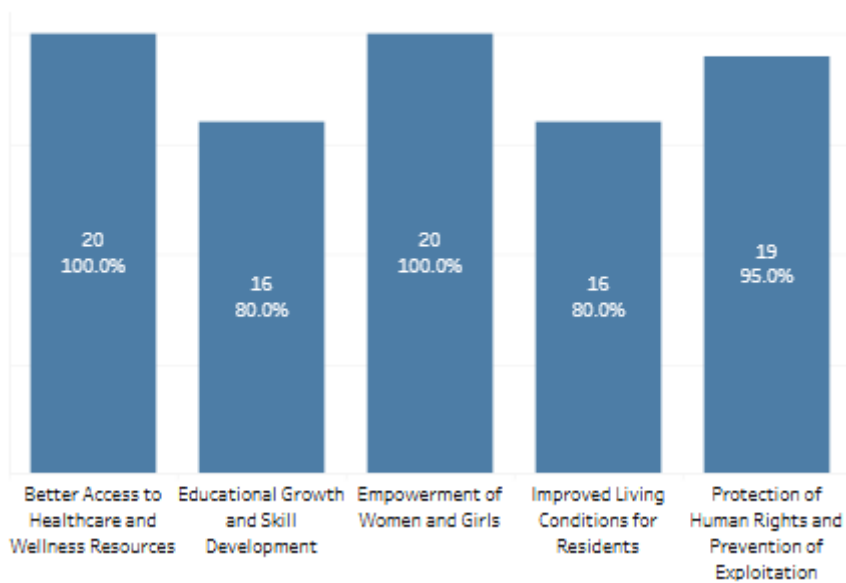


Organizational Challenges



Community Impact and Goals

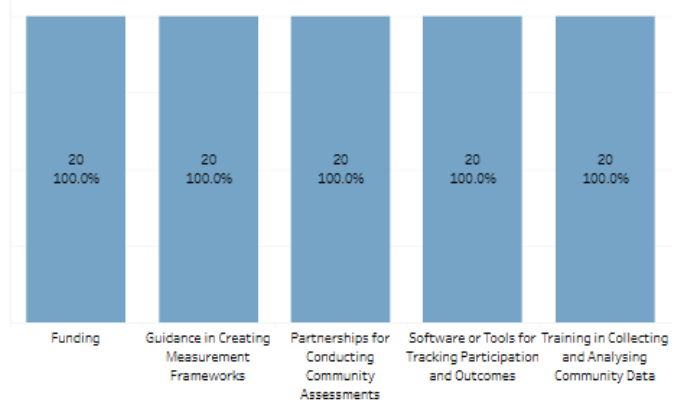
Organization Goals



Success Measure

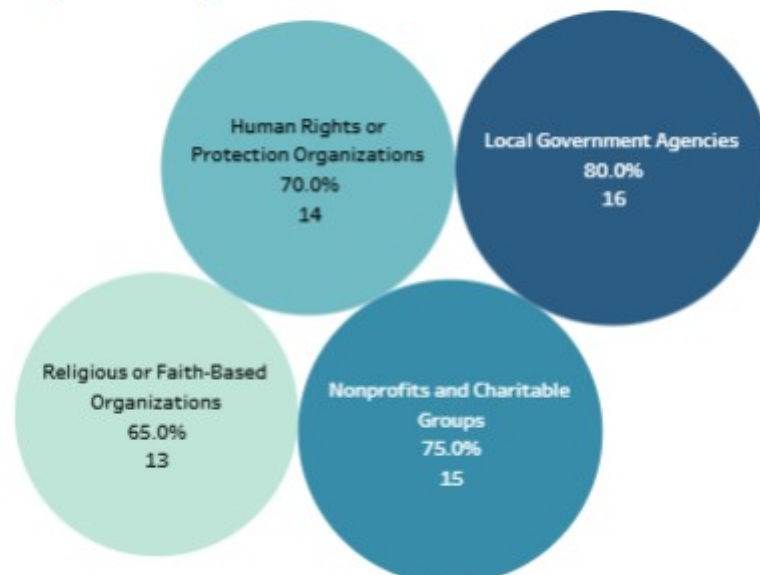
Empowerment Outcomes for Women and Girls	100.0%	20
Feedback from Community Members	100.0%	20
Improvement in Living Standards	100.0%	20
Participation Numbers in Activities or Events	100.0%	20
Reduction in Exploitation or Incidents of Violence	100.0%	20

Resources for Impact Assessment

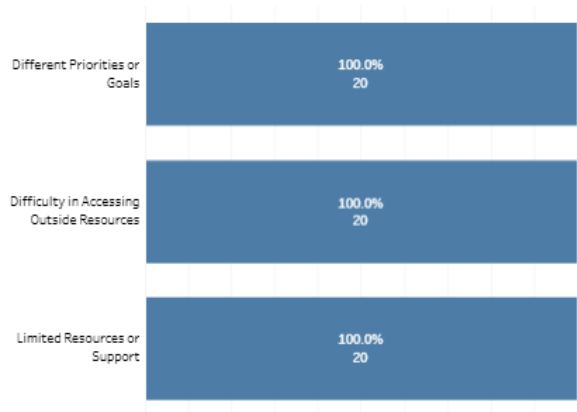


Partnership and Collaboration

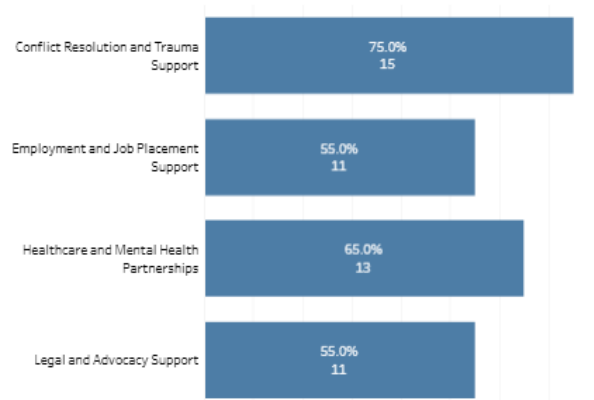
Existing Partnership



Partnership Challenges

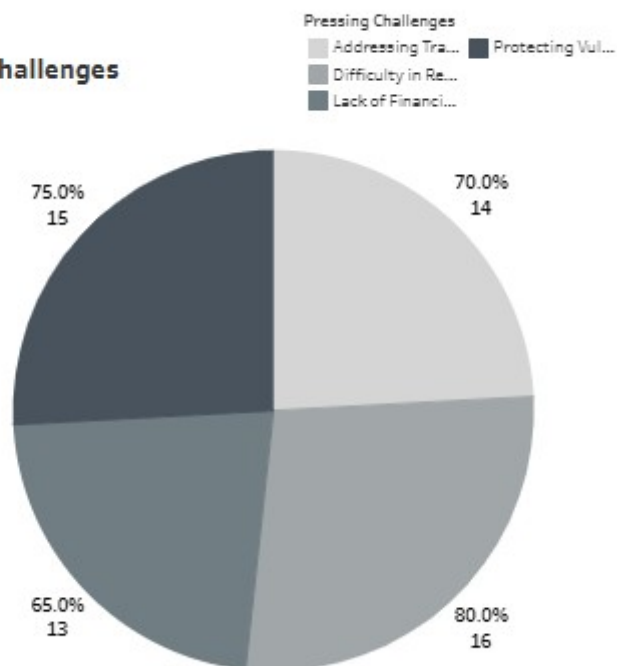


Desired Partnership

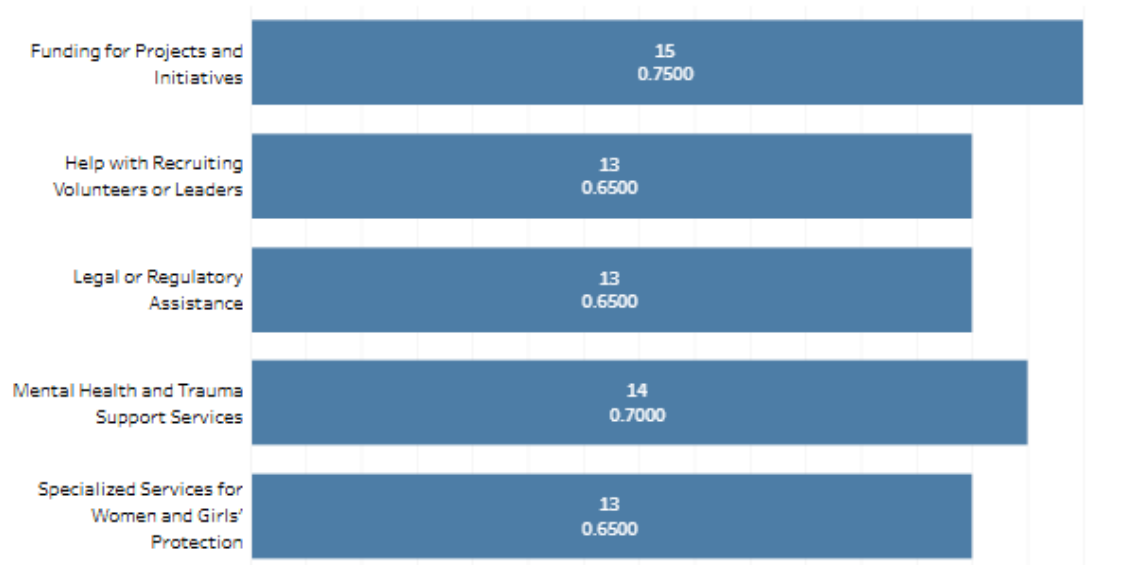


Partnership and Collaboration

Pressing Challenges

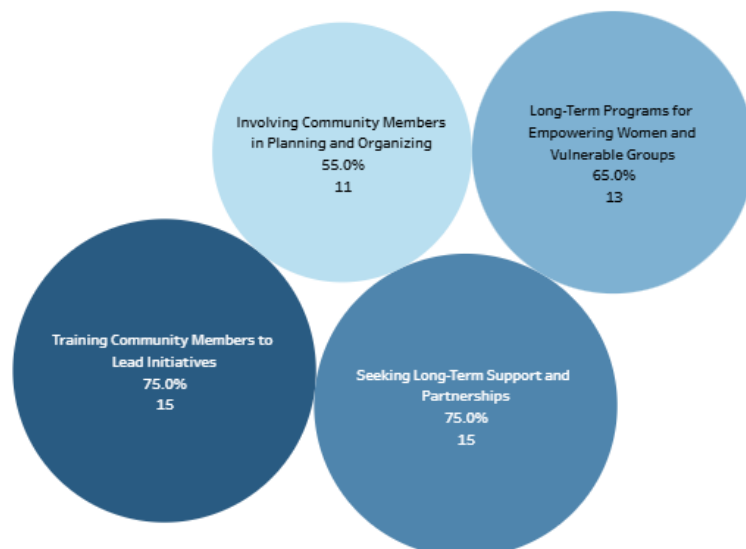


Support Needs



Sustainability and Innovation

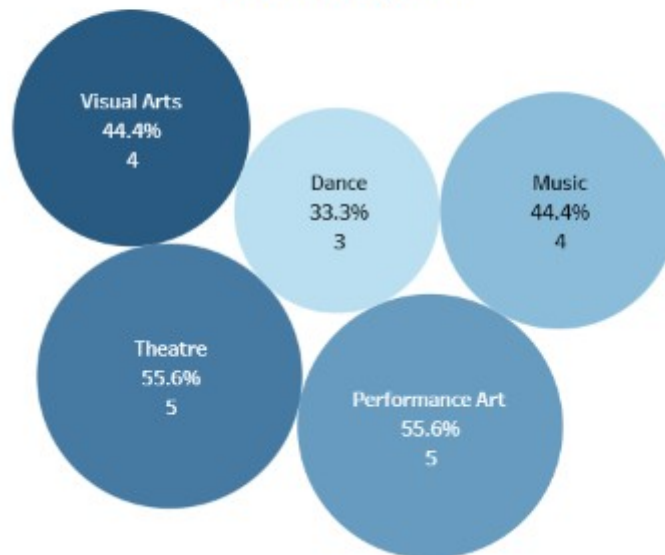
Sustainability Practices



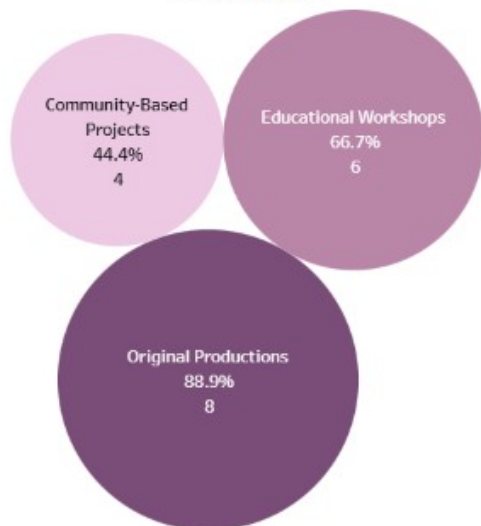
Creative

Organization Overview

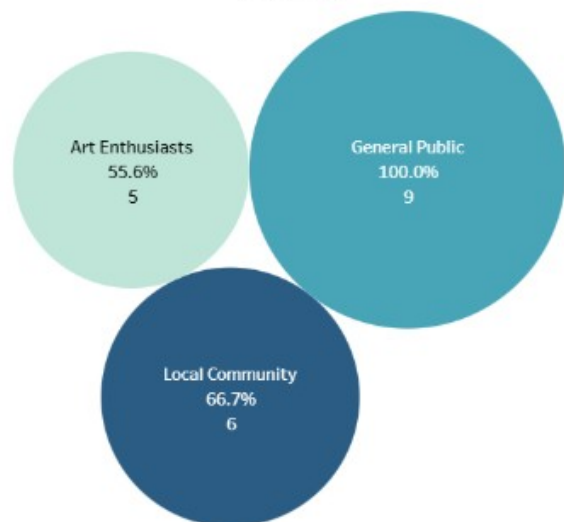
Artistic Disciplines



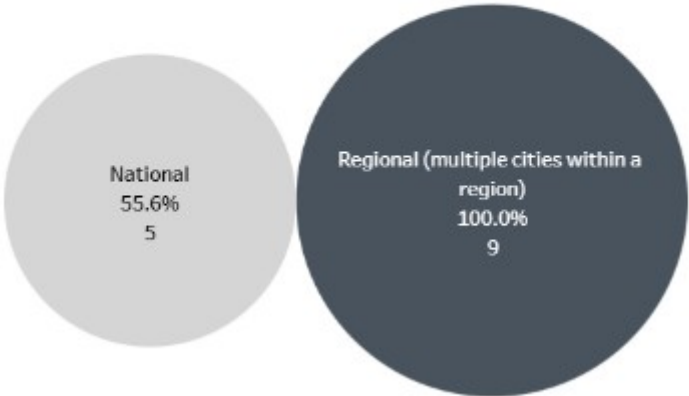
Project Types



Audience

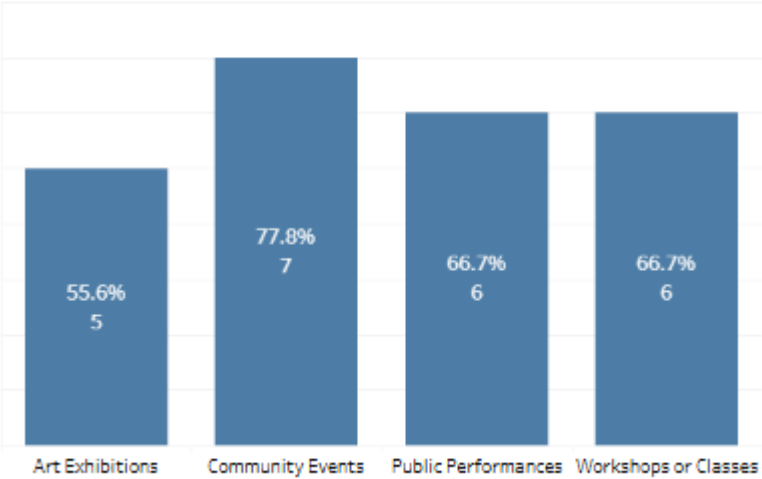


Geographical Reach

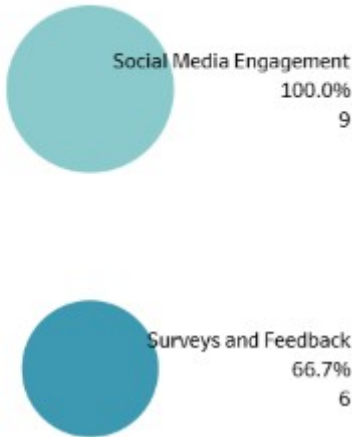


Artistic Programs, Engagement, and Core Themes

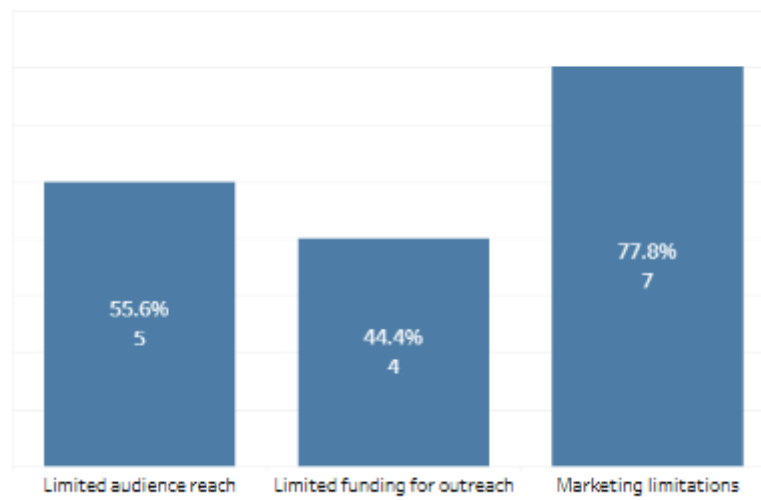
Audience Engagement Methods



Audience Needs Assessment

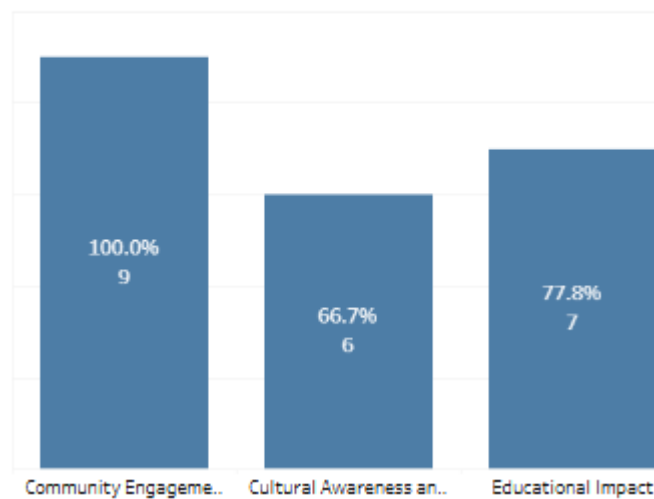


Challenges in Audience Engagement

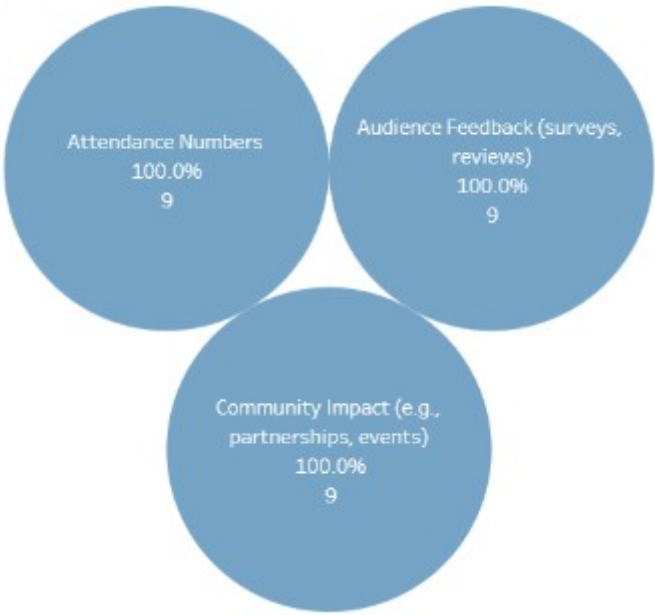


Impact and Outcomes

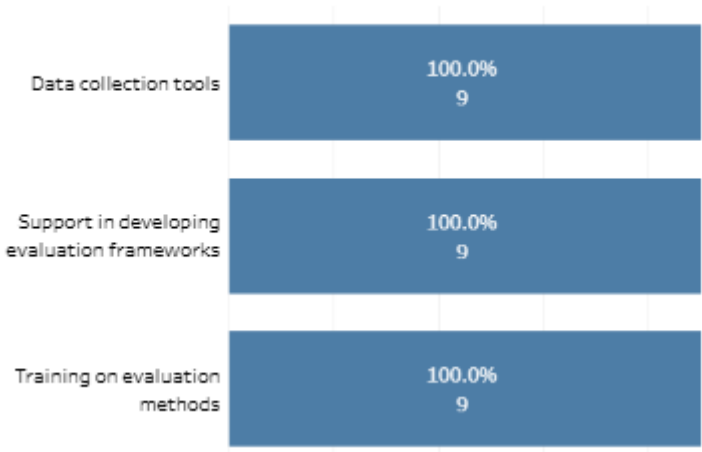
Outcomes



Success Measures

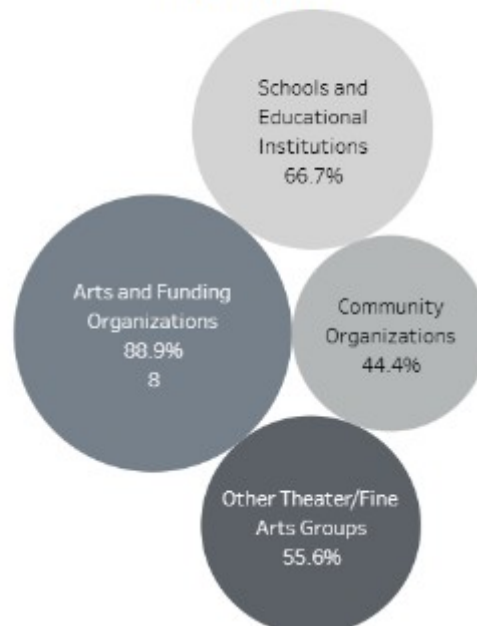


Resources for Improvement

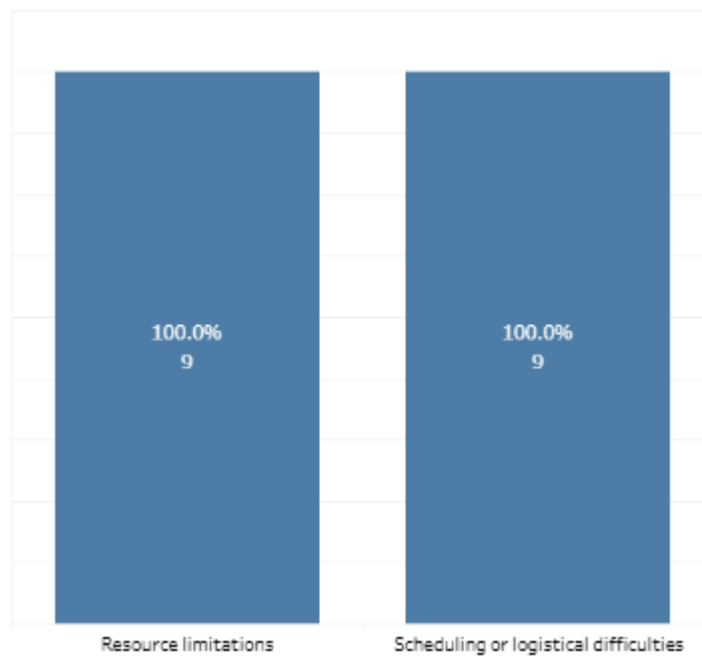


Partnerships and Collaboration

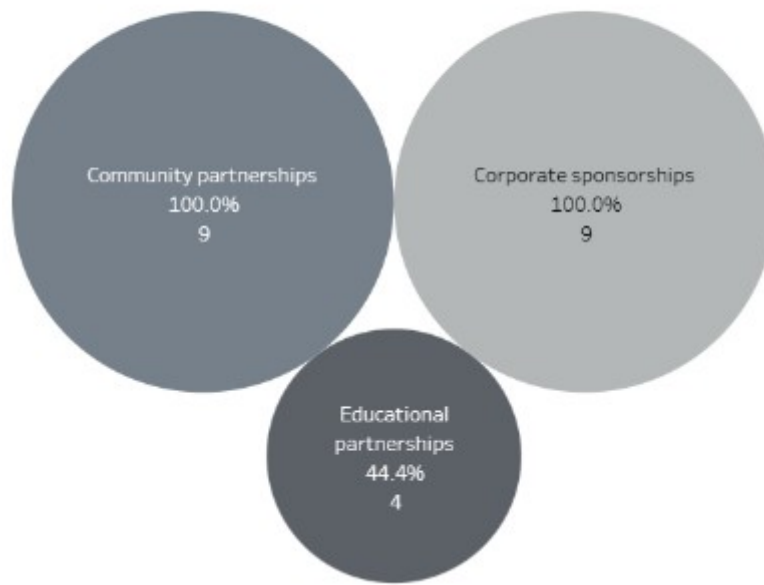
Key Partners



Challenges in Partnerships

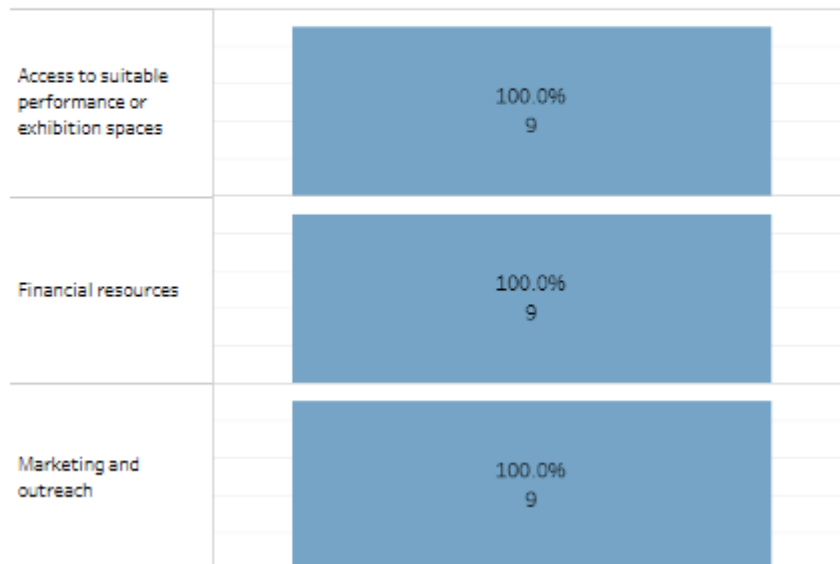


Desired Partnerships

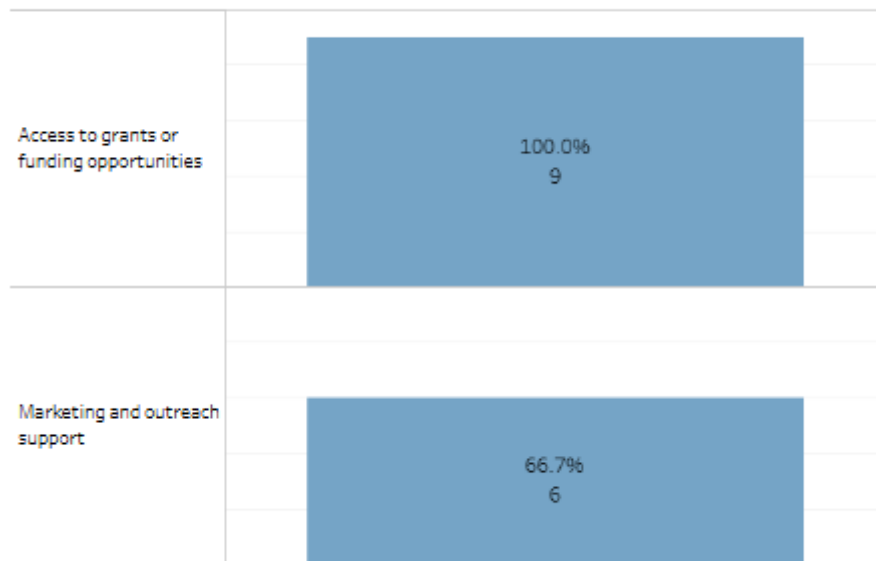


Operational and Funding Challenges

Primary Challenges

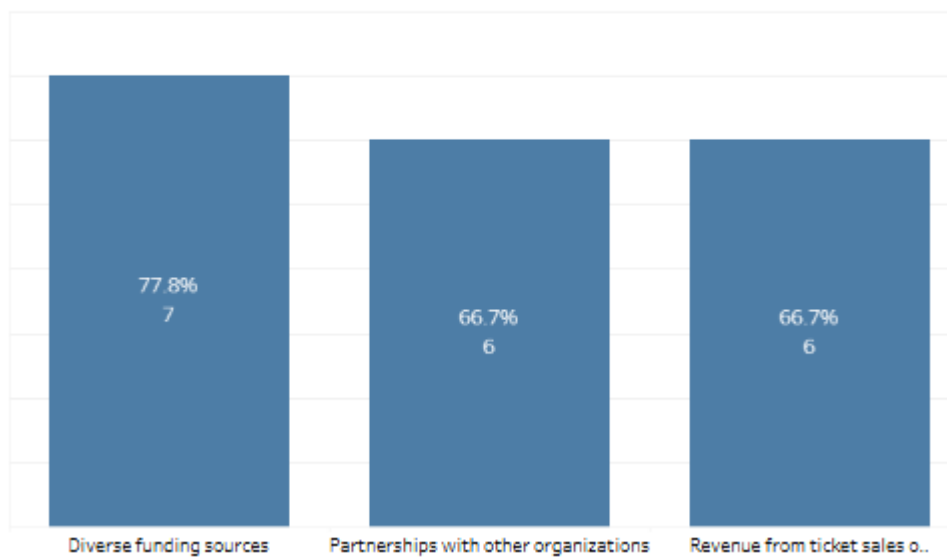


Support Needs



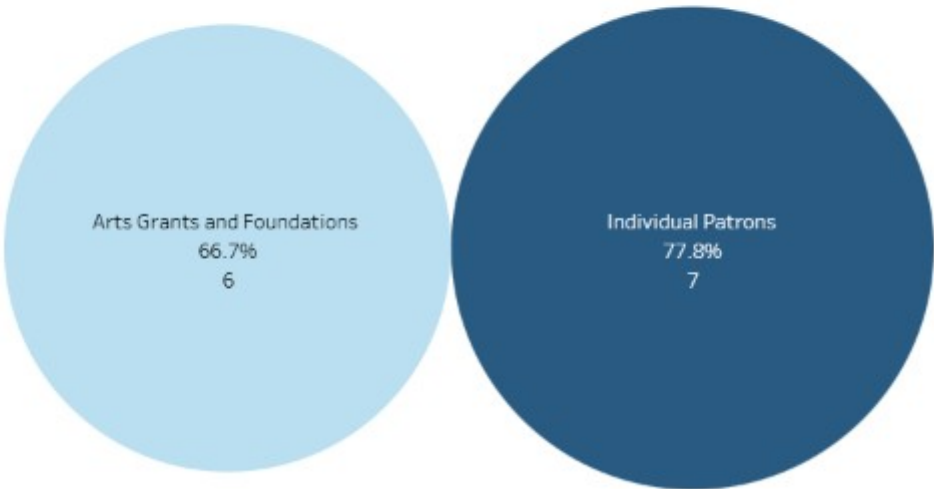
Innovation and Sustainability Approaches

Sustainability Practices

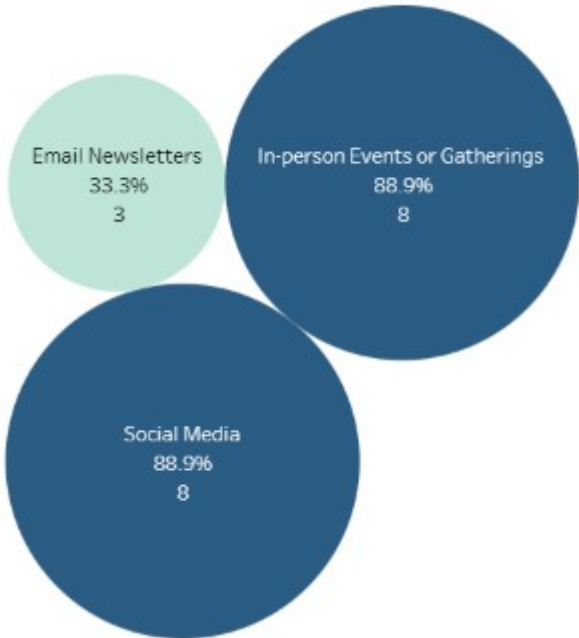


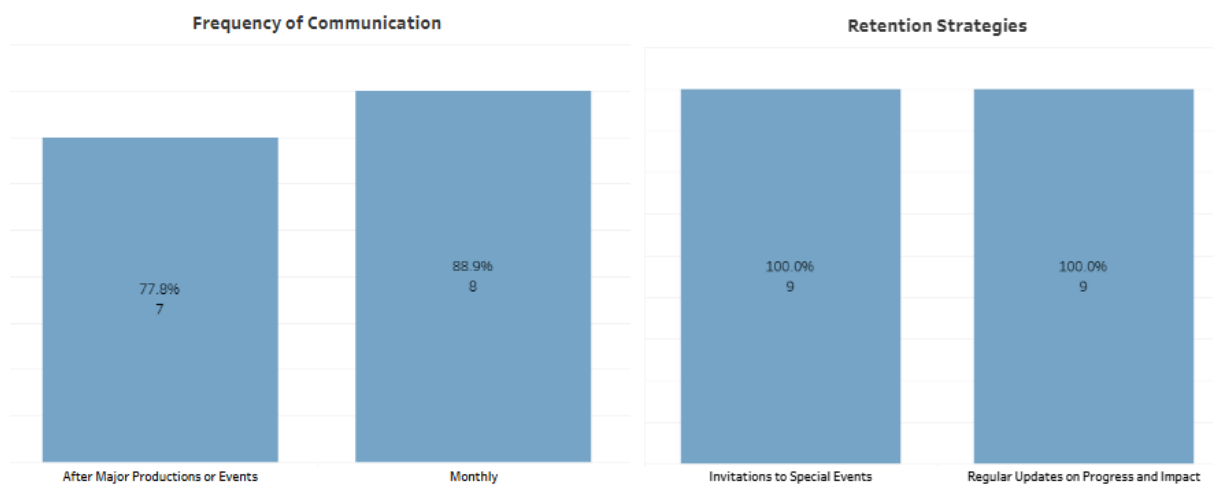
Donor and Audience Engagement

Supporters and Donors



Communication with Supporters





Conclusion

The crises of conflict, climate change, and gender inequality are deeply intertwined, each exacerbating the vulnerabilities of marginalised communities. For example, climate-induced resource scarcity can fuel conflict, while conflict and displacement disproportionately affect women and girls, exposing them to violence, exploitation, and limited access to resources. Similarly, gender inequality often intersects with environmental degradation, as women and girls are more likely to bear the burden of resource mismanagement and climate-induced displacement.

Addressing these interconnected challenges requires a holistic, intersectional approach that recognises the overlapping systems of discrimination and vulnerability. An intersectional lens allows us to understand how factors such as gender, race, class, and migration status intersect to create unique experiences of oppression and marginalisation. By adopting this approach, stakeholders can design interventions that are inclusive, equitable, and effective.

Central to this approach is the prioritisation of marginalised voices. Women, girls, refugees, migrant workers, indigenous communities, and LGBTQ+ individuals are often excluded from decision-making processes, despite being disproportionately affected by conflict, climate change, and inequality. Ensuring that these communities have a seat at the table is essential for creating policies and programs that address their specific needs and realities.

Collaboration is key to addressing systemic challenges and driving sustainable change. By building partnerships between civil society organisations (CSOs), academics, policymakers, and the private sector, stakeholders can pool resources, share expertise, and amplify their impact.

Creative advocacy tools, such as art, storytelling, and community-led initiatives, are powerful means of raising awareness, challenging dominant narratives, and fostering solidarity. These tools can engage the public, shift perceptions, and drive systemic change.

The findings and recommendations from this report, as well as the insights from the SASA Malaysia workshop, provide a roadmap for action. This roadmap calls on stakeholders to:

1. **Strengthen Collaboration:** Build partnerships that amplify impact and drive systemic change.
2. **Advocate for Policy and Legal Reforms:** Push for the ratification of international conventions and the development of inclusive policies.
3. **Implement Flexible and Participatory Funding Models:** Ensure that funding aligns with local priorities and adapts to changing contexts.

4. Prioritise Local Knowledge and Community-Led Initiatives: Empower marginalised communities to take leadership roles in advocacy and decision-making.
5. Promote Creative Advocacy: Use art, storytelling, and other creative tools to raise awareness and challenge dominant narratives.

While we were able to discuss and debate difficult, challenging and politically sensitive issues at the workshop to ensure partners from the Global North and Global South can foster mutually beneficial relationships, where we share power, resources & accountability, we also explored the meaning of the term “equitable partnerships” and how it must expand to include the honouring of trust established by Global South partners with communities on the ground during subsequent meetings in London. We emphasised the de-colonising of knowledge, where indigenous knowledge must be legitimised as crucial in policy making.

Building trust, negotiating trust and ensuring transparency are crucial and yet challenging when we work on research collaborations with the global North. So, it is crucial that these issues are being discussed and debated openly.

Global research is shifting towards more equitable partnerships, albeit with small steps. And we are glad to join hands with our colleagues from Brazil in this journey.

Glossary (photo gallery)

