# 2020 CSO Annual Survey on WPHF Global Community of Practice Activities

**Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund**
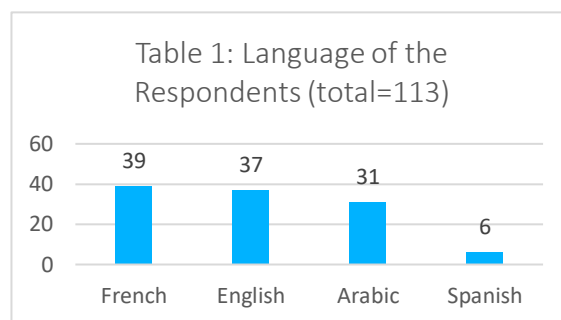A United Nations & Civil Society Partnership

## Background

In fulfillment of its mandate to serve as a global knowledge center for local women's civil society organizations (CSOs) working on the front lines of conflict and crises, the WPHF Secretariat led in 2020 the design and launch of a Global Community of Practice fostering a collaborative online space for its CSO grantee partners. Developed in pro-bono partnership with Dell Technologies, the WPHF Global Community of Practice (CoP) enables 214 local women peacebuilders and humanitarian activists from around the world to connect with each other, strengthen their networks, share information and best practices, and deepen their skills and capacity. The WPHF CoP constitutes the WPHF Community (WPHF-C) Digital Platform and the WPHF Capacity Building and Peer Exchange Programmes.

In 2020, nine virtual Capacity Building Webinars[1], and two live WPHF-C Help Desks, have deepened the institutional capacities and offered learning opportunities to 190 participants[2]. In addition, 53 participants of 41 CSOs[3] have been mobilized through three Peer Exchange Sessions[4] and one Knowledge Café[5]. According to the post-Capacity Building webinars' surveys, 82% of the respondents[6] found the webinars useful and relevant for their work. According to the post-Peer Exchanges' surveys, 77,8% of the respondents[7] declared they were able to learn from the good practices exposed in the Peer Exchanges and to share their own experience. The CSO Annual Survey aimed at providing an opportunity for a broader assessment of the CoP in addition to the data already collected after each event.

## Objective and Methodology

In December 2020, an online survey was realized among WPHF grantees to evaluate the delivery, accessibility and effectiveness of the CoP's training and information exchange activities. The survey was conducted in Arabic, English, French and Spanish with the aim to assess WPHF grantees' experience with the tools and initiatives of the CoP. The survey also intended to collect inputs and ideas to adapt the CoP tools and activities to the grantees' training needs, expectations and knowledge exchange priorities.

**Table 1: Language of the Respondents (total=113)**

| Language | Number |
| --- | --- |
| French | 39 |
| English | 37 |
| Arabic | 31 |
| Spanish | 6 |

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[1] The Capacity Building Webinars -in English and French- covered the following topics: WPHF Community & Capacity Building Programme; WPHF & you: An Overview of the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and Your Critical Role; Results Frameworks, Indicators and Methods; Organizational Strategic Planning: Learning from Practice; Qualitative Methods and Approaches for Data Collection; Tools and Tips to mobilize Resources for Your Organizations.

[2] Does not represent the unique number of CSO grantees, but participants that may have participated in multiple sessions.

[3] Does not represent the unique number of CSO grantees, but participants that may have participated in multiple sessions.

[4] The Peer Exchanges addressed the following topics: Enhancing Women's Leadership in Socio-Economic Recovery Efforts (19 November 2020), Protecting Rights and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (24 November 2020) and Supporting Women Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (10 December 2020).

[5] The Knowledge Café was dedicated to Gender and Food Security in the Context of Climate Change in Fiji (17 December 2020).

[6] 61 out of 74 people.
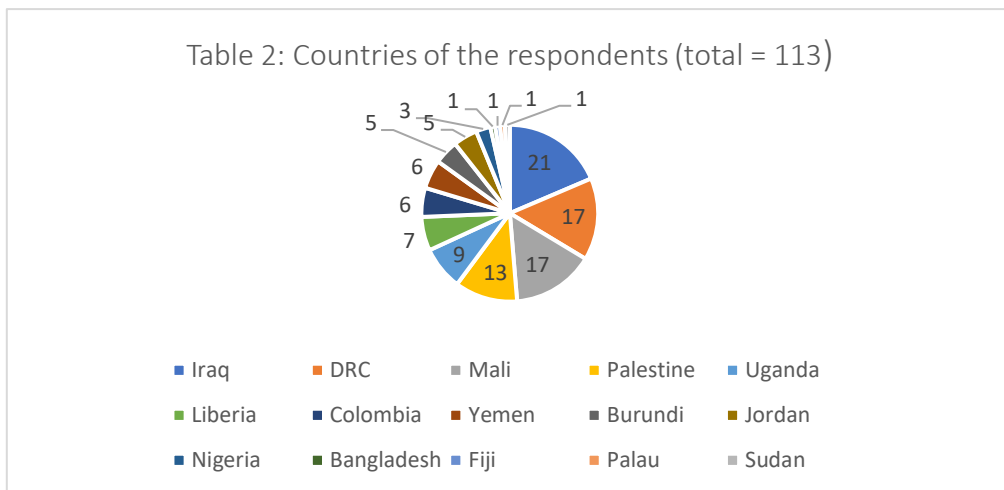
[7] 14 out of 18 people.

## Profile of Respondents

The survey has involved **113 respondents from 15 countries**: Bangladesh, Burundi, Colombia, the DRC, Fiji, Iraq, Jordan, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Palau, Palestine, Sudan, Uganda and Yemen.

Most respondents are from Africa (59) and the Arab States (45), which are the **geographic** areas where WPHF has supported more projects so far.

Nearly 88% of the respondents indicated that they are active grantees while 12% are former grantees (their WPHF-supported project has ended).

Among the active grantees 35% have been WPHF grantees for more than one year and 65% for less than one year.

Table 2: Countries of the respondents (total = 113)

Legend: Iraq, DRC, Mali, Palestine, Uganda, Liberia, Colombia, Yemen, Burundi, Jordan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Fiji, Palau, Sudan

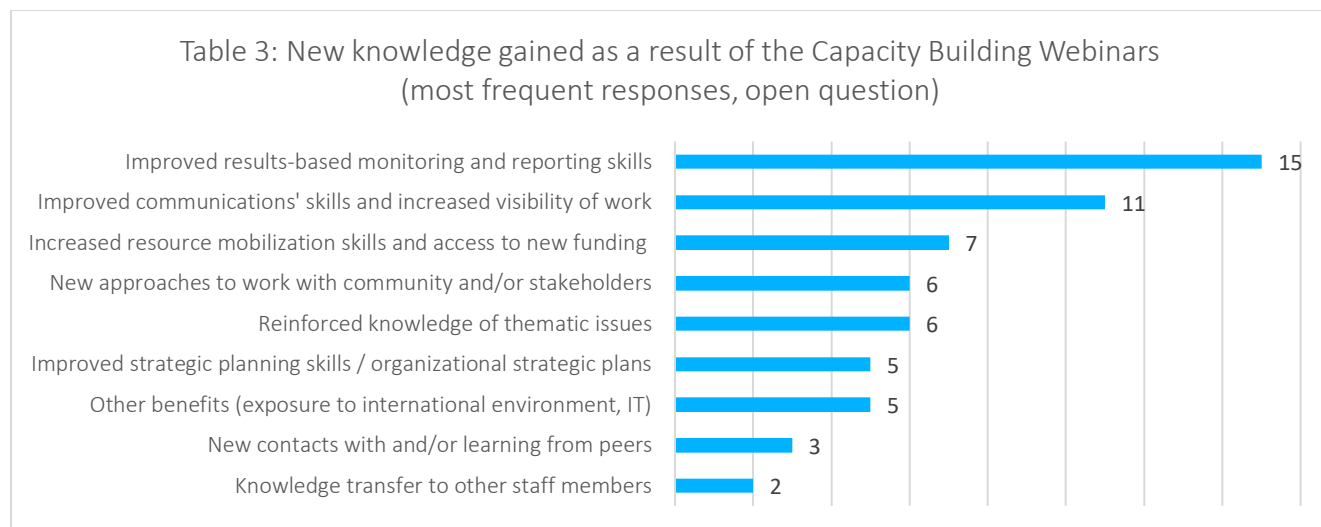Values: 21, 17, 17, 13, 9, 7, 6, 6, 5, 5, 3, 1, 1, 1, 1

## Findings

### Capacity Building and Peer Exchange Programmes

78 respondents (69% of the total) indicated they have participated in at least one Capacity Building Webinar and 55 respondents (48% of the total) have participated in at least one Peer Exchange session. 60% of those who attended at least one Capacity Building Webinar, or one Peer Exchange Session have reported using new knowledge and skills from these opportunities.

**Example of application of a new knowledge or skill, as a result of the Capacity Building Webinars**

Table 3: New knowledge gained as a result of the Capacity Building Webinars
(most frequent responses, open question)

| Category | Value |
|---|---|
| Improved results-based monitoring and reporting skills | 15 |
| Improved communications' skills and increased visibility of work | 11 |
| Increased resource mobilization skills and access to new funding | 7 |
| New approaches to work with community and/or stakeholders | 6 |
| Reinforced knowledge of thematic issues | 6 |
| Improved strategic planning skills / organizational strategic plans | 5 |
| Other benefits (exposure to international environment, IT) | 5 |
| New contacts with and/or learning from peers | 3 |
| Knowledge transfer to other staff members | 2 |

- Responses confirmed that the webinars have increased participants' skills in results-based monitoring and reporting (11 mentions), as well as project design (4 mentions).

- Seven respondents highlighted that the webinars have increased the visibility of their work and enhanced their communications skills. Four respondents have developed the ability to use the social media and connect remotely with their colleagues through using the Zoom platform.

- The third technical area most mentioned, by 7 respondents, is resource mobilization, with concrete examples of how several CSOs have accessed new funding thanks to the information provided in the webinars (see below "Testimonies").

- 5 respondents have acquired new approaches of strategic programming and used them to develop or review their strategic plans.

- The capacity building programme has inspired new approaches and strategies to reach the organizations' community and coordinate and negotiate with stakeholders in their regions (cited 6 times).

- 6 respondents have declared gaining new knowledge of technical issues such as the gender approach, and 5 respondents have benefitted of CSOs' contacts and of sharing with partners facing similar issues (insecurity in their country, COVID pandemic).

- 2 respondents underlined that they were able to transfer the knowledge gained to colleagues from their organization (management team and frontline workers).

- 3 respondents were not able to make the most of the webinars due to the language limitations which hindered their interactions with their peers.

> **What are you, or your organization, doing differently as a result of participating in the Capacity Building Webinars?**
>
> "I learnt that advertising my work on the social media helps the organization to grow and also to be known by other donors."
> "We have adopted the results-based management to help in monitoring project outcomes. We adopted the use of success stories to show evidence and impact."
> "We used the strategic planning webinar to help us prepare for the upcoming year and are using the knowledge to help build our new strategy for 2022-2024."
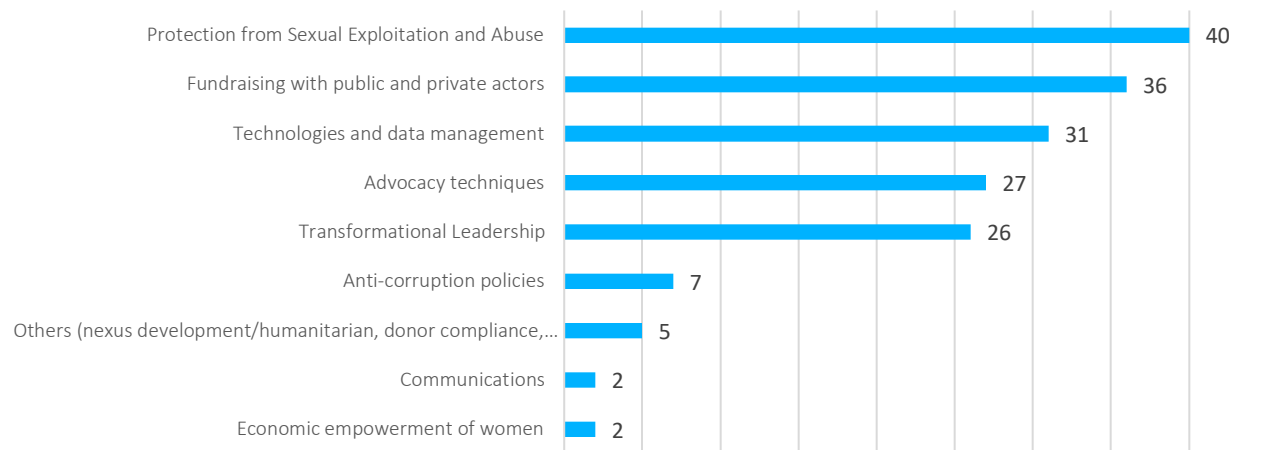> "Thanks to the webinars, we learned about other call for projects' websites that allow us to have many more project opportunities."
> "As a result of our participation in the webinars we have been able to properly structure our financial reporting, to research other grant opportunities and to share information about our organization's work with other organizations among WPHF partners with respect to women land rights."

### Priorities for future Capacity Building Webinars

- The respondents were asked to indicate their two top capacity building priorities for 2021 -without ranking them- among a list of topics. Overall, WPHF CSO partners have prioritized: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Fundraising (both with public and private actors), Technologies and Data management, Advocacy and Leadership. The WPHF Secretariat will build on the grantees' preferences to design future CoP training activities.
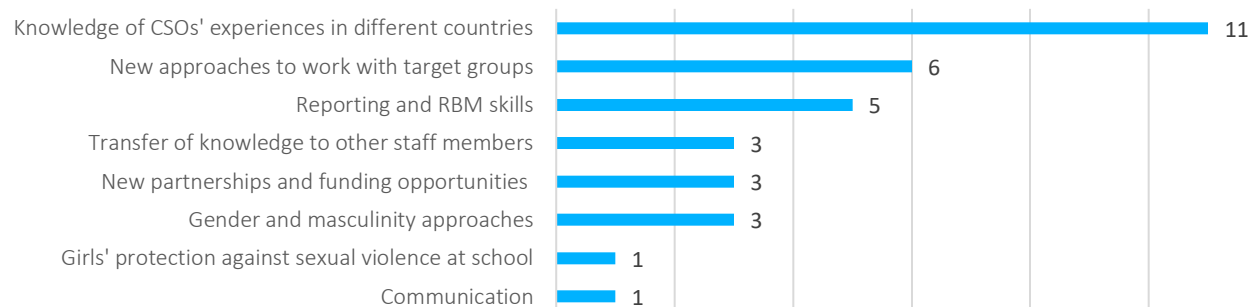
**Table 4: Priorities for future Capacity Building Webinars (Total = 176 = 88 respondents*2 priorities each, among a list of choices)**

| Priority | Count |
|---|---|
| Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse | 40 |
| Fundraising with public and private actors | 36 |
| Technologies and data management | 31 |
| Advocacy techniques | 27 |
| Transformational Leadership | 26 |
| Anti-corruption policies | 7 |
| Others (nexus development/humanitarian, donor compliance,… | 5 |
| Communications | 2 |
| Economic empowerment of women | 2 |

**Example of application of a new knowledge or the contacts gained through the Peer Exchange Sessions**

- The grantees have been exposed to their peers' experiences implemented in a broad range of countries and environments. They have discovered new methods and approaches to deal with refugees and IDPs, to mobilize the community and to establish income generation activities that can be incorporated into their work. 3 respondents have cited learning about new ways to engage with men and the use of gender disaggregated data.

- 5 respondents have mentioned increasing their reporting skills[8].

- 3 respondents have restituted the information shared during the Peer Exchanges to their colleagues.

- 3 respondents have established new partnerships and accessed funding opportunities.

- 7 respondents emphasized that they have not gained new knowledge or contact yet and 1 respondent noted that there was a problem with the translation during the session they attended.

**Table 5: New knowledge or contacts gained through the Peer Exchange Sessions (most frequent answers, open question)**

| Category | Count |
|---|---|
| Knowledge of CSOs' experiences in different countries | 11 |
| New approaches to work with target groups | 6 |
| Reporting and RBM skills | 5 |
| Transfer of knowledge to other staff members | 3 |
| New partnerships and funding opportunities | 3 |
| Gender and masculinity approaches | 3 |
| Girls' protection against sexual violence at school | 1 |
| Communication | 1 |

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[8] Some respondents may have mixed up with the Capacity Building Webinars as the Peer Exchange Sessions did not deal with RBM nor reporting issues.

**What are you, or your organization, doing differently as a result of participating in the Peer Exchanges?**

"We've developed more effective strategies for joint coordination with local government authorities and local traditional leaders in ending Violence Against Women and Girls in rural communities".

"We have slightly adapted our approach when it comes to working with governmental stakeholders, having participated in several webinars and listened to how other colleagues go about involving government actors."
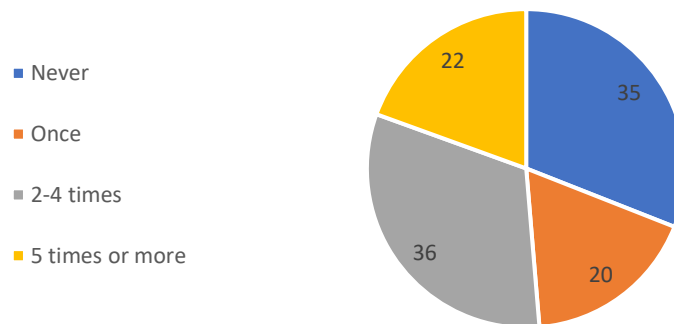
"We have used the knowledge on economic empowerment of women to review our work within the women groups we support by reaching out to members of the family, especially the husbands, for acceptance of the program and also support to their wives in the group."

"Post-conflict women's economic empowerment experiences were an important and pioneering one, which stimulated the capabilities of the organization's team to implement it in Iraq."

## WPHF Community Digital Platform (WPHF-C)

- In the last 12 months, 69% of the respondents[9] have accessed the WPHF-C Platform at least once, and 19,5% of them[10] have entered it more than 5 times.

- Half of the grantees who have accessed the Platform[11] have downloaded or consulted capacity building resources more than 2 times.

Table 6: How many times have you ever accessed the WPHF-C Digital Platform ? (total=113)



Legend:
- Never
- Once
- 2-4 times
- 5 times or more

(Never: 35, Once: 20, 2-4 times: 36, 5 times or more: 22)

- Regarding the grantees' motivations to visit the WPHF-C Platform[12], the first reason was to access information on WPSHA issues, followed by connecting and learning from peers.

- The willingness to access training materials and opportunities comes in third position, followed by identifying potential partners and disseminating achievements and updates on their actions.

- Asking support to the WPHF Secretariat about their project's implementation is another incentive to navigate the Platform.
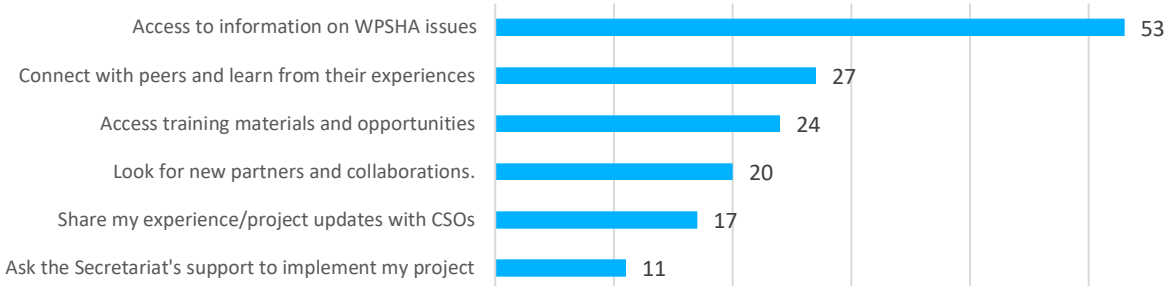
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[9] 78 out of 113 respondents.

[10] 22 out of 113 respondents.

[11] 40 out of 78 respondents.

[12] Each participant was asked to choose two main reasons - without ranking them.

**Table 7: Main reasons why you logged on the WPHF-C Platform (most frequent responses among a list of choices, 2 choices per respondent)**

| Reason | Count |
|---|---|
| Access to information on WPSHA issues | 53 |
| Connect with peers and learn from their experiences | 27 |
| Access training materials and opportunities | 24 |
| Look for new partners and collaborations. | 20 |
| Share my experience/project updates with CSOs | 17 |
| Ask the Secretariat's support to implement my project | 11 |

- **The WPHF-C Platform is first and foremost a source of information** which the grantees use to download resources on a variety of topics -humanitarian crisis management, COVID 19 and studies published during the pandemic, project design and writing, and resource mobilization. It is also a repository to keep updated on other CSOs' experiences, funding opportunities, and WPHF activities.

- Respondents are also using the Platform as a means to advertise their work and promote their organization's visibility (e.g., share videos, success stories etc.).

- 8 respondents who accessed the Platform have not yet used it nor applied it to their work and 2 respondents indicated a lack of knowledge of how to use the platform.

**Table 8: Example of how you have used the WPHF-C Platform in your own work or organization (most frequent answers, open question)**

| Use | Count |
|---|---|
| Download resources | 25 |
| Explore experiences / information about other CSOs | 8 |
| Sharing of organization's work | 8 |
| Funding opportunities | 7 |
| Communication channel | 6 |
| News / Activities from WPHF | 3 |

**How have you used the WPHF-C Digital Platform in your work or organization?**

"We use and share the materials with the organization employees."

"We used it to review data on internationally funded projects and learn from them."

"We conducted a session with our staff using the video *Tools and Tips for Resource Mobilization* and regularly access resources from the Women's Resilience to Disasters Hub[13]."

"We checked it to access to news and success stories in other regions and learn from what can be repeated in our circumstances."
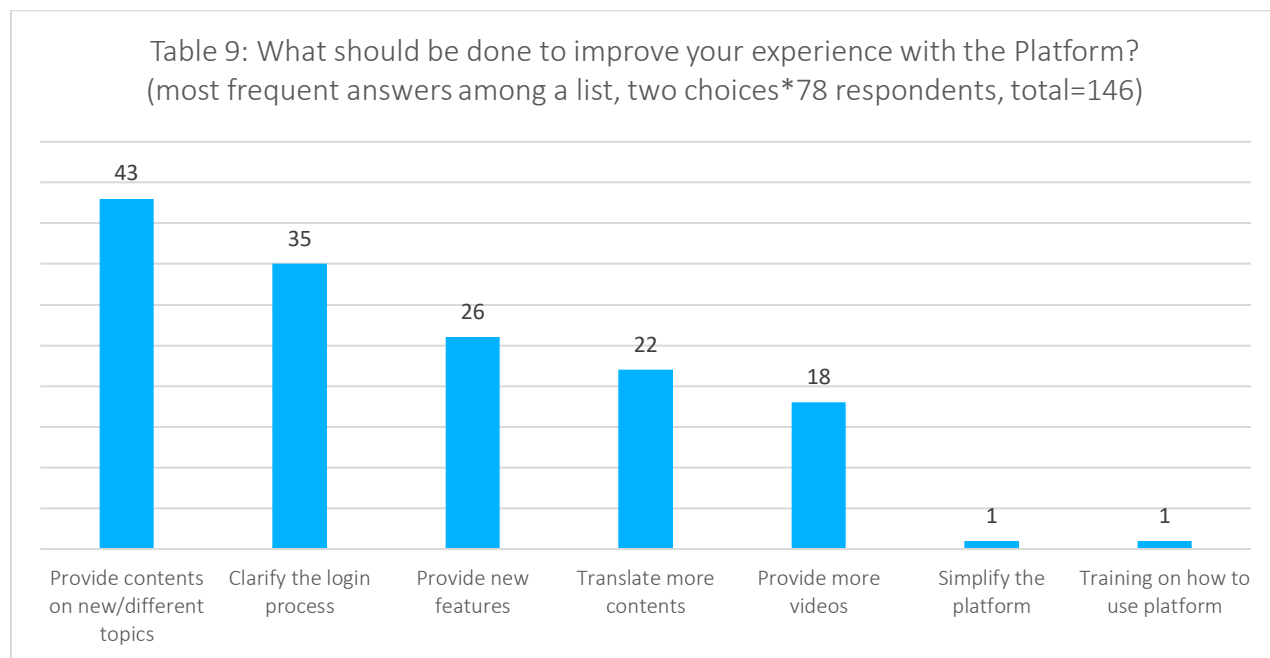
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[13] This website is part of a selection of useful links promoted in the WPHF-C Platform.

## Barriers to access the WPHF-C Platform

- For the 35 respondents who have not accessed the Platform, the main reason for not entering is their unfamiliarity with the login process (16 mentions). 5 people highlighted that they have not been given their username and password yet, 2 respondents have lost their login details, and 3 did not access due to a lack of time and other commitments.

- Five respondents have mentioned Internet connection issues as an obstacle to access the Platform.

- One participant has noted that the WPHF-C Facebook group has motivated them to perform their work better through connecting with other humanitarian organizations and seeing their experiences.

## WPHF-C Areas for Improvement

- The respondents were asked to identify their two top priorities among five actions of what should be done to improve their experience with the WPHF-C Platform. The grantees prioritized finding contents on different/new topics and new features or formats (videos are preferred).

- As regards to accessibility, many respondents expressed the need to get further information and training about the login process and more webpages and resources translated in their language.

Table 9: What should be done to improve your experience with the Platform?
(most frequent answers among a list, two choices*78 respondents, total=146)

| Provide contents on new/different topics | Clarify the login process | Provide new features | Translate more contents | Provide more videos | Simplify the platform | Training on how to use platform |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 43 | 35 | 26 | 22 | 18 | 1 | 1 |

## General Recommendations

An open question aimed at better understanding the interests and concerns of the grantees[14]. The most frequent recommendations were:

- Provide additional Capacity Building Webinars and Peer Exchange Sessions (18 mentions), including gathering participants of a same country (1 mention).

- Provide in-person training and networking and encourage South-South learning through delivering learning visits and study trips among peers (3 mentions) and onsite capacity building sessions (2 mentions), and through organizing an annual conference to discuss the CSOs' work (1 mention).

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[14] The question was as follows: Do you have any recommendation to make the WPHF Community of Practice -including Capacity Building and Peer Exchange Programmes- more useful and relevant to your work?

- Translate Capacity Building Webinars and documents (4 mentions).

- Regarding the design of the Capacity Building Webinars, it was suggested to provide more practical examples and templates (1 mention), give more time for interaction between participants (1 mention), share documentation and summaries of the sessions for those facing connection issues (1 mention), integrate the CSOs' capacity building programmes into WPHF practices (1 mention) and consider the different partners' capacity levels - small versus large/experienced organizations - (1 mention).

- Regarding the logistics and communications process, it was proposed to avoid a late timing of webinars (2 mentions), announce the events earlier (1 mention), provide reminders of the sessions (1 mention), make them accessible to people with disabilities (1 mention), offer information about the speakers in advance (1 mention) and record the sessions[15] (1 mention). One respondent referred to the lack of suitable electronic equipment for their good participation in the exchanges.

- 9 respondents have suggested additional topics for future capacity building sessions: networking with funders (2 mentions), financial management, vocational training for women and girls, gender issues, and psychosocial support for beneficiaries (1 mention each).

- Regarding the Digital Platform, the respondents have suggested to disseminate information on the use of the WPHF-C (1 mention), upload simplified content (1 mention) and share more strategies of other CSOs on the website (1 mention).

- Around ten recommendations were related to WPHF grant-making and funding opportunities (e.g., provide a quicker release of tranches for the projects' timely delivery and long-term grants of more than two years), hence, beyond the scope of WPHF Global CoP.

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### Recommendations for the CoP

"We had problems of timing for relevant webinars and there were problems of network interruption that did not favor us. Maybe next time better."

"We recommend disseminating information on the use of the platform for easy access and to benefit from the contents and publications."

"WPHF could compile the different strategies already implemented by its partners in order to disseminate them in the Community of Practice."

"It could be helpful to explore the possibility of facilitating exchange learning visits among peers to further deepen and strengthen the work that we do in different countries."

"We recommend providing translation into Arabic of all publications, files, sessions or events carried out by WPHF."

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[15] The Capacity Building Webinars are recorded while the Peer Exchanges are not, in order to create a safe space for exchange. But the WPHF Secretariat produces Briefs to summarize and keep record of the learnings and good practices shared during the Peer Exchanges.

### Lessons Learned

- The CSOs' feedback proved that **the capacity building webinars and materials produced by WPHF in 2020 have reinforced the respondents' skills in Strategic Planning, M&E, Communications and Resource Mobilization technique**s. The participants have been able to adapt the international practices and methods and apply them to their own organizations and models. Several respondents mentioned modifying their way to reach beneficiaries and communicate with their staff or their target groups as a result of listening to and sharing reflections with fellow CSOs.

- Responses confirmed that several CSOs have developed fresh resource mobilization strategies and networked with new funders thanks to the information provided in WPHF training resources and opportunities. Increasing WPHF grantees' abilities to research and obtain funding is a valuable result for the Capacity Building Programme, which primary goal is to help local women CSOs sustain their efforts and maintain their organizations beyond WPHF funding.

- The testimonies showed that the CoP brings mutually beneficial networking opportunities to the grantees and helps them keep in touch with fellow civil society leaders. There is also a multiplying effect as the respondents reported sharing the learnings with staff members and partner institutions as well as members of their community. This entails that the CoP and its learning activities are reaching people outside the WPHF-C members.

- The CoP has increased the visibility of the civil society partners' work as they present their projects and impacts to peer CSOs and strengthened their use of online collaboration tools and social media.

- Even if qualitative knowledge exchanges have been initiated and stronger connections created among local women CSOs across the globe, the survey has shed light on several **challenges preventing the CSOs from benefitting of WPHF knowledge building initiative**s such as accessibility and language barriers.

To increase the effectiveness of the Community of Practice, the respondents have suggested to expand the variety of the covered subjects and to provide more trainings and opportunities to interact with each other, including learning visits and in person meetings. The main **recommendations are as follows**:

- Multiply the training and exchange opportunities as there is a strong appetite for learning and information sharing across countries and regions.

- Build on efforts to provide live interpretation during events and translation of webpages and training materials.

- Clarify the WPHF-C Platform's login process.

- Make the training opportunities more comprehensive through addressing a wider spectrum of topics in different formats.

The WPHF Secretariat will incorporate these recommendations in the design, planning and implementation of the Capacity Building and Peer Exchange Programmes, and the survey's findings will be used to adjust the WPHF-C Digital Platform and communication tools to better serve the learning needs and priorities of WPHF grantees.