

# Annual CSO Survey on WPHF Global Learning Hub (L-HUB) Initiatives (2021)



**Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund** 

A United Nations & Civil Society Partnership

## I. Survey Background and Objectives

As part of its mandate to serve as a global knowledge center for women's civil society organizations (CSOs) working on the front lines of conflict and crises, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) Secretariat manages a [Global Learning Hub \(L-HUB\) and Community](#) fostering an online space for its civil society partners across 26 countries to connect with each other, share information, and deepen their skills and capacity. In January 2022, a global online survey was conducted with 155 WPHF civil society partners to assess the usefulness of WPHF capacity building and exchange activities, and partners' experience with the L-HUB initiatives to collect insights on their priorities and needs regarding capacity building and networking. These findings will be used to shape WPHF's capacity development planning for 2022 and adapt the L-HUB tools and activities for partner organizations.

### A. Overview of WPHF L-HUB initiatives in 2021

In 2021, WPHF engaged **611 CSO representatives**<sup>1</sup> from 170 organizations and 21 countries in capacity development activities:

- **453** CSO representatives participated in 23 capacity building webinars covering organizational development topics, including data visualization, gender-sensitive and feminist monitoring and evaluation (M&E), disability inclusion mainstreaming, prevention and response to sexual harassment, exploitation, and abuse (SHEA) and risk management and anti-corruption. Live Help Desks were also conducted to provide orientation on the capacity building opportunities and to access the WPHF community digital platform.
- **158** people participated in 8 Peer Exchange and Knowledge Café sessions and **19 CSO partners** shared knowledge, experiences, and solutions with their peers on programmatic and institutional topics (child marriage, women's role in conflict prevention and mediation, engagement of women and girls with disabilities, coalition building for advocacy and gender responsive humanitarian response). Research conducted by CSOs in Iraq, Uganda, and Palestine were also shared. To accompany these sessions, **7 knowledge products** were produced to delve deeper into the topics and inspiring practices of the CSO leaders. These resources were disseminated through WPHF Community digital platform and Facebook group to amplify and capitalize on the lessons learned from these civil society-led conversations.

Moreover, through its digital platform, Facebook, and email distribution group, WPHF has disseminated 182 peace and humanitarian related publications and knowledge building resources and opportunities. WPHF CSO partners were also updated on the WPHF Community events through a Monthly Update (350 recipients as of December 2021) and encouraged to use the WPHF Community Facebook group to exchange impacts and ideas with civil society peers.

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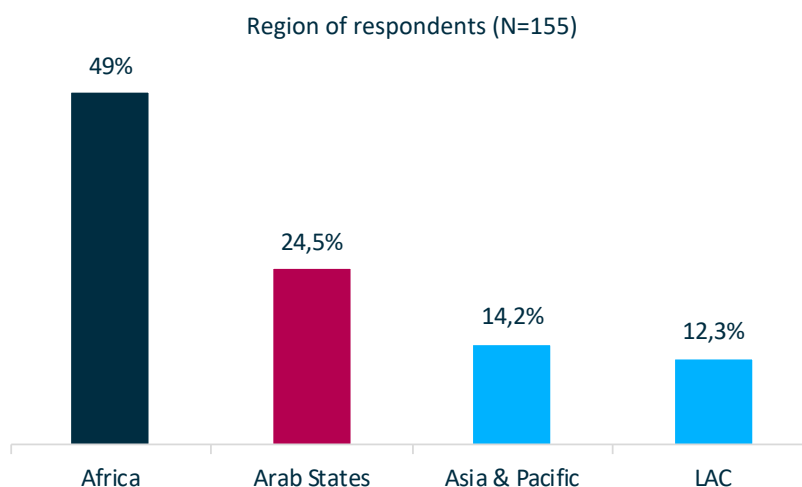
<sup>1</sup> Represents multiple participation by CSOs and not necessarily unique CSO representatives.

## B) Profile of Survey Respondents

The survey engaged **155 CSOs** from **23 countries**: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burundi, Colombia, DRC, Fiji, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, Palau, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Tonga, Uganda, and Yemen.

The 2021 survey shows a greater diversity of respondents compared to 2020, which engaged 113 CSOs from 15 countries. The increase in the number of survey respondents also reflects the growing visibility of the WPHF initiatives and engagement in learning activities. In 2020, WPHF Community initiatives reached 74 (unique) CSOs from 12 countries in and 154 (unique) CSOs from 21 countries in 2021.

Most respondents are from Africa (49%) and the Arab States (38%). It is to be noted that Africa is where WPHF has supported more projects so far followed by Asia and the Pacific and Arab States.

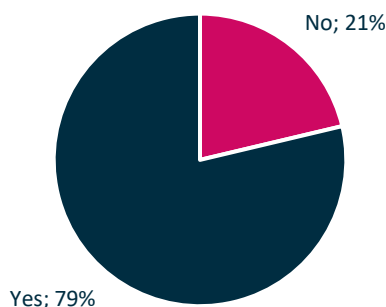


## II. Findings

### A. General engagement in and appreciation of WPHF L-HUB initiatives

79% of CSOs indicated that they participated in a capacity building or peer exchange webinar in 2021, a growing share compared to 2020 where 69% of CSOs indicated they had participated in at least one capacity building webinar and 48% of CSOs in at least one peer exchange session.

Respondents who attended a capacity building webinar, peer exchange, or knowledge café hosted by WPHF in 2021



Preferred WPHF Community Initiative (N=136)	%
Capacity Building Webinars	60%
Peer Exchanges	16%
I don't know / I'm not familiar with WPHF Community initiatives	10%
Mailing List Updates / Listserv	5%
Facebook Group	4%
Digital Platform	4%
Knowledge cafés	1%

## B. Usefulness of capacity building and peer exchange webinars

Overall, **86.1% of CSOs reported using new knowledge and skills from WPHF webinars**, an increase of 25.9 percentage points from 2020 where 60.2% of those who attended at least one capacity building or peer exchange webinar reported using new knowledge and skills from these opportunities.

Have you used new knowledge or skills gained from WPHF capacity building and peer exchange webinars? (N=122)	%
Strongly agree	35,2%
Agree	50,8%
Neither agree or disagree	8,2%
Disagree	1,6%
Strongly disagree	4,1%

CSOs application of knowledge and skills / what CSOs are doing differently after participating in webinars (N=122) <sup>2</sup>	Mentions
M&E and results-based reporting	28
Organizational management (anti-corruption etc.)	15
General capacity building / project management	12
Replication of training	11
PSHEA policies	10
New approaches (for women's participation etc.)	6
Networking	6
Other (awareness raising, leadership, strategies against SGBV, etc.)	6
Communications / Visibility	5
Data visualization	4
Advocacy and coalition building	3
Access to new financing	2
Research skills	2
Project design	2
Disability inclusion mainstreaming	1

<sup>2</sup> Multiple responses. Of 122 CSOs, 95 referred to topics that were addressed in WPHF webinars, 18 referred to topics not covered in WPHF webinars, and 9 CSOs did not provide example of new knowledge applied from webinars.

- 17 CSOs noted an **improvement in M&E and results-based management practices** including data collection and conducting field visits. The webinars increased CSOs’ abilities to use gender inclusive and intersectional approaches and apply survivor centered approaches when collecting data. Several CSOs adapted their M&E systems to disaggregate their data by sex and age. The knowledge gained in the webinars helped the organizations to track beneficiaries and measure the impact of their projects more effectively.
- 15 CSOs reported **taking new measures to detect risks and counter fraud** after attending the webinar on risk management and anti-corruption. Several CSOs incorporated learnings from the webinars in their planning, administrative and financial processes by setting up internal mechanisms such as workplans, anti-fraud policies, risk registers, human resource policies, and procurement procedures. CSOs noted a better understanding of how to deal with corruption and document cases confidentially.
- 12 CSOs reported improved management capacities of their personnel and **better capabilities in project management** showing that the webinars were impactful to help CSOs operate more efficiently.
- 11 CSOs transferred the webinars’ training content to additional staff members, volunteers, board members and local groups with whom they work. It is to be noted that webinars are often attended by people occupying a senior position who are well positioned to replicate trainings and transfer key messaging to colleagues and collaborators. Passing knowledge to others creates a **multiplying effect of WPHF training webinars** and is crucial to facilitate dialogues on sensitive issues such as PSHEA and corruption among the CSOs’ staff members.
- 11 CSOs declared feeling **more confident to report on activities** and that the quality of their reports increased after attending the webinars. This also relates to the webinar on data visualization which helped several organizations improve data analysis and Excel skills to design charts and graphs, making them better equipped to visualize their results and create impactful narrative and financial reports.
- 10 CSOs declared **reviewing current policies or developing new policies to prevent SHEA** and make their workplace safer after attending the webinar on SHEA response. This contributes to promote safeguarding among children and adults that women’s CSOs serve.

“The Monitoring and Evaluation training was impactful in changing our **reporting standards and data management.**”

“Our organization developed a **conflict-of-interest declaration** form to be signed by procurement committee members before selecting suppliers and to be signed by appointments committee before hiring new staff.”

“We have thoroughly reviewed our **internal policy against harassment and abuse** by integrating certain important aspects learned during the training on PSHEA.”

“We have considered gender disaggregation in all our activities. In addition, we give much more importance to the reflections of rural women in the prioritization of their needs.”

- 6 CSOs were inspired by their peers to **use new approaches in project implementation**, for example, to enhance women’s role in conflict prevention and management. It positively relates

to WPHF’s mandate of supporting women’s participation and leadership in peace and humanitarian relief. Through listening to others’ experiences, 6 CSOs reported **increased networking** with women’s organizations, new partnerships with stakeholders and new synergies at local level. 3 CSOs referred to the importance of collation building for advocacy work. While 6 CSOs noted other benefits, for example, a greater attention to consider different humanitarian needs and enhance women’s protection at community level.

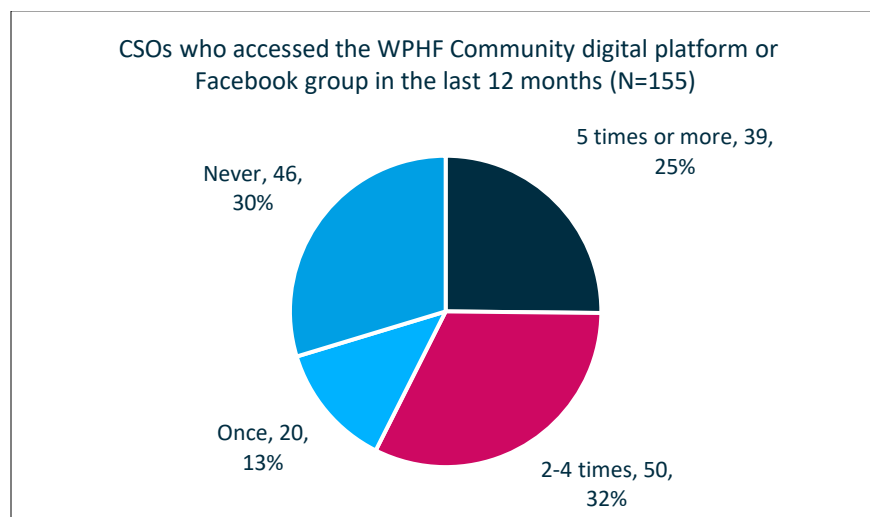
- Several CSOs noted a **greater awareness of gender equality**: “Participating in the webinars allowed us to acquire new knowledge on gender issues. Since then, we have completely revised our monitoring and evaluation system so that gender-specific data can come out every time. Also, we reviewed the organizational chart of our NGO during the general assembly to grant decision-making positions to women.”
- Several CSOs also noted a positive impact of the webinars in several areas of their work such as M&E and strategies to end VAWG, showing that **training topics are strongly interlinked and can impact working practices at both institutional and technical level.**

CSOs who have been in contact with new CSO peers, or built new alliances with CSOs as a result of participating in WPHF Community initiatives	Responses	%
No, none	58	43%
Yes, with at least one civil society peer/ organization	38	28%
Yes, with several civil society peers / organizations	40	29%

## C.Engagement in WPHF Community Platform and Facebook group

### 1. Motivations and use of the Digital Platform and Facebook group

In the last 12 months, 57.4% of CSOs have accessed the WPHF Community Platform or Facebook group at least two times, an increase from 2020 (51,3%), and a quarter of all CSOs have used the platform five times or more. Yet, last year, the question explored only access to the Platform, and the Facebook group was not included.

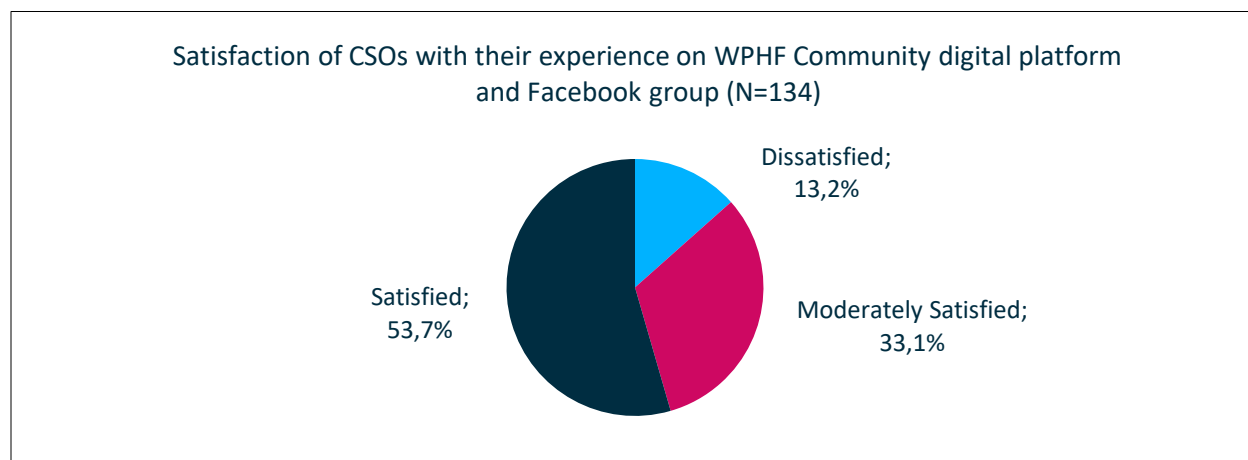


50.5% of CSOs indicated that the main reason they logged onto the WPHF community digital platform or Facebook group was to access information on WPS-HA issues, followed by access to training

materials and opportunities (19.3%) and to connect with CSO peers for new collaborations (11.9%). Another 11.0% of CSOs logged onto the platform or the Facebook group to be able to share project’s achievements and impact with their peers, 5,5% to use the help desk to get support to implement their project and 1,8% for all these reasons at once.

## 2.Satisfaction with WPHF Community Platform and Facebook group

Overall, 86.8% of WPHF Community Platform and Facebook group’s users were satisfied or moderately satisfied with their experience.



Of those who were satisfied or moderately satisfied, the reasons include:

Reason for satisfaction with WPHF Community digital platform & Facebook group (N=91)	Mentions
Quality of information & training materials	44
Knowledge exchange	30
General satisfaction & capacity strengthening	12
Quantity of information and training materials	7
Accessibility (available in multi languages, easy to read and understand)	5
Access to opportunities, especially funding opportunities	5
Visibility, including with peers and funders	4
Networking & motivation from peers	4

### 86.8% of WPHF Community platform and Facebook group’s users were happy with their experience:

- 44 CSOs qualified the information and training resources provided as “relevant for the CSOs’ work”, “bringing insights on WPS issues”, “responding to one’s needs”, “regularly updated” (platform), “relevant for project implementation”, “interesting contents”, “learning effect”, “useful for advocacy and resource mobilization, and “clear and precise” “I received the guidance I needed”.
- 30 CSOs indicated that the digital platform and Facebook group enabled them to learn and get inspiration from others, and share experiences, information, and impacts with others, in a two-way dynamic.

“**Networking between local and international civil society organizations** is very important for gaining knowledge and learning about the successful experiences of countries that are suffering from violence and insecurity.”

“It allowed us to **showcase our work** on a large scale.”

“The platform is **comprehensive** and has a periodic update.”

“I like that we can **learn a lot from our peers**. I'd love to see more stories/features of CSOs working in Africa.”

“We got some **credible materials** for our advocacy.”

“We are satisfied because there's available a space where we can share our work, achievements, and experiences with our CSO counterparts as well as learn from our counterparts.”

“It opened up **opportunities for new funding**.”

“We learn new things every time.”

Reason for discontentment of WPHF Community digital platform & Facebook group (N=40)	Mentions
Lack of accessibility, including for staff with visual impairment & low digital skills	10
Connectivity issues	8
Not having an opportunity to participate (for ex. access to Facebook group)	8
Language barriers, especially Arabic and French	6
Not interesting / lack of relevant materials	3

### 3.Barriers to access the WPHF Community digital platform

Main reason preventing those who never accessed the digital platform (N=46)	%
I am not part of WPHF Community / non applicable	37%
I do not know how to log in	33%
I have not received my login details	9%
My internet connection is not good enough	7%
My password has expired	4%
Lack of time	4%
I have lost my login details	4%
I did not know about the platform	2%

### B. Priorities for future webinars

CSOs were asked about their top two priorities for future webinars. As a first priority for future webinars, the CSOs selected **Advocacy strategies** (19,6%), **Private sector resource mobilization** (15%) and **Integrating climate change into work** (16 mentions). As a second priority, the CSOs selected Advocacy strategies, Private sector resource mobilization and Leadership skills and Self-defense and empowerment.

As indicated in the table below, if we aggregate top and second priorities, advocacy strategies (17%), private sector resource mobilization (14%) and writing for research and advocacy (9%) were mentioned most frequently. This was followed by leadership skills, self-defense and empowerment, data collection methods and integrating climate change into work. CSOs’ preferences will be used to shape WPHF future capacity building and knowledge exchange initiatives. Programmatic topics related to WPHF outcome areas will complement these institutional development/crosscutting topics and skills.

Regarding the 11 WPHF youth-led/rights partners, their top priorities are slightly different: i) Self-defense and empowerment (60%); ii) Using arts for gender equality (30%); iii) Advocacy strategies (20%).

Most frequently cited priorities for future capacity building and peer exchange webinars (aggregated 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> priorities)	%
Advocacy strategies	17%
Private sector resource mobilization	14%
Writing for research and advocacy	9%
Leadership skills	8%
Self-defense and empowerment	8%
Data Collection Methods	8%
Integrating climate change into work	8%
Using art to promote gender equality	7%
Effective communications and storytelling	7%
Gender inclusive language	6%
Online safety and protection	4%
Technological tools (e.g., remote collective work)	3%

### III. Recommendations and lessons learned

#### A. Recommendations and areas for improvement

What could be done to make WPHF Community initiatives (capacity building webinars, peer exchange sessions, digital platform etc.) more useful & relevant to your work? (N=116)	Mentions
Provide additional trainings and peer exchanges, including on specific topics	43
Reinforce accessibility of information, digital platform, webinars	16
Support resource mobilization efforts	10
Facilitate in person meetings and trainings	9
Offer professional translation / interpretation	8
Provide focused exchanges by region, country, area of competence and in small groups	5
Support CSOs needs' assessments / tailored capacity plans	5

“Existing opportunities should **take into account Francophone women and those who speak other languages apart from English** because the criterion of proficiency in English excludes women from benefiting from such opportunities.”

“We work in conflict zones, and the internet network does not allow a connection. For me, **you have to think about another model like a WhatsApp group.**”

“I request WPHF Community to **continue with the same spirit**, the exchanges we gained were of great impact in our organizational professional development.”

“**Increase engagements beyond webinars.**”

“Training plans should be shared in advance.”



“I would recommend physical exchange visits either in country and also to other countries, seeing carries more weight.”

“More topics should be drawn based on success stories of various partners and should be linked to practical experience not theoretical only.”

“Need to balance online and physical partners’ meetings for better learning.”

“We also recommend organizing capacity-building training in drafting projects and make calls for projects available to help us do our work well in the field. We are blocked by lack of funding sometimes for 3 years and we operate with difficulty.”

## B. Lessons learned

- CSOs expressed a **strong appetite to capacity building** with many requests of organizing webinars more frequently. CSOs have been able to display their achievements successfully among the community but many **CSOs asked for help to increase their visibility**. 10 CSOs recommended continuing with the same approach highlighting positive aspects in current initiatives such as the sharing of information on women’s rights and gender equality through different channels, consulting the CSOs to design training activities, doing webinars on a regular basis, and the provision of funding opportunities. Several persons noted the **importance of capacity building to enable women’s organizations move forward and survive**, especially new organizations: “Peace can be improved when women local organizations can build up.”
- Specific training topics were suggested and requested such as advocacy, project writing, financial management, report writing, marketing, writing success stories and presentation skills. In addition, CSOs pointed the need to **allow for exchange of practical experience, provide training certificates and offer in person learning opportunities**, which may be linked to the Covid-19 pandemics’ isolation and mobility restrictions.
- **Accessibility remains a major area for improvement** to ensure that all CSO partners can make good use of the learning initiatives considering challenges such as the lack of connection in many countries and the language barriers.
- Several CSOs recommended **clustering the trainings and exchanges and doing activities in small groups** through grouping partners by region and area of competence. However, other partners noted the richness and inspiration of being exposed to experiences coming from different countries to understand the role of other organizations in supporting women.
- CSOs’ existence and sustainability are not possible without funding: **providing support, information, and training to mobilize resources is essential**.
- Another core recommendation was to **expand the reach of capacity building activities** to transfer information to more civil society leaders and advocates. One CSO suggested to “put aside small grants for participants to always work in groups to further share the knowledge with other women at the grassroots who may have not been part of the exchanges.”
- Strong demand for customized training, tailored to individual organizations’ requirements. Especially, some CSOs expressed the need to help them set their priorities.

## C. Conclusions and way forward

WPHF learning initiatives have had a **lasting impact in organizations**. Several CSOs reported that the skills provided have been helpful beyond their WPHF-supported project and have had an impact on their organizational and individual approaches to improve their performance in their community. WPHF learning initiatives are contributing to make organizations stronger even after their projects have concluded. **“We have not had any activity for 20 months; however, we shared the knowledge acquired in our clusters.”** The fact that several CSO representatives have replicated WPHF trainings with other staff members and partners at grassroots level is outstanding and should be acknowledged and encouraged.

The WPHF Secretariat will use the survey’s findings in the planning of learning and knowledge exchange initiatives in 2022. Special attention will be put on:

- **Developing CSOs’ advocacy skills and focusing on resource mobilization needs**, two main priorities for grassroots women's organizations. This can be done through disseminating calls for proposals and funding opportunities in WPHF Community Facebook group and Monthly updates, through organizing trainings on advocacy tools and strategies and project proposal writing and through helping partners to diversify their funding sources. As suggested by one CSO, WPHF could also share the list of WPHF CSO partners with all partners to encourage alliances and consortiums for resource mobilization purpose and joint advocacy for women’s rights in fragile contexts.
- **Strengthening CSOs’ familiarity with WPHF learning initiatives** to facilitate their participation considering different capacity gaps and time zones. To increase accessibility, it is forecasted to continue making documents and opportunities available in the WPHF Community digital platform, Facebook group and other spaces such as Dropbox, to record webinars and to employ a variety of materials and formats such as infographics and games/quizzes, to provide frequent trainings on the digital platform, to offer professional interpretation of webinars and adopt disability-inclusive norms in training activities and resources (for ex: font and colors of texts in guides, slide decks, etc.).
- **Adapting activities based on CSOs’ recommendations and documenting the lessons learned** from CSO partners’ exchanges through summaries and factsheets. When possible, targeted trainings and exchanges will be organized focusing on a specific region, and methods such as break out rooms will be used to promote in-depth conversations in smaller groups. WPHF Secretariat will also continue providing training opportunities through leveraging the expertise of I/NGOs, governments and private sector entities such as Dell Technologies and ESDG Global.
- **Mobilizing funding to provide opportunities for CSOs’ cooperation beyond online initiatives** such as the CSO Peer Learning Awards and the Mentorship Scheme, two pilot programmes that are accessible to non WPHF partners and include field activities and in person visits between organizations. It is also forecasted to advocate and raise donors’ awareness on the need of providing spaces for offline trainings and gatherings where women’s rights organizations can meet, share, and nurture from each other experience, reinforce solidarity and consolidate their movements.