

Module 1: Background reading on the structural challenges identified in implementing refugee led work.

Structural Barriers experienced by WRLOs

We first examine the potential of, and challenges to **women refugee led work, with a focus on the key structural issues**. These refer to problems that are a result of the biases embedded in the fabric of social institutions, such as education, family, religion, government, and economic institutions. This applies both in countries of origin host countries, and in resettlement. These biases create great advantages for some members of society and major disadvantages for others, who may be already marginalized. They are said to be designed to provide structure, guidance and order in any given society, and are shaped by ideologies and dominant beliefs. However, they do not deliver social good in an equitable manner and often are deigned to preserve the status quo for the already advantaged. For example, in every society there are different levels of education, health care, access to the law, to wealth and access to human rights (*See Module 3, Session 2, The Power of Privilege*). This can particularly impact on refugees, when they are not granted citizenship, work rights, access to good quality education, health services training, income.

Unregistered and registered refugee led groups

A major structural impediment to refugee led organisations, in particular WRLOs, is lack of the ability to **register** their organisations in the countries where they have sought refuge. and the impact this has on their ability to function effectively. It can pose major problems to their smooth operation, and to receiving funding from major donors. They include issues such as not being able to open Bank accounts, to rent or hire premises, purchase equipment, legally hire staff and provide proper employment conditions, to advertise their goods and services. They do not receive the protection of the law to which other businesses may be entitled. While many unregistered organisations find ways around some of these barriers, they leave them very vulnerable to exploitation to coercive control, by authorities, sometimes by NGOs and service providers. They