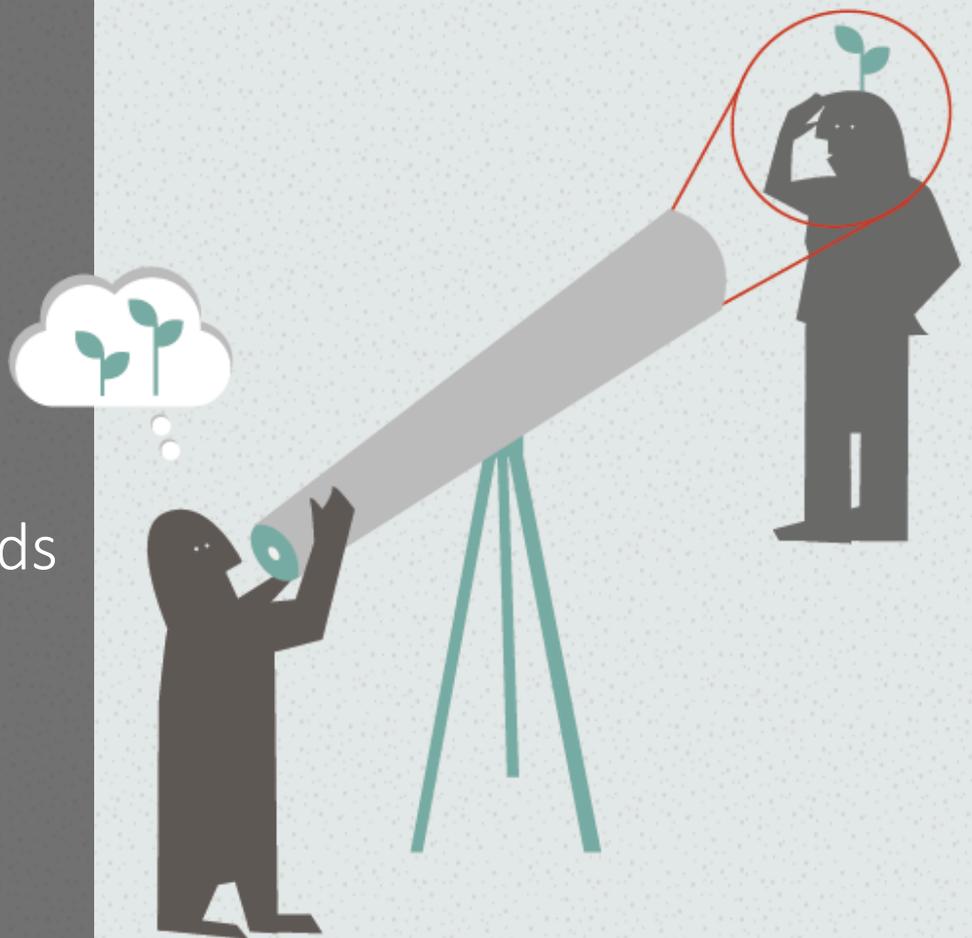


Learning Needs
Assessment
2020
Findings Report



Executive Summary

In 2019 the Fabo Learning Lab offered a Learning Needs Assessment to partner organisations for DanChurchAid to learn more about their approach to learning and the results were clear — respondents showed a clear trend of having significant gaps between relevant and available trainings, and furthermore displayed interest in networking and collaboration opportunities as a pathway to increased capacity development. The 2020 Fabo Learning Needs Assessment is a more robust adaptation of the 2019 version for DanChurchAid partners, promoted in the ACTLearn and ACT Alliance newsletters and the Danish NGO platform Globalt Fokus, as well as throughout the Fabo Community. It will be used for follow up in the autumn 2020 and into 2021.

In May 2020, emails were sent out across the Fabo Network with requests to complete one of two surveys on serving as a Fabo Community Learning Needs Assessment (LNA); one survey was targeted at Organisational Learning Managers (OLMs) and the other was targeted at subject areas focal points (SFPs). The survey was also translated into Spanish to be more inclusive for Fabo members with partners in Latin and Central America. The response to the survey gave a strong sample of diverse organisations within the Fabo community. Any member organisation, partner of a member organisation, or past collaborator was invited to participate. There were 283 responses overall from 39 countries, with an average organisational size of 80 staff.

Three key priorities were identified in the analysis of the results:

1. Learning design must be collaborative as very few organisations see themselves as only recipients of capacity development opportunities
2. Learning materials need to reflect not only the need for relevant content but do so always in dialogue with constraints of time, language, and internet connectivity (whether in-person or online)
3. To be truly effective and to avoid duplication and wasted resources, broadly sharing access to existing materials and modifying them as needed is critical (i.e. translations, contextualization)

Responding organisations identify already as sharing capacity development with other organisations and show a strong interest in not only access to learning materials but also networking and collaboration opportunities. Further, there is a strong indication that a top-down model wherein large organisations produce content to push out to small organisations may not be as relevant as intended. On the other hand, some subject areas where there is a strong organisational need but less enthusiasm from focal points (e.g. compliance trainings on Code of Conduct or personal data protection), having stock trainings to share and adapt might be extremely useful.

Many resources already exist for the subject areas where a need has been identified for materials, and this indicates very strongly that opening access to what is already made will generate momentum from the beginning for organisations that have many needs but limited resources. As most organisations are not using online learning platforms/websites right now, this is a natural first step. The lack of learning opportunities and language barriers are a challenge that can be addressed with new models for delivery, but limitations of time are also significant for staff in the non-profit sector. 98% of respondents were interested in follow up, showing an appetite to move forward with data from this Fabo Learning Needs Assessment 2020 with concrete actions.

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0. Context

In 2019 the Fabo Learning Lab offered a Learning Needs Assessment to partner organisations for DanChurchAid to learn more about their approach to learning, learning conditions, areas of priority, and interest in collaborating in a learning network. 62 organisational senior managers responded and the results were clear — respondents showed a clear trend of having significant gaps between relevant and available trainings, and furthermore displayed interest in networking and collaboration opportunities as a pathway to increased capacity development.

The 2020 Learning Needs Assessment is a more robust adaptation of the 2019 version for DanChurchAid partners, as will be detailed throughout this report. Not only were gaps in data from the 2019 version addressed with adjustments to existing questions, but there was also a branch introduced for subject area focal points to detail their needs and priorities in the immediate future. This will allow for concrete follow up in the autumn 2020 and into 2021.

1. Response Overview

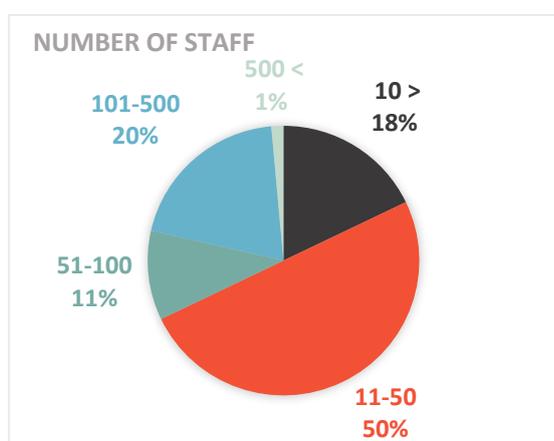
a) Survey Conditions

In May 2020, emails were sent out across the Fabo Network with requests to complete one of two surveys on serving as a Fabo Community Learning Needs Assessment (LNA); one survey was targeted at Organisational Learning Managers (OLMs) and the other was targeted at subject areas focal points (SFPs). The survey information was sent out in plain text emails and HTML5 format. It was also promoted in the ACTLearn and ACT Alliance newsletters and the Danish NGO platform Globalt Fokus. The survey was also translated into Spanish to be more inclusive for Fabo members with partners in Latin and Central America. The initial closing date for the LNA was May 30th, but the addition of the Spanish version of the LNA and individual requests meant that many had extensions to June 8th and beyond. This analysis has a firm closing date of data from July 9th 2020.

b) Participation

Response Numbers

The response to the survey gave a strong sample of diverse organisations within the Fabo community. Any member organisation, partner of a member organisation, or past collaborator was invited to participate. There were 283 responses overall. 140 responses were from OLMs and 143 were from SFPs. 24 responses (10 OLM and 14 SFP) used the Spanish version of the LNA, making up 8% of responses.



Demographics: Organisational size and geography

The OLM survey asked about **organisational size**, and the average number of staff for respondents was 80.

The majority of organisations responding have 11-50 staff, and 76% have 100 staff or fewer.

Notably, only 2 responding organisations have 500 staff or more.

Figure 1: Number of staff in participating organisations (OLM survey only)

Geographically, the 283 responses came from 39 countries. 40% of responses came from organisations in Africa, 24% from Asia, 15% from the Americas, 12% from Europe, and 9% from Middle East North Africa region. A detailed breakdown is provided in Figure 2.

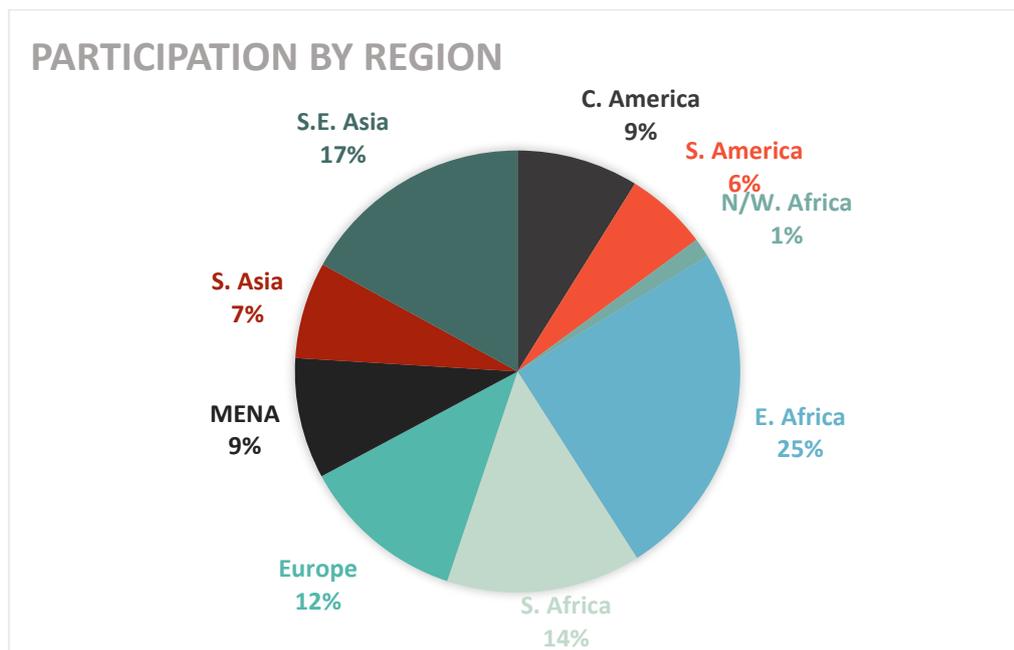


Figure 2 Detailed articpation by region

c) Survey Questions

The Assessment is made up of two separate but related surveys: one for organisational learning mangers (OLMs) and one for subject area focal points (SFPs).

Survey for Organisational Learning Managers

This survey is made up of 18 questions: 4 demographic questions about the respondent, 3 demographic questions about the organisation, 9 questions about organisational learning conditions and priorities, and 2 related to follow up. The purpose of the survey is to learn more about the opportunities for and barriers to learning activities across participating organisations, such as internet access, language, and technology use. Key areas of organisational interest were also asked about to link to SFPs in their survey.

Survey for Subject Area Focal Points

This survey is made up of base 10 questions, with 7 questions asked per subject area identified by the respondent. 6 questions are demographic. The 7th question offers a list of 40 subject areas, which the respondent uses to identify as many relevant areas as are relevant for her or him. For each subject area identified, the respondents offer details about plans and materials for the subject area in question within their organisational context. The survey ends with 3 questions about potential for follow up.

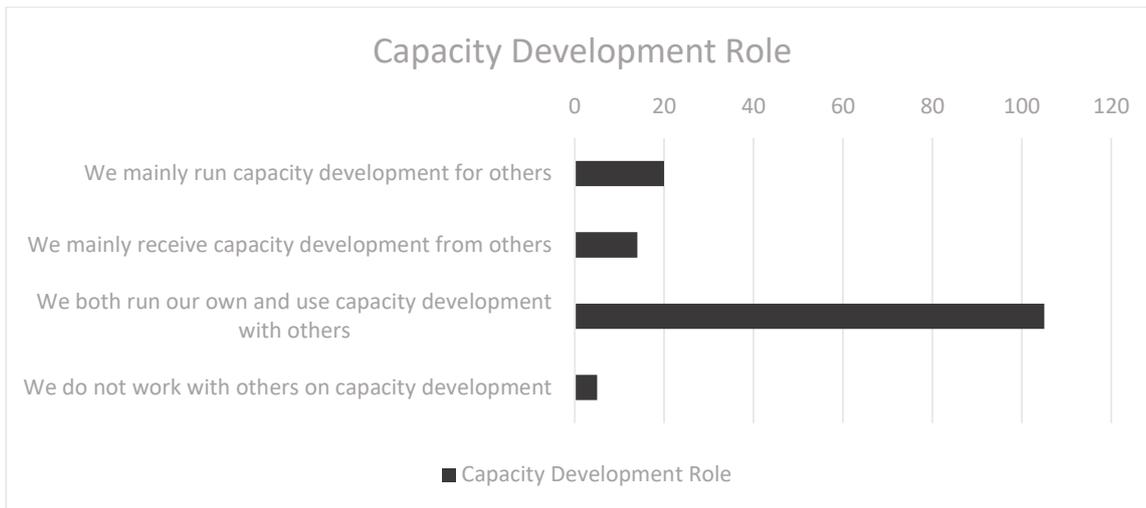
If an SFP only identified one subject area of relevance, the survey would therefore be 17 questions whereas two subject areas would mean the survey is 23 questions because 7 questions were asked about each subject in question. On average, SFPs identified 6 areas of expertise, which reflects smaller organisational sizes where individual portfolios are wider. That means, on average, 52 questions were answered for this survey, reflecting a somewhat substantial time investment.

2. Results: Organisational Learning Manager Survey Only

This section of the report includes key data from the OLM survey questions related to organisational learning conditions. Demographic results are reflected in section 1, and organisational learning priorities as expressed in both surveys are described in section 3.

a) Capacity Development Role

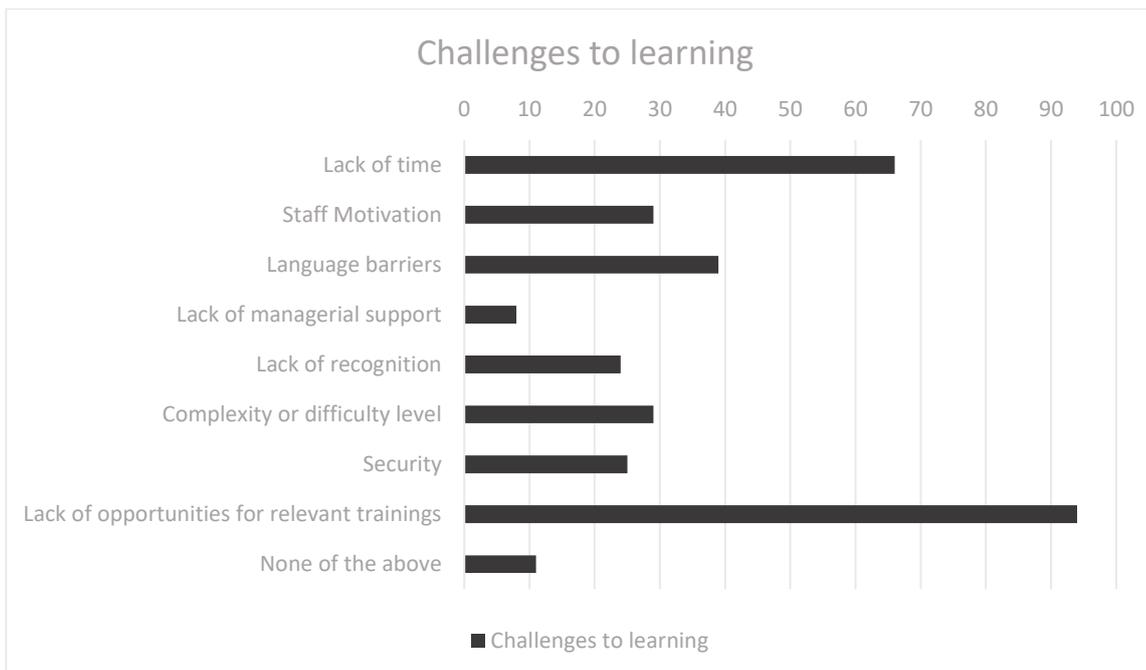
“Please indicate what best describes your organisation’s current (2019/2020) work with other organisations related to capacity development”



The majority of respondents (73%) identify as both offering and receiving capacity development when working with others, and only 10% identify as mainly receiving capacity development from others.

b) Challenges to learning

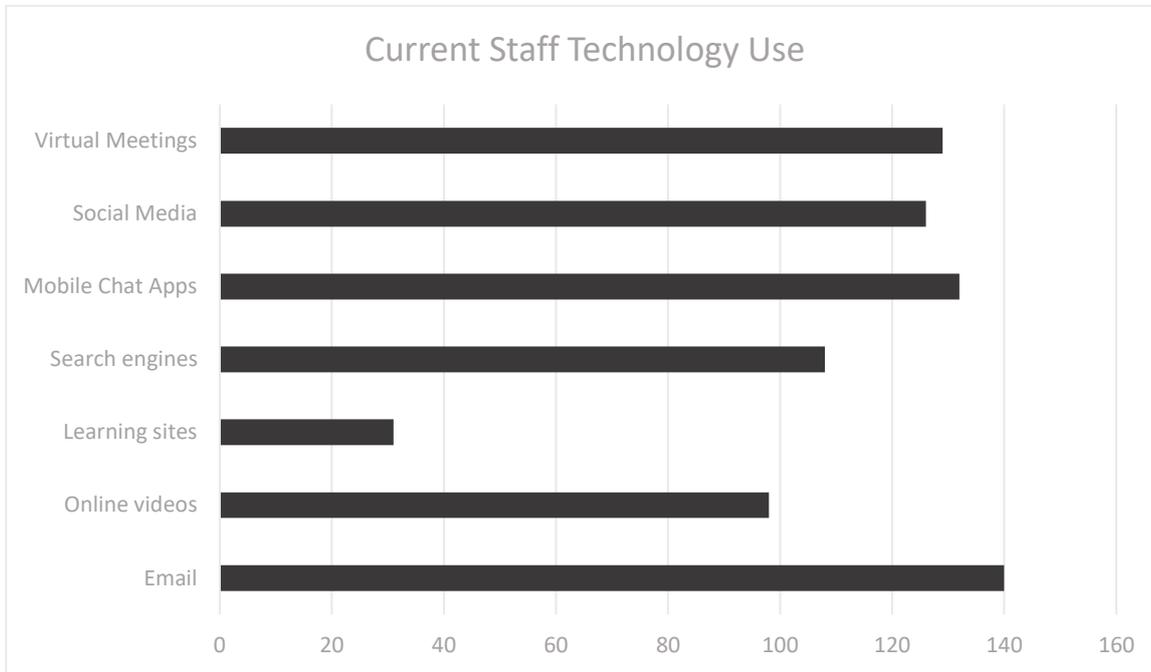
“Which of the following challenges to learning are most frequent in your organisation?”



The greatest challenges to learning identified are lack of opportunities for relevant trainings (65%), lack of time (46%), and language barriers (27%). Lack of managerial support (6%) was the least common challenge and only 8% claimed that none of these challenges apply in their organisations.

c) Current Technology Use

“Do most staff in your organisation currently use any of the following technologies? (select all that apply)”



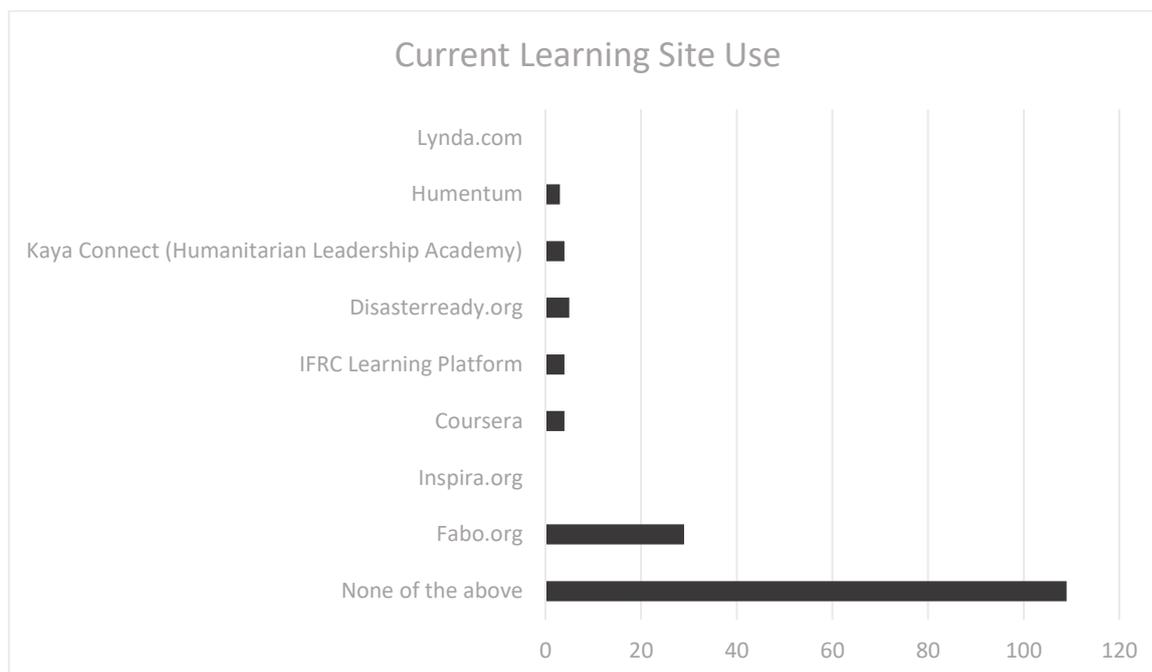
Respondents indicated that most staff in their organisations widely use internet-based technologies. Email (including Outlook and Gmail) are used by most staff in 97% of organisations, Mobile chat apps (including WhatsApp, WeChat, Viber) are used by most staff in 92% of organisations, and virtual meetings (including Zoom, Adobe Connect, WEbX and Skype) are used by most staff in 90% of organisations.

Social media (including Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) are used by most staff in 88% of organisations, search engines (including Google and Bing) are used by most staff in 75% of organisations, and online videos (including on YouTube and Vimeo) are used by most staff in 68% of organisations.

The only category that showed a low participation rate was for learning sites (including Fabo.org, Lynda.com) with only 22% indicating that most of their staff use this technology.

d) Use of Learning Sites

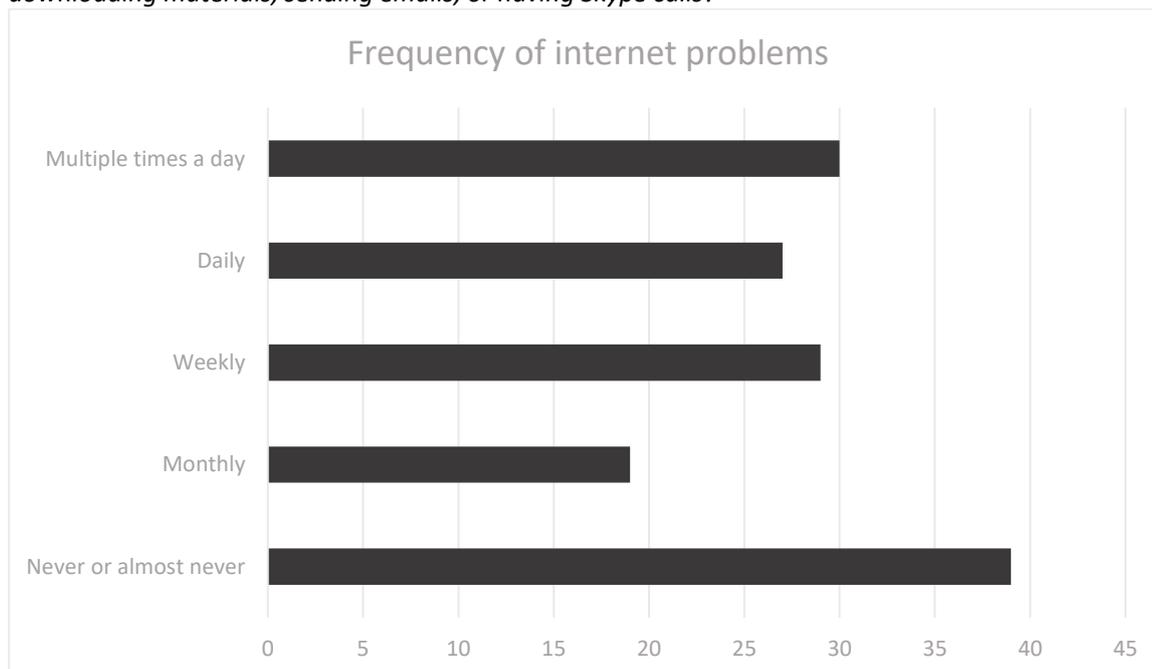
“Does your organisation currently use online training on any of the following platforms?”



Consistent with the responses on current technology use, 76% of responding organisational learning managers report that their organisation does not use any learning management site at all. 20% use Fabo.org, and all remaining options were only used by 2-3% of organisations. It is important to note that this learning needs assessment was distributed via Fabo members, contributors, and their partners, which would naturally make Fabo.org more popular in the sample group.

e) Internet Stability

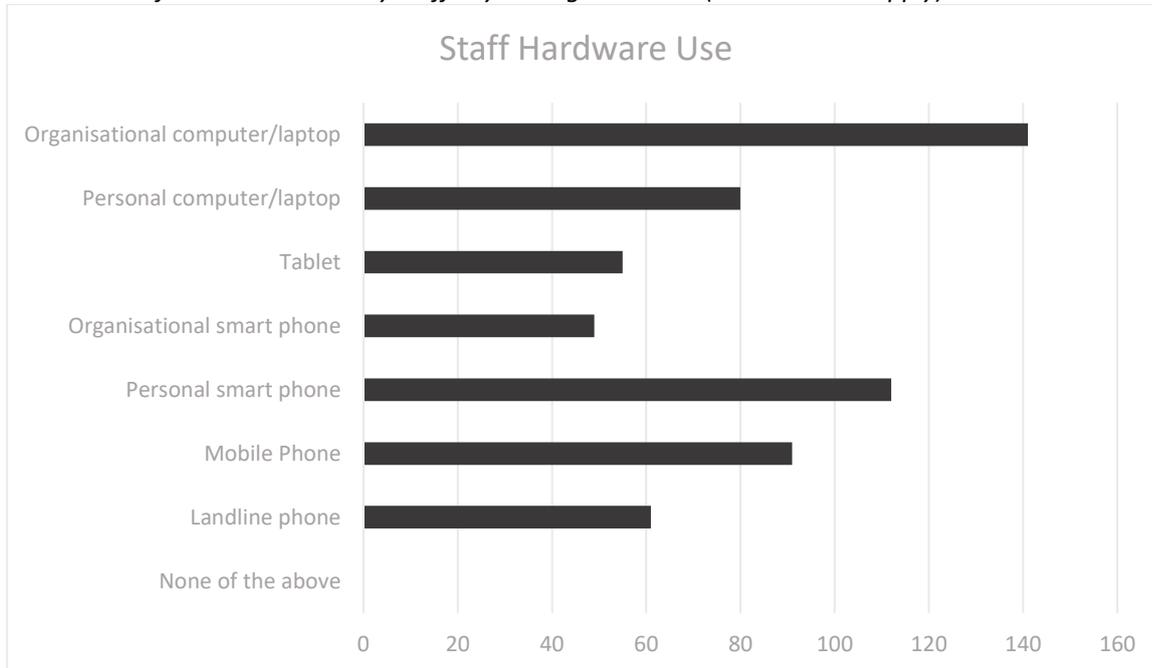
“How often do problems with your internet connection affect your ability to perform job tasks such as downloading materials, sending emails, or having Skype calls?”



40% of responding organisational learning managers state that internet disruptions are infrequent, happening only on a monthly or incredibly rare occasion. Approximately the same number of respondents (39%) state that internet disruptions are fairly frequent, happening weekly or daily. The remaining 21% of respondents state that internet disruptions are highly disruptive, occurring multiple times a day.

f) Staff use of organisational and personal hardware

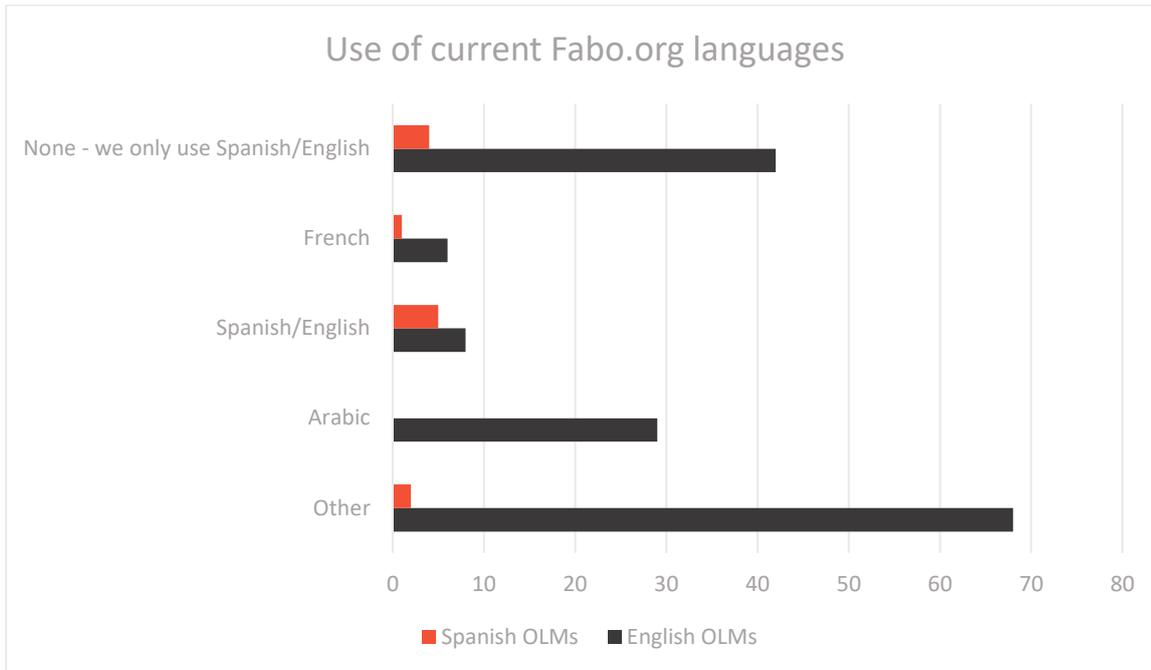
“What kind of devices are used by staff in your organisation? (select all that apply)”



Computers and smartphones are the most heavily used devices in reports from organisational learning managers. Organisational computers/laptops are more common (98%) than personal computers/laptops (56%), but the opposite is true for smart phones, with personal devices (78%) being more commonly used than organisational smart phones (34%). Mobile phones without smart capacities are used by nearly two-thirds of staff (63%) and landlines are still used by 42% of organisations. No organisation claims that staff are not using any of these technologies at all.

g) Relevant Languages

“In addition to English/Spanish, which language(s) are used for working in your organisation?”



Only 29% of responding organisations state that English is the only relevant language for their staff during trainings, and this is even considering that the survey was only available in English and Spanish, with the majority of respondents using the English-language survey.

Not having the survey available in Arabic or French would reduce the opportunity for OLMs not fluent in English or Spanish to indicate relevance, but each still arose as of interest to 20% and 5% of organisations respectively.

Almost half (49%) of organisations note that other languages are also highly relevant for their work. When asked to specify which languages would be relevant, 23 languages were identified (as well as 3 who stated only “local languages”).

Languages listed include Amharic (5), Burmese/Myanmar (11), Chichewa (1), Danish (2), Didinga (1), Dinka (1), Garifuna (1), German (1), Hebrew (2), Juba Arabic (1), Karen (2), Khmer (7), Kiswahili (4), Luo (1), Ngakarimojong (1), Ndebele (6), Nepali (15), Norwegian (2), Portuguese (3), Shona (9), Sign Language (1), Somali (1), and Swedish (2).

h) Data Highlights for Discussion

As shown above, the responses from the organisational learning manager survey show very strong trends in the participating 112 organisations. When this data is taken together, there are five significant findings:

1. Most organisations are interested in both delivering their own trainings as well as receiving trainings from others (see section 4b)
2. Most staff in participating organisations are using digital hardware and online services routinely, although stable internet access remains a significant barrier for 1/5 of those responding. (see section 4a)
3. There are many challenges to learning in these organisations, but lack of relevant opportunities, lack of time, and language barriers are the most significant. (see sections 4a, 4b, and 4c)
4. Reducing the language barrier is complex as the number of relevant languages for participating organisations is high, and often very specific to a local environment. (see sections 4a and 4b)
5. Participation in online learning is significantly lower than all other means of online information and knowledge exchange in these organisations. (see section 4a)

3. Results: Organisational Learning Priorities

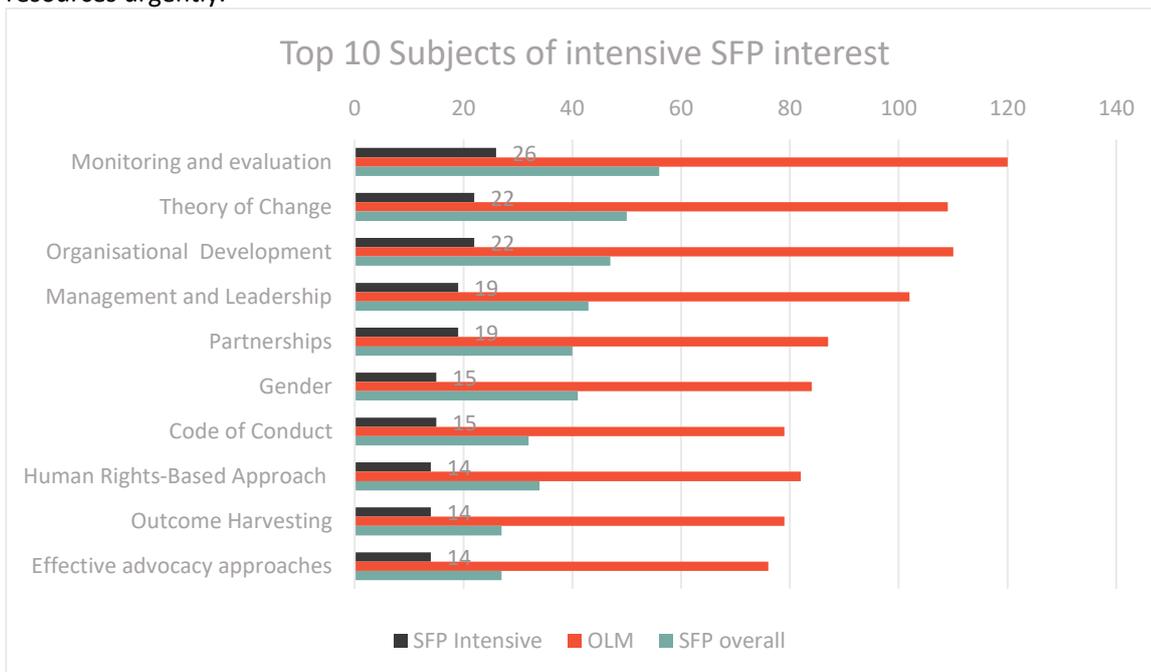
The data set from the combined learning priorities established by organisational learning managers (OLMs) and detailed by subject area focal points (SFPs) is complex and offers many avenues of exploration for further collaboration. This section of the report shows the level of interest expressed by OLMs and SFPs for all 40 thematic areas asked about in the survey as well as their shared input for potential future learning opportunities.

a) Top Ten Trainings with Intensive Interest by SFPs

“Please indicate what best describes your organisation’s prioritisation of capacity development in relation to [insert training name]”. Repose options:

- “This area is relevant for our work, but we have no current training needs”
- “This area has training needs, but they are not an organisational priority”
- “This area has ideal training in place that works well”
- “This area is relevant, and we may need to develop or update training resources”
- “This area is an organisational priority and we have a strong need to develop or update training resources”

This question was used to help identify which SFPs had an intensive interest in a given subject area and which ones were *responsible* to report on an area, but lacking a mandate or need to develop, locate, or update resources urgently.

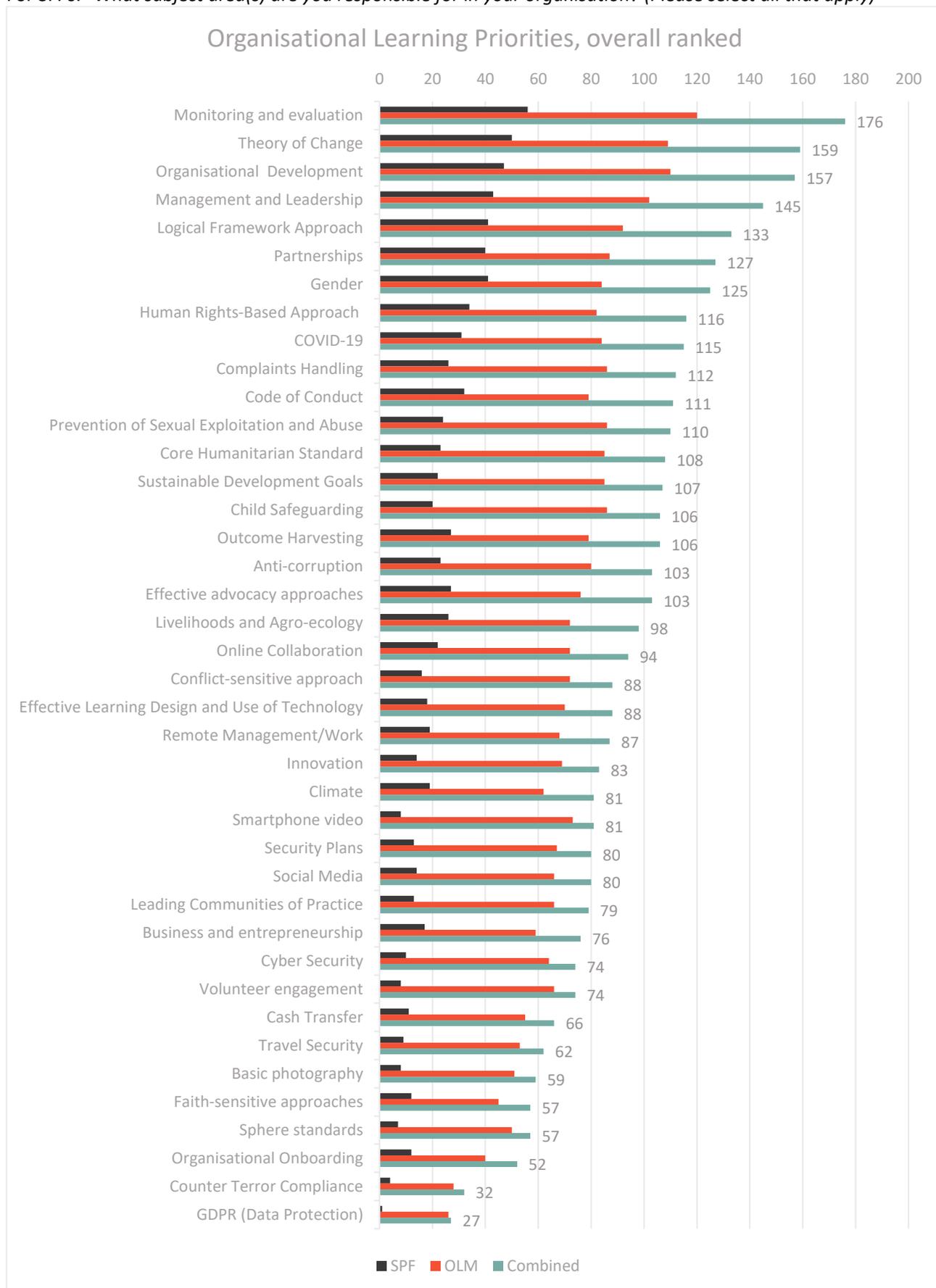


As the chart above shows, the number of organisations/individual SFPs who are intensively interested in the top subject areas (green) is much smaller than the overall SFP interest (grey) and OLM overall input (grey).

b) Organisational Learning Priorities Overall

For OLMS: “What subject area(s) are relevant for your organisation? (Please select all that apply)”

For SFPS: “What subject area(s) are you responsible for in your organisation? (Please select all that apply)”

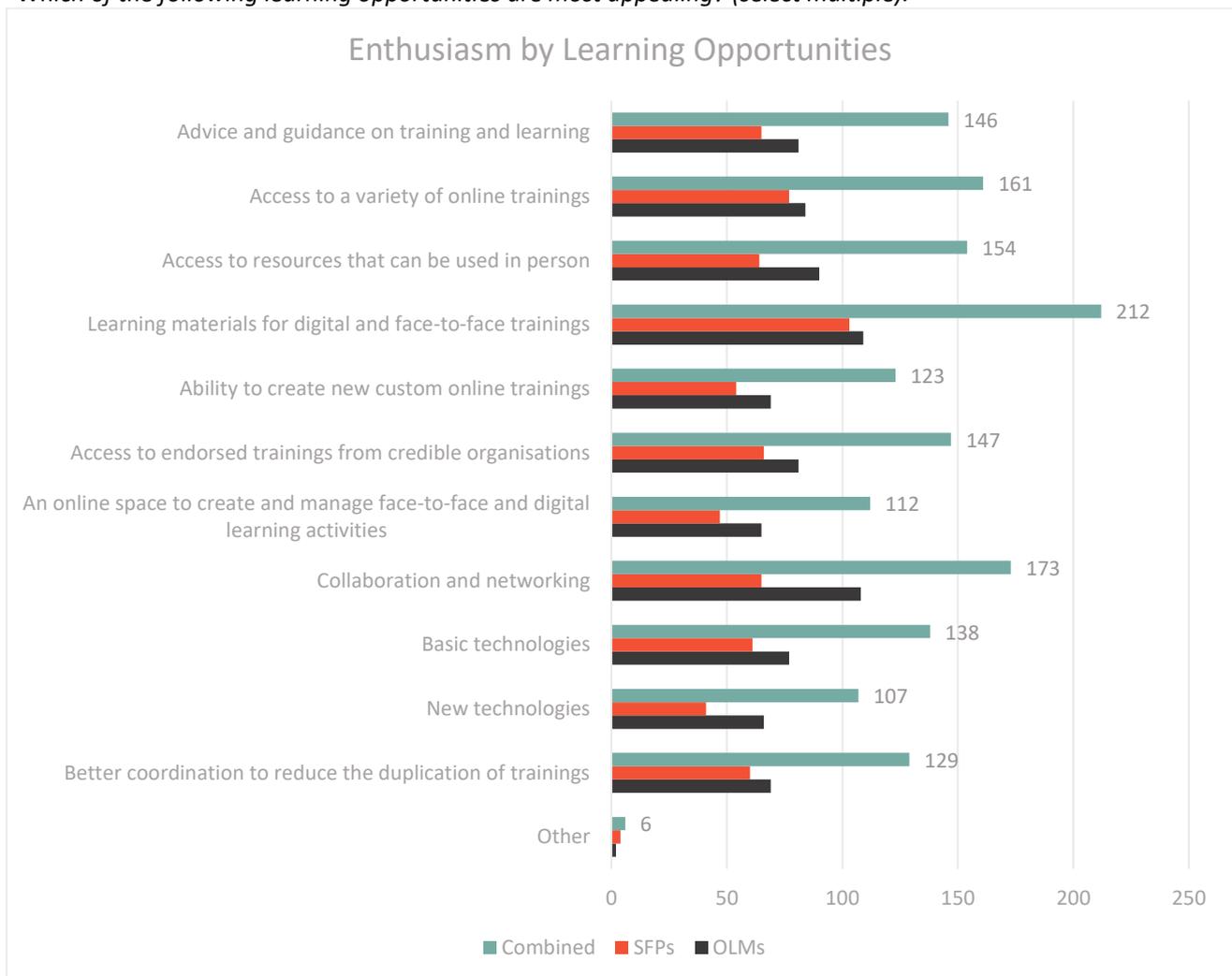


Looking at the level of interest across subject areas in a raw count shows that there are some areas of capacity development that garner more interest than others. Some areas, especially related to organisational development, are of more interest to OLMs than SFPs (e.g. Counter Terror Compliance and Data Protection). SFP numbers are also lower across categories as the design of that survey and the question posed to the individual respondent was framed differently.

The ranking of highest responses when separating OLM priorities from SFP priorities would be different, but as the chart above shows, there is still an overall correlation between what is of organisational interest and the availability of focal points responsible in those areas.

c) Enthusiasm about Learning Opportunities

“Which of the following learning opportunities are most appealing? (select multiple).”



The question of which future learning opportunities appeal the most to respondents was the only substantive question shared across the surveys and it is the only question with a more subtle trendline of priorities.

Access to learning materials for both digital and face-to-face learning activities was the top-ranked activity (75%), followed by collaboration and networking opportunities (61%). Notably, the interest in specifically digital trainings (57%) and resources that can be used in-person (54%) were almost on par, with a slight preference for digital materials. By a slight margin, SFPs are more open to digital materials than OLMs in digital opportunities.

The areas of least interest are new technologies (38%) and an online space to create and manage digital and face-to-face learning opportunities (40%), but even these categories showed significant interest.

d) Data Highlights for Discussion

283 responses, roughly evenly divided between OLMs and SFPs, reveal that there are some clear priorities for both subject areas for the content and development of trainings and also for how to approach that content through learning activities. In each case, however, there is also significant interest in even those options with the lowest count of responses. When this data is taken together, there are four significant findings:

1. The intensity of interest in a subject area should be used as a metric to shape *initial* conversations about how to move toward collaboration opportunities where there is shared interest, especially in areas where dozens of individuals have expressed that a subject is relevant (see section 4d)
2. OLMs prioritise learnings on organisational development highly, but there is not always a corresponding focal point. This suggests that trainings such as this may be of particular interest to adapt from existing resources as ownership of these materials might be less defined in key personnel. (see section 4b)
3. All subject areas have enough interest to move forward with discussions, but the extent and quality of existing resources should also shape what discussions look like and how to move forward, especially considering that the OLM survey revealed an overall lack of familiarity with fabo.org (and other learning management systems) (see section 4b)
4. The interest in future learning opportunities is diverse, but there is an overall focus on access to learning materials and collaboration and networking. (see section 4b)

4. Overall Discussion

Taken overall, the results of the 2020 learning needs assessment (LNA 2020) show that there is a clear need for new ways of working collaboratively on capacity development.

Three key priorities were identified in the analysis of the results:

1. Learning design must be collaborative as very few organisations see themselves as only recipients of capacity development opportunities
2. Learning materials need to reflect not only the need for relevant content but do so always in dialogue with constraints of time, language, and internet connectivity (whether in-person or online)
3. To be truly effective and to avoid duplication and wasted resources, broadly sharing access to existing materials and modifying them as needed is critical (i.e. translations, contextualization)

d) 4a) Technology as an opportunity

We know that staff in responding organisations are widely using internet technology to share information and knowledge (section 3c) and that they generally have access to an organisational computer and often a personal smart phone (section 3f). However, we also see that the use of learning sites is underrepresented as a pathway to accessing learning materials across recipients (section 3d). And while internet connectivity is a significant barrier for 21% of responding organisations, access to hardware and the potential to use fabo.org offline could go a long way to addressing these limitations. Moreover, developing downloadable trainings for in-person delivery is an approach that can address connectivity problems and real-time interpretation across languages.

e) 4b) Sharing capacity vs building capacity

The overwhelming indication that responding organisations, despite the average size being quite small (section 1b), overwhelmingly see themselves as both developers and recipients of learning materials (section 2a). Taken with the strong interest in not only access to learning materials but also networking and collaboration opportunities (section 3c), there is a strong indication that a top-down model wherein large organisations produce content to push out to small organisations may not be as relevant as intended. On the other hand, some subject areas where there is a strong organisational need but less enthusiasm from focal points (e.g. compliance trainings on Code of Conduct or personal data protection), having stock trainings to share and adapt might be extremely useful (section 3b).

Sharing capacity should also be seen as a collaboration within a subject area and learning materials as opposed to an exchange of complete projects. For example, rather than seeing sharing as “I will share my training on anti-corruption if I can access your training on gender”, it would be productive to also consider “Our organisation would be happy to share a translation of this gender training into Swahili as we have access to it and have to translate it for our partners anyway”. When as many developed materials as possible are openly available to all members, the chance for relevant adaptations grows.

Many resources already exist for the subject areas where a need has been identified for materials, and this indicates very strongly that opening access to what is already made will generate momentum from the beginning for organisations that have many needs but limited resources. As most organisations are not using online learning platforms/websites right now (section 2d), this is a natural first step. Creating models and suggestions on how to adapt these materials for translation or for in-person use will also offer some quick initial steps for collaboration.

f) 4c) Time/Financial Challenges

As discussed above, the lack of learning opportunities and language barriers are a challenge that can be addressed with new models for delivery, but limitations of time are also significant for staff in the non-profit sector. Blended and spaced learning and on-demand resources like FAQ sites are good ways to learn flexibly and to use resources rather than emails/meetings to get information. While there are clearly networking and interpersonal benefits to setting aside some time for a week-long in-person training, alternative models may be more practical for those facing time constraints and who have unpredictable calendars.

g) 4d) Moving toward concrete action

In the open comments at the end of the survey, responses to update emails, and as indicated with 98% of respondents being interested in follow up, there is an appetite to move forward with data from this LNA 2020 with concrete actions.

The high volume of responses and large number of subject areas provided demands methodical follow up activities that are meaningful for those who responded with interest and to work on planning activities that can be executed. Therefore, the approach to respond to the data discovered surrounding the subject areas will be based on a combination of LNA 2020 OLM and SPF data, as well as an assessment of existing resources that have been scored according to open accessibility (see section 5 on next steps).

The delivery of this report will include an explanation on what to expect for autumn 2020 and into 2021, and also open a channel of communication for those who would like to ensure discussion with other stakeholders before the end of 2020.

5. Recommendations

In addition to generating this report and distributing it to respondents as well as Fabo members, the following approach will take place to engage in follow up:

1. Respondents will be invited to Fabo Creators Week in September 2020 as an opportunity to learn more about Fabo, to share in free capacity development within that event, and to learn more about Fabo Share, which is an opportunity for any partner of a Fabo member to have up to 2 free learning sites for one year on fabo.org
2. Emails will go out to all respondents for by subject areas they took interest in detailing open resources already exist on fabo.org. If there is momentum surrounding updates to such materials or adapting them in some way, invitations will be sent to stakeholders on that subject area.
3. For areas that have a very high level of focal point interest, an initial meeting will take place with the focal points and their OLMs to discuss priorities and resources to move forward in 2021 and outline potential projects for collaboration. After these initial meetings, a larger call for participation can be extended to all respondents who expressed some interest in the subject area.
4. For those areas that have limited momentum for 2020/21 and few already-existing resources, an email will go out to those who expressed an interest to explain the survey results and open a channel of communication for future discussion. If momentum develops based on interactions within this group, there is a possibility to expand stakeholder engagement activities in response.

In the email releasing this report, there will be instructions on how to request attendance related to specific subject area discussions as they arise. For example, if an OLM knows it will be critical to attend a workshop on Theory of Change in the autumn when it takes place, she or he will have the opportunity to request an invitation to a workshop on that topic.

The goal of these next steps is to give *all respondents* one or more avenues to move forward with benefits from Fabo in 2020 and into 2021, but without overwhelming them with options that are not realistic to engage with.

6. About Fabo and Contact Information

Fabo was founded by ACT Alliance members in 2019. It emerged from the ACTLearn Partnership with the vision of broadening the learning collaboration to CSOs beyond the ACT Alliance. Fabo is hosted by DanChurchAid (DCA), an ACT Alliance member and a Danish humanitarian and development NGO, headquartered in Copenhagen, Denmark.

actalliance



The Fabo Learning Community is a growing community of 18 member organisations and over 10,000 learners. Fabo is a member-driven learning community for civil society organisations and we are brought together by a shared passion and belief in learning as an empowering vehicle for change.

Dedicated to shared learning technology and learning resources, we bring organisations and learners together in our pursuit of enhancing capacity sharing and building. Read more about Fabo here: <https://fabo.org>.

If you have specific ideas related to how you would like to engage with Fabo after reading this report, please send your thoughts to info@fabo.org

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