

## Management Response to the Findings and Recommendations of the ‘Evaluation of the Porticus Asia Refugee Cluster’ Report

Porticus welcomes the external evaluation to the ‘Rights Protection to Displaced Persons Cluster’, also known as the “Asia Refugee Cluster” (2019-2022), conducted by Lighthouse Partnerships from January to December 2022. We are grateful to all partners, external stakeholders and people with lived experiences who contributed to the programme and provided valuable input for the evaluation.

We agreed to the recommendations and responses to the findings and recommendations of the evaluation team, prepared by Porticus’ People on the Move Manager, are presented in the following matrix.

KEQ	FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT RESPONSE
<p><b><u>Focus Area 1 – Learning and Adaptation</u></b></p> <p><b>KEQ1: How well did the Cluster anticipate and plan for uncertainty, change, learning, and adaptation?</b></p> <p><b>KEQ2: How well did the Cluster learn, adapt, and respond to change and uncertainty during the Cluster period?</b></p> <p><b>KEQ3: How well did the Cluster ‘return learning to the system’ and practice strategic accountability while learning and making changes during the Cluster period?</b></p>	<p><b>Expecting to learn and adapt (Performance: Developing-Promising)</b></p> <p>Partners expected that they would need to adapt and change their projects given the complex and dynamic contexts in which they work, but this understanding was rarely acknowledged in project plans. Although some partners felt that Porticus supported them to be flexible in their project plans, Porticus’ grant application documents did not explicitly encourage planning for change.</p> <p>In terms of pre-planned processes for learning and adaptation, partners’ practices ranged from ad hoc and reactive approaches to more systematic management and learning processes, including regular learning journals, progress reviews and debriefings.</p> <p><b>Adapting (Performance: Promising-High)</b></p> <p>Although Porticus approved all requests for project changes, some partners felt constrained in their ability to make more strategic or fundamental adaptations or project redesigns that could have made projects more efficient or effective. Some partners felt that power dynamics between funders and grantees make them reluctant to acknowledge uncertainty, including by needing to ‘pitch’ projects and creating a risk in acknowledging failure.</p>	<p>(1) In grant application processes, Porticus and partners (supported by MEL partners) <b>should identify and plan for uncertainty and learning opportunities, including allocating adequate resources to learning.</b></p> <p>(2) Porticus, MEL partners, and partners should <b>contribute to a stronger learning culture in the sector.</b></p> <p>(3) Porticus and partners (supported by MEL partners) should <b>experiment with practical and feasible methods for documenting and embedding project lessons within organisations.</b></p> <p>(4) Porticus and partners (supported by MEL partners) should experiment with ways to <b>share learning beyond their organisations, including people with lived experience of displacement.</b></p>	<p>As part of an organisation wide initiative, Porticus is in the process of reviewing and testing out different learning tools and practices with selective partners. As there’s no one-size-fit-all approach for different grants and programmes’ needs, staff and partners will aim to work out a ‘right fit’ learning pathway that balances both Porticus and partners’ learning needs throughout our partnership. Strengthening and embedding a learning practice at the grant and programme level will enable Porticus and partners to be more effective. We will ensure our MEL partnerships are focused on Learning and include financial and non-financial support for our partners to embed and strengthen good learning culture and practices.</p> <p>For some new programmes, Porticus are working with MEL partners and partners in streamlining and changing the grant application and reporting so that it has clearer learning goals that takes into account of <b>Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI)</b> aspects and guides partners in identifying uncertainty and learning opportunities in the project.</p> <p>We will continue to invest in learning, including the inclusion of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) partner as critical friend to both Porticus and partners in programmes, and support partners on</p>

	<p><b>Reflecting, sharing, and staying accountable (Performance: Developing-Promising)</b></p> <p>The Cluster balanced learning and accountability well, with partners generally feeling that Porticus’ reporting processes and other accountability requirements did not obstruct adaptations and were useful for staying on track when making changes to their plans. However, most partners reported struggling with documenting and embedding lessons learned within their organisations and sharing learning more widely in the sector, with lack of resourcing being cited as the main barrier.</p>		<p>their learning agenda, approach and process to help build a stronger learning culture in the sector.</p> <p>We will also continue to create and share learnings and evidence generated from evaluations and research to the public, including people with lived experience. Furthermore, we aim to involve people with lived experience in our evaluations and learning processes in a meaningful and participatory way that is valuable and beneficial to our partners to avoid tokenism. For example, in the new <b>Immigration Detention programme</b>, we have invited around 10 experts with forced displacement and detention experience to help us to co-design the programme strategy to ensure that people on the move are front and centred in our work. Some of them would also be included in our MEL partner recruitment and vetting process.</p> <p>We will continue to use a system lens to analyse the bottlenecks, enablers and pathways to the respect, protection and fulfilment of fundamental human rights of the target groups. To address systemic issues and amplify impact, we will be more active in seeking collaboration with other funders and stakeholders when developing new programmes to complement efforts and build useful evidence and learning for the field. We will continue to examine and reflect on our own roles and values as funder, convener and influencer through our strategic investment within the wider ecosystem.</p>
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<p><b><u>Focus Area 2: Contribution to systems change</u></b></p> <p><b>KEQ4: How aligned were the Cluster’s objectives to the target systems change problem?</b></p> <p><b>KEQ5: How valuable were the Cluster’s actual outcomes for shifting the target systems change problem?</b></p>	<p>Overall, the Cluster’s objectives were well aligned with the Cluster’s target systems change problem. Together, the Cluster’s project objectives addressed all six ‘conditions’ of the systems change problem. There was a clear concentration of partners’ efforts towards power dynamics and least emphasis on the relationships and connections and laws and policies.</p> <p>The Cluster achieved valuable outcomes across the six conditions of the target systems change problem, including a notable number of <b>directly aligned</b> outcomes in the deeper, more implicit (and more difficult) categories of systems change (<b>power dynamics</b> and <b>mental models</b>).</p> <p>This indicates that partners are aware of and are proactively seeking to address less explicit aspects of systems change.</p> <p>The highest value outcomes contributed to <b>shifting laws and policies, practices, resource flows, and power dynamics</b>. Fewer outcomes addressed <b>relationships and connections</b> or <b>mental models</b>.</p>	<p>(5) Porticus and partners (supported by MEL partners) should <b>look for and experiment with useful and meaningful systems thinking processes to identify, analyse and communicate the complexity and interconnectedness of target problems and outcomes</b>.</p> <p>(6) Porticus and partners who focus on service delivery and individual-level outcomes (supported by MEL partners) should <b>reflect on how organisations can strengthen and better articulate “the contribution their work” makes to systems change</b>.</p> <p>(7) Porticus and partners (supported by MEL partners) should <b>strengthen their capabilities to articulate and evidence their outcomes</b>.</p>	<p>Service delivery work is often where data and evidence on the affected lives and communities are gathered, thus plays an important role in our understanding of the system barriers and helps to build interventions that drive impact. We will co-create achievable outcomes with our partners and people with lived experience to ensure that we have a clear and shared vision and goals. We will also use power analysis and related tools to help us further investigate on the power dynamics existing within the system and try to shift the paradigm on power imbalances and seek and promote lived experienced leadership and empowerment.</p> <p>In practice, we are using FSG’s Water of Systems Change model to understand the ecosystem for people on the move and building a more intentional GESI lens into our grantmaking period.</p> <p>For our Migrant Leadership and Movement Building (MOVE) programme, we are looking into services for refugee/migrant-led organisations in strengthening movement. And for the Igniting Workers Programme, we are using Prof. Michele Ford's framework<sup>1</sup> in our MEL work, where service delivery is listed as a critical component of system change.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> Ford, Michele. From Migrant to Worker: Global Unions and Temporary Labour Migration in Asia, Cornell University, 2019.