

Meaningful Refugee Participation Transformative Leadership for Concrete Action



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session Objectives

Trace the historical development of refugee participation.

Define Meaningful Refugee Participation MRP and refugee led organizations or initiatives RLO/I .

Why MRP is important.

How we achieve MRP.

Discuss the challenges and opportunities.

5-Develop strategies for supporting RLOs and their efforts to influence policymaking.



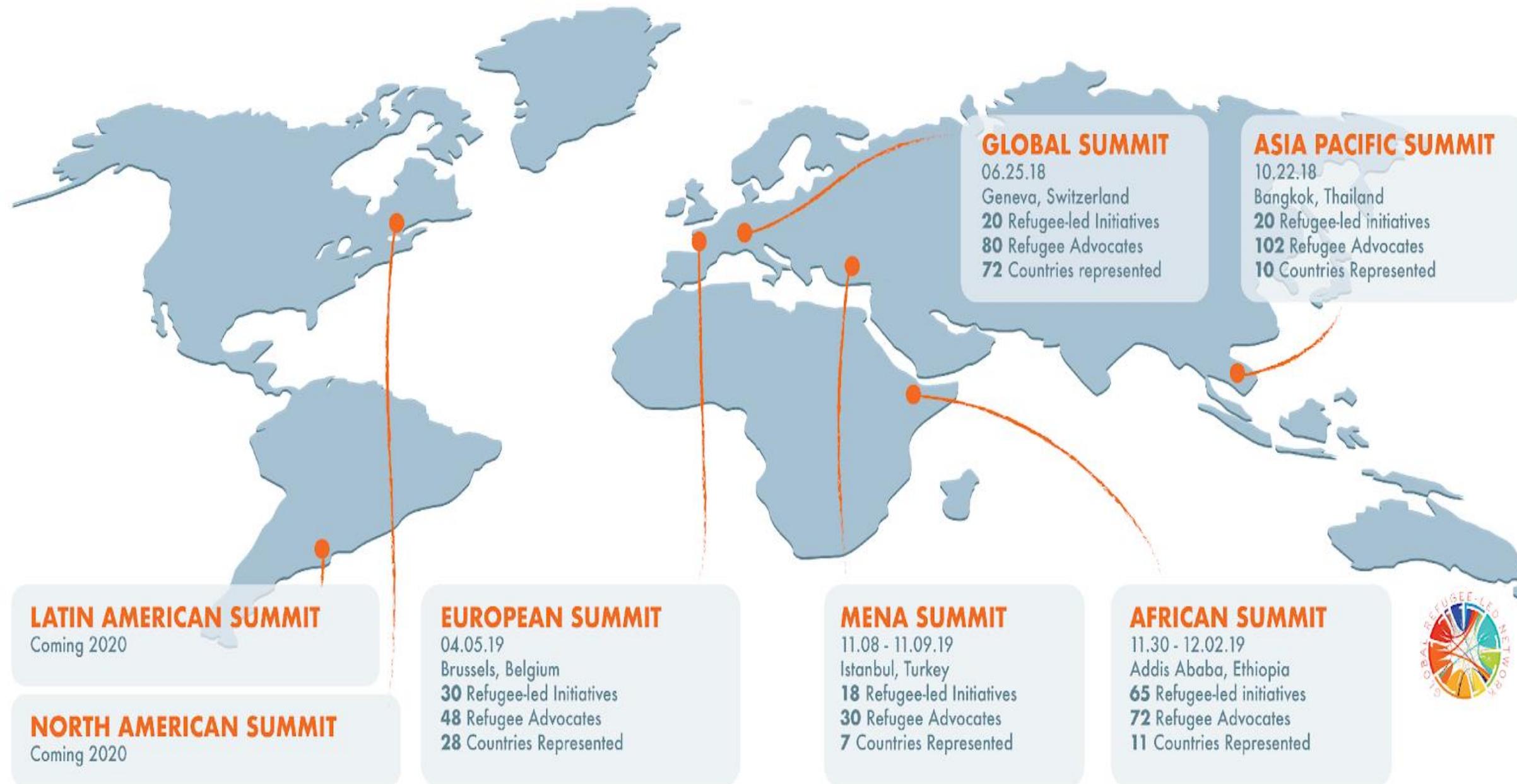
What does MRP mean?

We define meaningful participation as:

1. **when** refugees — regardless of location, legal recognition, gender, identity and demographics — are prepared for and participating in fora and processes
2. **where** strategies are being developed and/or decisions are being made (including at local, national, regional, and global levels, and especially when they facilitate interactions with host states, donors, or other influential bodies)
3. **in a manner** that is ethical, sustained, safe, and supported financially.



Refugee Summits 2018 – 2020 Breadth of Engagement





What is Refugee -Led (RLO/I)

GRN working definition

Empower Refugees

100% respond to the local needs & priorities of refugees.

Engage and empower other refugees in advocacy, protection, and assistance, with AGD approaches

01

Powered by Refugees

100 % initiated by Refugee/ stateless/ displaced person

03

02

Manage by Refugee

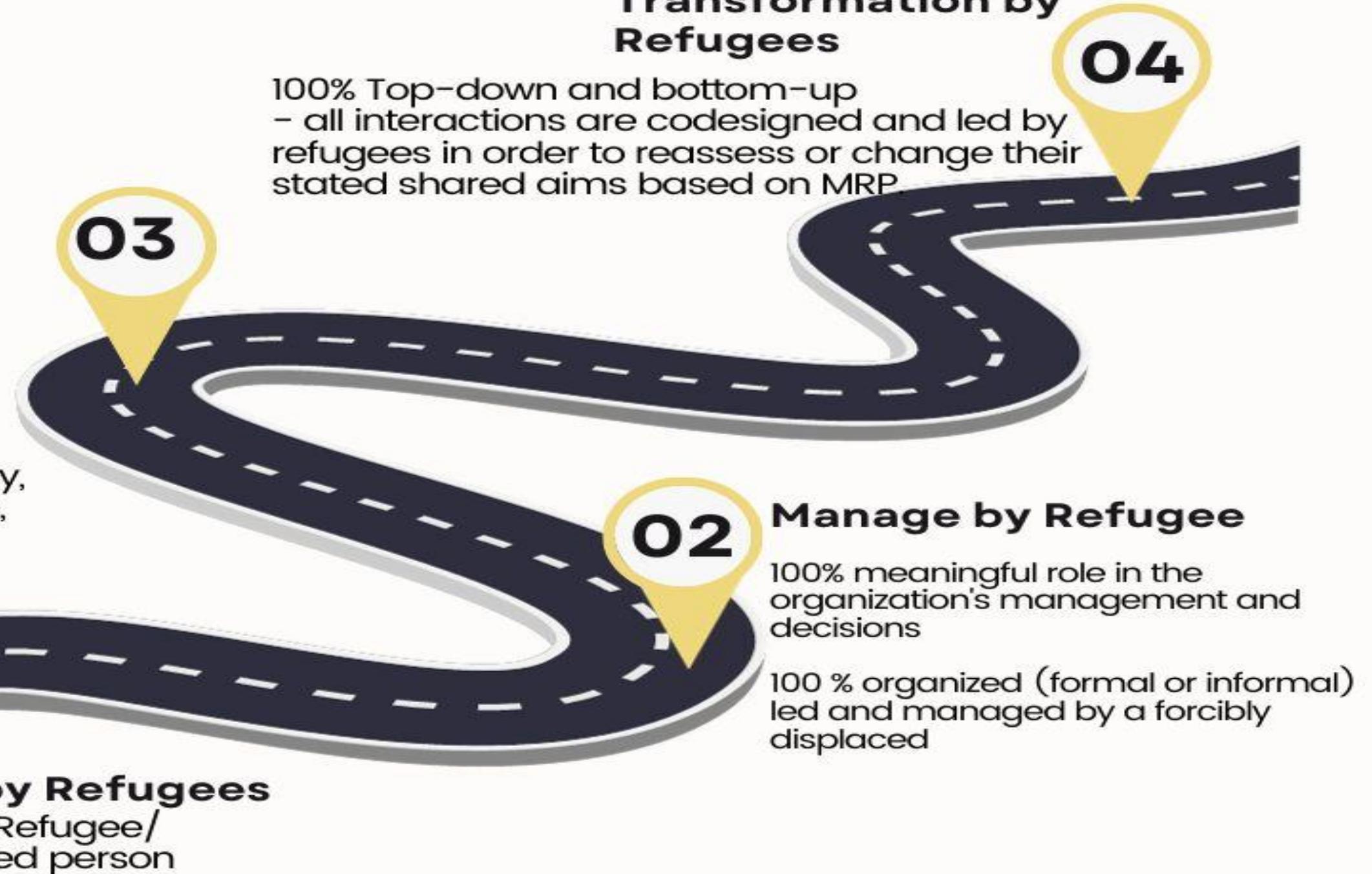
100% meaningful role in the organization's management and decisions

100 % organized (formal or informal) led and managed by a forcibly displaced

100% Top-down and bottom-up
- all interactions are codesigned and led by refugees in order to reassess or change their stated shared aims based on MRP

Transformation by Refugees

04





2. Why is MRP important?

1. **to create** spaces by and for refugee leaders to maximize their participation, developing synergies among refugee-led networks.
2. **to highlight** a few best practices in refugee-led initiatives to address existing challenges and to strengthen capacities.
3. **to mobilize** various stakeholders to come together and re-think refugee participation in an inclusive and systematic way.

<https://globalcompactrefugees.org/multistakeholder-pledge-refugee-participation>



MRP Pledge Description

GRN Pledge text:

'In accordance with the commitments established under goal 6 of the Grand Bargain to support a "Participation Revolution"; we pledge to support the meaningful participation of refugees and host communities in decisions that affect their lives. Participation should take into account the diversity within communities, including age, gender, and disability. This pledge will support the agency of those we seek to assist while improving the relevance, quality, transparency, and accountability of that assistance. We furthermore commit to share experiences on the implementation of this pledge at subsequent Global Refugee Forums and/or high-level officials' meetings.'

<https://globalcompactrefugees.org/multistakeholder-pledge-refugee-participation>



3. How can we achieve MRP?

Refugee **M**eaningful **P**articipation so far is **NOT** Participation but *tokenism*. Refugees still in need to reshape the narrative

- Facilitate ongoing and sustained access to strategizing and decision-making processes at every level.
- Facilitate preparedness to engage in strategizing and decision-making moments.
- Initiate institutional self-reflection and enact changes that dismantle power dynamics.
- Finance participation and refugee/ Migrant - led initiatives.
- Address and prevent tokenizing.



How do RLOs engage in policymaking?

- Providing input on draft policies and legislation.
- Participating in consultations and public hearings.
- Meeting with government officials and decision-makers.
- Organizing protests and campaigns.
- Building alliances with other organizations and networks.



What are the challenges for RLOs to have a greater impact on policymaking?

- Lack of recognition and legitimacy from governments and other stakeholders.
- Limited resources and capacity.
- Difficulty in accessing decision-makers.
- Language barriers and cultural differences.



What are the opportunities for RLOs to have a greater impact on policymaking?

- The increasing recognition of the importance of refugee participation in policymaking.
- The growing number of RLOs and refugee networks.
- The increasing availability of resources and support for RLOs.
- The growing awareness of refugee rights and issues among the public.



HIGH PRIORITY TRANSFORMATIVE ACTIONS

Actors

Donors Community (Foundations, Governments, UNHCR and beyond)

High Priority Transformative Actions

- Increase refugee representation on staff and leadership within relevant funding departments or projects;
- Issue Calls for Proposals for refugee-led initiatives; loosen requirements and create fiscal sponsorship options so refugee-led initiatives in early stages can access funds, including in locations where access to banking and registration may be limited for refugee-led initiatives;
- Realign existing resources to support initiatives promoting meaningful participation; and
- Conduct regular and transparent briefings on funding opportunities, and advertise within refugee communities.

Host Governments

- Increase refugee representation among staff who work within relevant government departments and on refugee response projects;
- Implement safeguards and offer assurances to refugee-led initiatives and advocates that representatives and their families will be safe from detention or deportation; and
- Build and/or strengthen pathways toward legal status that confer work rights and free movement as this allows refugees to safely work as community representatives.

National and International Civil Society

- Increase refugee representation on staff and in leadership, including on Boards of Directors or Governors; ensure that refugees receive equal pay for equal work and avoid "gig" employment;
- Serve as intermediary with the government to ensure refugees can participate and self-advocate safely in dialogues; and
- Build and implement partnership models that ensure equal access and co-ownership with refugee-led organizations and refugee advocates.

UNHCR Geneva and Regional Bureaus

- Increase refugee representation on staff and leadership; ensure that refugees receive equal pay for equal work and avoid "gig" employment;
- Build budgetary line-items that promote refugee engagement including but not limited to airfares, compensation for time and work, visa processes, improved technological equipment for remote participation, off-hour work for employees to accommodate time zones;
- Build and implement partnership models that ensure equal access and co-ownership with refugee-led initiatives and refugee advocates; and
- UNHCR explores and proposes, in collaboration with refugee-led groups, ways to include refugees and refugee-led institutions within its formal structures of governance at global, regional and local levels.

UNHCR National Operations

- Increase refugee representation on staff and leadership; ensure that refugees receive equal pay for equal work and avoid "gig" employment;
- Cover core costs for refugee-led initiatives, including unrestricted capacity-building grants; and
- Build and implement partnership models that ensure equal access and co-ownership with refugee-led initiatives and refugee advocates.



Prevent Tokenization

Refugee tokenization include:

- Limited access
- Focus on stories
- Restricted voices
- Superficial engagement

Tokenization can be prevented by:

- Amplify wholistic Approach
- Focus on Solutions
- Go Beyond Stories
- Call Out Tokenism
- Stand in Solidarity
- Prioritize Meaningful Inclusion



Recommendations :

- Empowerment through Education:
- Capacity Building within Refugee Communities
- Inclusive Representation
- Cultural Competence Training
- Networking and Collaboration
- Storytelling Platform
- Mentorship Programs
- Access to Information
- Advocacy Training
- Sustainable Funding for RLOs



Thank You

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