

An Overview of Reinforcing Comprehension of Refugee-related Organizations in Indonesia

Atika Budhi Utami^{1*}, Sheau Shi Ngo²

¹School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Email: atika.budhiutami@student.usm.my

²School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 11800 USM, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia
Email: sheaushi@usm.my

CORRESPONDING

AUTHOR (*):

Atika Budhi Utami

(atika.budhiutami@student.usm.my)

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ABSTRACT

As part of the essential fabric of Indonesian society, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, particularly those dealing with refugee-related issues, play a crucial role in assisting forcibly displaced people impacted by catastrophes. These organizations have distinct roles and characteristics, some focusing on capacity building while others on advocacy. However, the lack of comprehensive research on these organizations hinders our acknowledgment of their challenges and potential. This article underscores the urgent need for exhaustive research in this area and aims to fill this gap by reviewing several works of literature on refugee studies. It provides a platform for academic researchers, policymakers, and humanitarian organizations to deepen their understanding and contribute to the discourse of refugee-related organizations in Indonesia. The data was meticulously collected from journal articles and other scholarly sources relevant to the article and was reevaluated to demonstrate refugee studies within the Indonesian context and refugee organization studies in other countries' contexts. The study suggests that refugee-related organizations in Indonesia navigate the ambivalent government regulation of refugees and their predicaments as humanitarian organizations, leading to several operational impediments. The article, with its potential to significantly improve an apprehension of the operations and sustainability of nongovernmental organizations, particularly those dealing with refugee issues, underscores the importance of this research.

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of the few that has examined the current research concerning the roles and challenges faced by organizations supporting refugees in Indonesia. The primary contribution of this paper is to deepen our understanding of the dynamics and sustainability of both nongovernmental and refugee-led organizations in providing essential services to the refugee community.

1. Introduction

Forced migration has become a crucial issue the world has to face due to the thrive of geopolitical conflict, violence, and human rights violations. Moreover, problems with asylum seekers and refugees in Indonesia have risen because of the extended waiting situation. Nevertheless, as creative as it can be, humans will always find ways to work together to solve their hardships. Grouping in an organization like a refugee organization can act as a contribution to help each other. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine in the Near East (UNRWA) are UN bodies that protect and manage the settlement of forcibly displaced people. Together with other local, national, or international organizations, they handle refugee governance.

Refugee rights are human rights. The Global Refugee Forum 2023 addressed the need for refugee access to essential services within local and national systems, including education, housing, employment, and healthcare (UNHCR, 2023). According to the Global Trends 2023 report, there are 117.3 million forcibly displaced people worldwide as a result of violence, 75% of whom are hosted by low and middle-income countries (UNHCR, 2024). Indonesia Fact Sheet 2023 states that the country hosts 12.295 registered refugees with UNHCR, mainly from Afghanistan and Myanmar (Suryono, 2023). Indonesia is not at the refugees' top of mind for living a new life; it is not their final destination. Due to Indonesia's strategic locations, lower cost than crossing to Europe or America, and people smuggling issues, refugees are stranded in Indonesia (Missbach & Sinanu, 2011). With the state not a signatory to the 1951 refugee convention, Indonesia can only accept their presence due to humanitarian causes and then mandate UNHCR to organize the refugees. Being a non-signatory means Indonesia inhibits refugees with fundamental rights such as health services, education, and work. These circumstances are worsened by the fact that as of 1 July 2014, Australia has closed its border to refugees registered from UNHCR Indonesia (Bayani et al., 2023). In addition, several countries like Germany, the USA, Canada, the EU, and the UK restrict their refugee intake. This means refugees must extend their waiting time and be protracted in a transit country, Indonesia. UNHCR has advised refugees to expect longer resettlement (Ali & Briskman, 2016). Since then, refugees have become more self-reliant by founding refugee-led initiatives or organizations that aim to support their communities.

UNHCR defines a refugee-led organization as *"an organization or group in which persons with direct lived experience of forced displacement play a primary leadership role and whose stated objectives and activities are focused on responding to the needs of refugees and/or related communities"* (Tan & Hyde, 2023). Based on the Impact Report Sisterhood 2023 in Indonesia, Sisterhood is a refugee-led organization whose activities include livelihood skills and advocacy for women refugees (Sisterhood, 2023). This is one of the many RLOs that has played a significant role and greatly impacted its community. In contrast, RLOs have been facing obstacles. Refugee-led organizations were particularly marginalized in receiving funds during the COVID-19 pandemic, so there is an urgency to recognize, support, and amplify the action already being undertaken by refugees (Alio et al., 2020). This situation still happens to date, as found in the research that underfunding and lack of engagement are the main challenges that impede the operations and recognition of RLOs, so localization can be a solution to promote sustainability development (Tonks, 2024).

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as a significant force in modern society, crucially addressing and advocating for society's concerns and problems. NGOs have two interrelated functions: providing public services for needy people and advocating for public policy (Lewis, 2010). Abiddin et al. (2022) added this fact, which noted that NGOs' scope of work was initially to tackle social welfare issues, and now, it ranges from government to global system. According to Lewis (2010), various NGOs use terminology like civil society, voluntary, charity, and nonprofit to show their historical background instead of their activities. For example, in the UK, 'charity' or 'voluntary' organizations are most frequently used, while in the US, 'non-profit' organizations are standard. NGOs are implementers, catalysts, and partners (Lewis, 2014). For example, NGOs provide goods and services, promote social transformation, and collaborate with governments, donors, and the private sectors on joint activities. NGOs, as defined by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), are "*any profit entity without significant government-controlled participation or representation*" (Lewis, 2014). Collaboration is an integral part of NGOs' operations as there are consortiums that consolidate their work, such as the Human Rights Working Group, which consists of NGOs in Indonesia, or the Alliance for Refugees Network Asia Pacific. Collaborative work keeps NGOs sustainable as coworking organizations can share mutual values and strengthen their sustainability (Shumate & O'Connor, 2010). In addition to coworking with other NGOs like the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) and Suaka in Indonesia, NGOs work with international organizations or corporations. JRS and Suaka are two of many nongovernmental organizations that deal with refugee issues in Indonesia. JRS mainly operates services to refugees across the country, such as providing funding to registered refugees. On the other hand, Suaka works on refugee advocacy and public policy promotion of refugees.

The literature review is a key tool in understanding refugee-related organizations' historical context and emergence. It is one way to understand their roles, impacts, and challenges. This review covers refugee circumstances as a foundation for the emergence of refugee-related organizations worldwide, which multiple disciplines have widely studied. Focusing on refugee organizations in Indonesia, this article presents the background of refugees' protraction in the country and other countries to provide a rationale for the emergence of RLOs and NGOs in Indonesia.

1.1. Research Objectives

The main objective of this review article is to describe refugee-related organizations in the global sociopolitical discourse, particularly how they emerge, help resolve the refugee community they represent, and fight the challenges they face.

2. Research Methods

The literature review comprises journal articles that focus on refugees and refugee organizations. The review process is identification, screening, and eligibility (Abiddin et al., 2022). In identifying journal articles about the topic, this article utilizes the keywords 'refugee,' 'refugees in Indonesia,' 'refugee organizations,' 'refugee organizations in Indonesia,' 'NGO refugee,' 'refugee-led organization,' and 'refugee-led initiative.' In screening the articles, we limited the publication from 2018 to 2024 to only English articles. In selecting the articles' eligibility, irrelevant articles about refugee-related organizations, such as narrative or mental health perspectives, have been systematically

excluded. Out of 25 articles, one is a book section, and two are reports written and analyzed using the scientific method. Nine articles are about refugee-led organizations, eight about NGOs, and eight about refugees. Two are analyzed from the Communication studies; the remaining are the International Relations, Social Sciences, and other disciplines.

3. Results

3.1. Refugee studies.

[Tulibaleka et al. \(2022\)](#) studied the challenges that refugees cope with in the current forward-looking policy of the Uganda administration. The study was conducted through Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with refugees in the Arua district. They reveal problematic situations such as secondary school accessibility, unemployment, crime rate, elderly support, packed settlement, integration, and environment despite the country's friendly policy. Additionally, [Tulibaleka \(2022\)](#) explored another obstacle the refugees face, especially refugee students in the three areas of Uganda: Rhino, Kampala, and Arua. Through in-depth interviews and FGDs with refugee students, school administration, refugee leaders, and parents, he found that some challenges were high tuition fees, stigma, and lacking educational support during the COVID-19 pandemic. [Tulibaleka's \(2022\)](#) research in Uganda gave us an understanding of the protracted refugee situation in general. However, Uganda is a signatory party to the Refugee Convention and its protocol, whereas Indonesia is not. The refugee-related policies in Uganda are considered progressive because refugees are given certain rights to work, education, and health services. This situation is utterly different from Indonesia in that refugees are considered illegal immigrants, so they have no fundamental rights while staying in the country.

The refugee situation in Malaysia is similar to that in Indonesia because both countries are non-signatories to the Refugee Convention. [Sehu Mohamad et al. \(2021\)](#) reviewed several scientific articles regarding refugees' lives in Malaysia. Problems arose because of the refugees' challenges in accessing rights to education, employment, healthcare, and social life, which UNHCR Malaysia and local NGOs worked on to promote the refugees' fundamental rights. The review shows that some efforts have been resolved and resulted in positive progress despite the ongoing challenges the refugees have to deal with.

Concerning the pandemic, Rohingya refugees in Malaysia encountered resistance among local people on social media. #SayNotoRohingyainMalaysia was trending and prompted [Rashid and Saidin \(2023\)](#) to investigate how social media amplified the antipathy. Implementing qualitative content analysis of Malaysians' tweets, they found that the self-consciousness of Malaysians, borderline ambiguity between refugees and undocumented migrants, and the government's inconsistency toward refugees play a significant role in the reinforcement. The research conducted was comprehensive to describe the locals' acceptance of Rohingya. The study would have been triangulated through an interview with several Twitter users whose accounts became the subject of the analysis. Therefore, their motives could have been understood.

3.2. Refugee studies in the Indonesian context

The review is grouped in chronological order of times of publication to show how the policy and circumstances of refugees in Indonesia unfold.

[Sari et al. \(2018\)](#) described the Indonesian government's policy on Rohingya refugees by the end of 2015. The study revealed that the humanitarian principles and the 'Politik Bebas Aktif' or active free politics are the foundations of Indonesia's stance toward the Rohingya issue. Indonesia accepts Rohingya refugees for temporary settlement based on humanity. Meanwhile, the government will not interfere with the internal situation of the Myanmar regime due to Indonesia's diplomatic approach of not intervening in the domestic affairs of other countries. The study was absent in the concept or theory, methods, or analysis conducted for the research since it was purely presenting facts and data from documents. However, it has provided a slight understanding of the Indonesian government's legal framework toward Rohingya refugees from a perspective of International Relations studies.

In addition to a further intensive study on refugee policy, [Prabandari and Adiputera \(2019\)](#) explored alternative protection for refugees in Malaysia and Indonesia, which are non-signatories to the Refugee Convention. Data was collected through interviews with NGO workers in both countries, and they found that both face dilemmas between sovereignty and humanitarianism. Therefore, relying on informal agents like NGOs for services and aid toward refugees is one solution that keeps the ongoing policy the same. The study was comprehensively researched using a Foucault concept of governmentality and a meta-governance concept based on international relations studies. Indonesia and Malaysia's governments' resistance to progressing refugee policy prompts another possibility of fostering and supporting the works of non-governmental agencies to tackle the protection of refugees. However, there should be more thorough findings on the dynamics of relationships between NGOs, international bodies, and governments, as well as an analysis of the points of view of both governments. In the article, [Prabandari and Adiputera \(2019\)](#) mentioned that no research had been conducted regarding the reception of the local community to refugees.

A few years later, [Sadjad \(2022\)](#) explored the reception by local Indonesians to refugees staying in the country. Focusing on emotions of 'solidarity and social jealousy' as a relationship combination, he conducted interviews and conversations with locals, refugees, and officials in Medan and Jakarta. The study's main finding was that locals accepted the refugees' presence because of their solidarity as human beings; however, this acceptance was nuanced with envy because refugees received more support from international organizations. Interestingly, jealousy was not necessarily expressed by people who opposed the refugees but by the same person who received the refugee presence with some limitations. The study was anchored in the assemblage theory, which is vital to understanding agency power relations of host society and refugees. Conducted in Jakarta, Bogor, and Medan, the research was extensive. However, areas like Pekanbaru and Makassar could also contribute to the findings. [Sadjad's \(2022\)](#) argument that solidarity can permeate power imbalance was practically shown when the pandemic struck and affected refugees.

[Prabaningtyas et al. \(2023\)](#) investigated refugees' access to education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Applying multiple data collection in Makassar and Batam, the results show that lockdowns and mobility restrictions have complicated access to education,

particularly access to information, activities in the learning process, environment support, and motivation of refugee children. Refugee children's access to education during the pandemic was hindered by accessing internet services where refugees were not provided internet quota from the government, unlike the Indonesian students. This showed the imbalance of power in which the host community has the privilege of. Nonetheless, the findings could be further equipped with data collection from teachers dealing with refugee children. Indonesia's refugee policy has not progressed, as other research has pointed to the policy regarding the increasing number of Rohingyas in the country. [Taha et al. \(2024\)](#) recommend that Indonesia's government policy on Rohingya refugees be re-evaluated. Based on the descriptive and comparative analyses, the re-evaluation fosters border surveillance, social integration, regional cooperation, and refugee status organization. The study was mainly conducted through content analysis, so it would be necessary to triangulate with refugee experts and government officials.

To sum up, as Indonesia never signed the Refugee Convention, it acts as a transit country for refugees. It has mandated the UNHCR to administer their resettlement to a third host country. This folds the government's reluctance to renew its policy on refugees. After all, Indonesia is not the refugee's final and dream destination. Additionally, resettlement administration takes time, and host countries restrict the number of refugees they want to take up. For this reason, UNHCR has advised the refugees regarding their prolonged life in Indonesia. Nevertheless, the longer the refugees wait for resettlement, the more complicated their protracted situation in Indonesia is. This circumstance has prompted several young refugees to establish initiatives or organizations to develop their cohorts' capacity, which is essential if they resettle one day.

3.3. Refugee organizations

The twelve articles reviewed, spanning from 2019 to 2024, collectively unveiled a persistent pattern of systemic neglect and institutional inadequacy in the marginalization of refugees and the organizations that strive to support them. This chronological analysis exposes the superficial roles assigned to NGOs and RLOs and the profound challenges they face within a global framework that often perpetuates inequality and suppresses genuine grassroots empowerment.

[Fehsenfeld and Levinsen \(2019\)](#) explored the collaboration and interaction between volunteers from refugee organizations and social service professionals. The study was conducted in Denmark through interviews and observations with the volunteers of Danish local refugee organizations. Channeling the hybridity, advocacy, and legitimacy concept, the study demonstrated that civil society organizations (CSOs) are a hybrid of social service and advocacy. Their legitimacy relies not only on successful cooperation but also on the values of their members. The assertion that CSOs function as hybrids dependent on cooperation and member values fails to acknowledge how state apparatuses co-opt these organizations, diluting their advocacy potential. The caution against economic dependence on public funding is only sufficient with critically examining how state funding controls and neutralizes dissenting voices within CSOs. The study stops short of interrogating the systemic barriers erected by governmental institutions, which are designed to maintain a veneer of collaboration while effectively stifling genuine transformative efforts.

Concerning stakeholders, [Ongenaert \(2019\)](#) analyzed refugee organizations in the European Union (EU) from a media perspective. More research is needed regarding

refugee organizations' public communication. Drawing from literature studies, the research presents that refugee organizations' public communication is relevant and essential to influencing media and public attention on the increasing humanitarian issue, particularly the negative perception of refugees. The study highlights the need for strategic communication but needs to critically assess the media's role as an instrument of power that often propagates state-sanctioned narratives. The study also focuses on the holistic perspective of the Communication Constitution of Organizations (CCO), which states that strategic communication can be practiced through the communicative events of refugee organizations. This research shows that not only NGOs and humanitarian organizations need to maximize media engagement, but the media also need to highlight the organizations' uniqueness in promoting humanitarianism. The research, however, overlooks how media entities, influenced by corporate and political interests, can marginalize or misrepresent refugee voices. Besides media publicity and public communication challenges, NGOs face shortcomings in funding and coordination with other NGOs or international organizations like UNHCR.

[Hamidi \(2020\)](#) finds barriers to NGOs' optimizing their work for the refugee community they represent. Another challenge was communicating with the refugees when the NGO conducted its service, as well as cultural values and language. However, the study analyzes the vital role of refugee-based NGOs' experience in supporting Rohingya refugees' capacity. Through in-depth interviews with a refugee-based NGO in Malaysia, the study concludes that the organization has done its role in providing refugees with education, employment, and cultural values and skills.

Like [Hamidi \(2020\)](#), [Kunapalan et al. \(2020\)](#) studied the role of nongovernmental organizations for refugees in Malaysia and found similar challenges. The research seeks to determine how NGOs aid refugees' access to fundamental rights. Using conceptual analysis, the study states that NGOs play an active role in helping refugees in Malaysia. However, their obstacles are in funding and legality underpinning their work to help refugees gain access to healthcare, education, and employment.

Challenges the refugee-related organizations cope with were also highlighted in the following study. [Pincock et al. \(2020\)](#) focus on the localization works of RLOs and international humanitarian actors in Uganda. They analyzed the interactions between global institutions and Refugee-led Organizations (RLOs). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, FGDs, and participant observation with RLO leaders, UNHCR, InterAid Uganda, and the Finnish Refugee Council. However, another local NGO should be included in the study to provide a balanced understanding of the local perspective, as the data collection was only represented by one organization. The study reports that RLOs face neglected situations, which lead them to build their transnational networks, find funds, and survive amid globalization's politicization amid growing recognition of the organizations' emergence. The study suggests more collaboration between RLOs and NGOs to minimize the shortcomings the RLOs face, which are underfunding and participation. The study inadequately critiques how globalization and politicization are tools for dominant actors to maintain hegemony over refugee narratives and resources.

German researchers also investigated RLO functions and problems. [Easton-Calabria and Wood \(2020\)](#) studied the Syrian refugee-led organizations and initiatives to understand their role in the integration process. Interviews with participants of refugee-led organizations and initiatives of the Syrian refugee community suggest that these

organizations and initiatives create meaningful and diverse social connections and contribute to the integration process of the community in Germany. This has proven that grassroots organizations are more effective in fostering integration processes than the government or established institutions, although the RLOs need more funding to sustain their activities.

In addition to the role of NGOs, [Verghis et al. \(2021\)](#) highlighted a nonprofit organization's proactive measures addressing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on refugees in Malaysia. The study focuses on the Health Equity Initiatives (HEI), a community-based organization working on mental health prevention programs. The study shows that HEI cooperates with refugee communities, other NGOs, and UNHCR to provide information and support regarding the pandemic and counseling. In contrast, HEI faced challenges in handling the mental health of the refugees with limited resources as well as digital divide issues accessing online support groups.

Of the coordination between RLOs and other refugee-related organizations, [Sahin Mencutek \(2021\)](#) investigated the refugee community-based organizations (RCOs) in Turkey. Conducting the research through semi-structured interviews in three provinces, she provides insight into the tokenistic inclusion of Refugee Community-Based Organizations (RCOs). The study notes that RCOs operate mainly in "invited spaces" and are used for public relations stunts, highlighting a systemic strategy of exclusion masked as participation. This practice not only undermines the autonomy of RCOs but also reinforces state narratives that refugees are being adequately represented and assisted, diverting attention from the oppressive policies that restrict their rights and freedoms.

[Essex-Lettieri \(2022\)](#) conducted research funded by the Resourcing Refugee Leadership Initiative (RRLI) to understand the impact of RLOs, which the RRLI supports. RRLI is a refugee-related organization that works with several RLOs worldwide. It was established to provide direct funding to RLOs. Data was collected from five RLOs in Indonesia, Colombia, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and Uganda through FGDs, interviews, and content analysis. It was reported that each RLO has significantly impacted the refugees' capacity and well-being. However, sponsored-based reports tend to be biased as they merely highlight the positive sides of their work, such as their achievement and impact. The emphasis on success stories without addressing ongoing systemic challenges perpetuates the illusion of progress, while structural injustices remain unchallenged. Nonetheless, having been conducted extensively in five countries, the research results find a unique nuance in policy and the different acceptances of refugees. The challenges of RLOs also occur in other areas.

[El-Abed et al. \(2023\)](#) examined the dynamics of refugee-led organizations (RLOs) in Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with founders, administrative staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries of these organizations. The findings indicate that RLOs are frequently sidelined from formal decision-making and policy processes at local, national, and international levels. This exclusion stems from the constraints imposed by host states, which contradicts the global advocacy for RLOs' independence and self-reliance. Conversely, there is an opportunity for RLOs to establish a new practice.

[Motalebi \(2023\)](#) studied implementing the asset-based model among RLOs. He investigated the capacity of RLO in information practices using Asset-Based Design (ABD). The research was conducted through multiple case studies and participatory

design approaches in 20 RLOs in Uganda, Kenya, Egypt, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The dissertation presents a comprehensive approach to ABD aimed at identifying the capacities of RLOs, exploring their nuances across different RLOs, and examining their implications for both Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and non-ICT practices. This approach can be shared with the wider community through effective leadership. However, without a critical lens, the study risks promoting approaches that dominant institutions may co-opt to further their agendas under the guise of empowerment.

Judson et al. (2024) studied the leadership teams of former refugees within ethnic community-based organizations (ECBOs). A focus group discussion with leaders from the Bhutanese, Burundian, Congolese, and Syrian communities in the USA revealed that these leaders exhibited strong transformational qualities. They empowered community members, modeled positive behaviors, and effectively communicated their mission. This has proven that community-based organizations like refugee-led organizations have the potential to sustain themselves when given the opportunity. Due to the limited focus on the former refugees in the US, the study could be examined through empirical research if it were conducted in other countries that are not signatory parties to the Refugee Convention.

3.4. Refugee organizations in the Indonesian context

The literature reviews aim to provide refugee organizations' roles, impact, and challenges in Indonesia. They are organized chronologically to assess any changes or progress over time. Limited research has been conducted regarding refugee organizations in the country.

Ali and Briskman (2016) studied asylum seekers and refugees in Indonesia. The study analyzed how the refugee communities coped with the political and policy framework. Data was collected through interviews with refugees, UNHCR, IOM, and legal services representatives, as well as an auto-ethnographic approach, as Ali himself was a refugee who resettled in Australia and had cofounded the learning center studied in the research. The research shows the background history of the first refugee-led organization in Indonesia. It reveals that despite limitations and uncertainty, refugees can find opportunities by building strong communities and connections.

Similarly, Brown (2018) explored the work and motivation of refugee-led organizations to support their refugee community. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews and participant observations with the five learning centers' founders, managers, and teachers of the Zahara refugee community in Cisarua, West Java. He noted that the refugee community is an agent of change that can overcome their struggle through self-reliance, self-organization, and initiative.

Regarding NGOs, Bush (2022) wrote a section of a book about a faith-based organization in Indonesia, focusing on the role of such organizations in addressing the forced displacement of people. Equipped with interviews and participant observations with the Muhammadiyah organization and an RLO, the article reveals that humanitarian and religious motives drive faith-based organizations to help Rohingya and Afghan refugees in the country.

To underscore the work and challenges of RLOs, [Bayani et al. \(2023\)](#) recently discussed the support and challenges faced by Refugee-led Initiatives (RLIs) in aiding refugee communities. The report was conducted through online surveys and interviews with 14 leaders of RLIs in Bogor, Medan, and Jakarta. They have found that RLIs provide their communities with education, health services, legal aid, and livelihood opportunities while facing barriers from government restrictions, organizational issues, and increasing desperation among refugees. The report was funded by the Act for Peace and several organizations in Australia.

To sum up, there are occasional differences in refugee-related organizations' roles, impacts, and challenges from one country to another. NGOs and RLOs frequently deal with legal issues surrounding refugees' presence and limitations. Indonesia, as a transit country and non-signatory to the refugee convention and its protocol, never regards refugees as legal immigrants. Therefore, community-based organizations become crucial in lending help that the government cannot fulfill. Drawing from various works of literature, the roles of NGOs and RLOs range from delivering services to uplifting skills to advocacy. International organizations such as UNHCR and IOM must work more closely with refugee NGOs to reach refugees directly. RLOs' role in voicing the refugee community cannot be taken for granted as they come from within the community, so they better understand their cohorts' needs. Refugee-related organizations have impacted the refugee community and will continue working on fostering the refugee capacity while dealing with their challenges, such as underfunding, unavailability of government progressive policy, lack of coordination, and media engagement deficiency.

4. Conclusion

The literature review emphasizes the multifaceted roles, impacts, and challenges refugee organizations face in Indonesia. Despite Indonesia's non-signatory status to the Refugee Convention, which relegates refugees to the status of illegal immigrants with no fundamental rights, multiple nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and refugee-led organizations (RLOs) have emerged as crucial actors in providing essential services and support to the refugee community. The comparative studies highlight significant differences in refugee policies and the resultant impacts on refugee communities. For instance, Uganda's progressive policies grant refugees certain rights. In contrast, Indonesia's lack of formal refugee protection necessitates heavily relying on NGOs and RLOs to bridge the gap in services and advocacy. However, this reliance comes with challenges, including underfunding, legal constraints, and limited governmental support. Research by [Tulibaleka et al. \(2022\)](#) and other scholars reveal that while Indonesia's policies remain static, there are pockets of progress driven by grassroots efforts. Studies by [Sari et al. \(2018\)](#) and [Prabandari and Adiputera \(2019\)](#) indicate a need for more comprehensive governmental engagement, suggesting that Indonesia re-evaluate its refugee policies to foster better border surveillance, social integration, and regional cooperation. The importance of NGOs and RLOs in this context cannot be overstated; they provide immediate relief and services and work towards long-term capacity building and advocacy. It is understood that refugees' inability to access fundamental rights prompts the emergence of NGOs as well as RLOs in transit countries like Indonesia and Malaysia. Refugee-related organizations have played their roles in providing the services the refugees need and advocating to influence public policy. Little research exists on refugee organizations in Indonesia. However, impacts and obstacles should be more thoroughly researched to understand the organizations' effectiveness and sustainability.

This limitation is a chasm that can be explored for further studies, either interdisciplinary or empirical. Theoretically, the analysis reveals a critical need to focus on organizational studies within refugee support. Organizational theory, emphasizing structure, culture, strategy, and external environments, provides a robust framework for understanding the operational dynamics of NGOs and RLOs. Organizational studies can provide valuable insights into the internal dynamics, resource management, strategic planning, and external collaborations of NGOs and RLOs. Such studies can identify best practices, areas for improvement, and innovative approaches to overcoming the challenges faced by these organizations. Moreover, understanding the organizational structure and strategies can help design targeted interventions to strengthen their capacity to deliver services effectively. The literature reviews also emphasize the necessity for international organizations like UNHCR and IOM to collaborate more closely with local NGOs and RLOs. Such collaborations could enhance the effectiveness of refugee assistance programs, ensuring that the unique needs of the refugee community are met more comprehensively. Furthermore, the research calls for greater media engagement to improve public perception and support for refugee issues, as demonstrated by [Rashid and Saidin's \(2023\)](#) study on social media's role in amplifying anti-refugee sentiments.

In conclusion, while Indonesia's current refugee policies are inadequate, the concerted efforts of NGOs and RLOs offer a glimmer of hope. To address the ongoing challenges effectively, there must be a rigorous push for policy reformation, increased funding, and enhanced cooperation between local and international actors. Focusing on organizational studies will provide the theoretical and practical insights needed to optimize these efforts, ensuring that refugee organizations can operate at their full potential and deliver the support and protection that refugees desperately need.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare there are no conflicts of interest.

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