



# **MAPPING CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN LEBANON**

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**Civil Society Facility South**  
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**MAPPING CIVIL  
SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS  
IN LEBANON**

Mapping conducted by



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report was written as part of the “Regional Capacity Building Program for Civil Society – South Facility”, funded by the EU and implemented by Transtec. Beyond Reform & Development (BRD) was awarded the contract for mapping civil society organizations in Lebanon. The EU continues to be committed to promoting and nurturing civil society and non-state actors in Lebanon especially after 2005.

The EU has successfully launched structured dialogues with civil society to promote the participation of non-state actors in development and governance. In its bilateral relations with Lebanon, the EU has continuously stressed civil society as an important focus for cooperation and dialogue.

The mapping of civil society organisations aims to complement the work of the EU by providing up-to-date, reliable information on the state of civil society in Lebanon, its needs and the steps required to enhance its role. The enclosed report is based on research carried out over five months and provides a description of the context within which civil society operates in Lebanon as well as an analysis of its role and priority needs.

Juxtaposed to the rest of the region, Lebanon has historically had a very vibrant civil society working on a wide range of political and developmental issues. Governed by the 1909 Ottoman Law of Associations, civil society actors, non-profit institutions, and political parties have enjoyed a great margin of freedom of assembly and self-organization that is unique in the region. The right to form self-organized associations was enshrined in Article 13 of the Lebanese Constitution, which states:

*“The freedom to express one's opinion orally or in writing, the freedom of the press, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom of association are guaranteed within the limits established by law.”*

*Lebanese Constitution, Article 13.*

Lebanon has always had hundreds, and more recently thousands, of associations dedicated to work on issues of governance, development and democratization. According to recent studies there are approximately 1.3 associations per 1,000 inhabitants in Lebanon. The latest data received from the official records of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities shows the presence of 8,311 registered civil society organizations, in addition to a number of loosely organized groups.

Despite this dynamism, accurate and reliable information on the nature of these organizations, their functions, membership, scope of work, and overall influence over governance and policy-making is highly limited. Access to, and understanding of, this information is a necessity for any actor wishing to promote and support civil society in Lebanon.

The report studied the relations and mutual influence of the following actors:

- ✗ **State institutions** How the state system, service delivery and policy making affects the scope and size of the associational sector,
- ✗ **Political context** How sectarian representation, political parties, security and the electoral system influences the performance of state institutions,
- ✗ **International organizations** How donor strategies, programming and agendas for civil society affects the functioning of CSOs,
- ✗ **Civil society** The existing capabilities, needs and priority issues that need to be addressed to better engage civil society organizations in development and governance issues.

The methodology used comprised of mixed methods to gather empirical data in addition to the analysis of research undertaken by secondary sources:

- ✗ **Random representative sample of CSOs** Following a survey sent out to 991 out of the 1,094 CSOs proven to be active, 261 full responses to 111 questions were received.
- ✗ **Representative sample of community based organizations** 91 participants took part in 13 focus groups conducted all over Lebanon.
- ✗ **Key informants** 12 interviews were conducted with seasoned activists and representatives of major donor organizations in Lebanon.

### DEFINITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Civil society organizations (CSOs) are defined in this report as those organizations working to promote intra-sectarian cooperation, civic participation, and inclusion in the governance and political order in Lebanon. This definition includes only a subset of a broader civil society sphere that incorporates partisan organizations, faith-based organizations, unions and others. It was selected as a definition to be used when sampling CSOs for this research.

Civil society is operating in a volatile political and security environment as well as dire socio-economic conditions.

The political order that enshrines sectarianism as the basis of participation and representation infringes on the ability of civil society to be an influential autonomous actor in policy-making. The political system Lebanon has adopted makes policy making an obscure process and one that is inaccessible to CSOs. The polarization of political factions makes agreement on policy issues difficult and hence a challenge to the role CSOs may play in policy dialogue.

There has also been a rise in security incidents including assassinations, bombings, and rounds of internal strife since 2005. The security situation negatively contributes to civil society by polarizing activists and making it challenging to reach out to citizens from various backgrounds. Security incidents challenge the ability of CSOs to mobilize actors and resources and to fulfil their mission.

Additionally, the government's lack of a concrete response to the Syrian refugee crisis has led to a deterioration of socio-economic, political and security conditions that negatively affect the work of CSOs. Whilst several CSOs have shifted their focus to relief and humanitarian aid at the local level, the tensions between Syrians and Lebanese, as well as the need for basic services in vulnerable communities, are beyond the capacities of CSOs.

Lastly, the following socio-economic conditions offer reasons as to why CSOs are focusing their efforts on development and social services:

- ✗ **Challenges to public education** Low quality of school infrastructure, low enrolment rates in public schools, and low investment rates in educational institutions.
- ✗ **Challenges to public health** Lack of national health coverage, low access to basic health services, and rise of drug abuse among youth.
- ✗ **Rampant unemployment** Higher rates of unemployment, increase of debt ratio indicating decrease in investment, and a mismatch between the needs of the labour market and education system.

These challenges prompt civil society to focus its efforts on complementing government services and filling the gaps in basic service provision. As such, the report highlights that CSOs' roles in policy making and policy development have suffered as there is increased need to focus on infrastructure and imminent development needs.

**Despite these challenges, the following opportunities are noted in the report and are suggested as reasons to support and promote the role of civil society:**

- ✗ The Law of Associations in Lebanon creates an enabling legal environment for CSOs to operate overtly and undertake all types of political, social and economic activities
- ✗ CSOs comprise a very large number of organizations that work in a variety of sectors and

many have a proven track record in development and governance

- ✗ The post-2005 period provided a space and a new means for civil society to flourish, and as such thousands of new CSOs are to be found at present
- ✗ CSOs display experience and keenness to work with central and local government authorities and have experience in policy dialogue and policy development
- ✗ CSOs are able to mobilize human resources and volunteers to support their activities, this is evident both in large and small CSOs.

## 1.3

### PROPOSED TYPOLOGY

While it is possible to classify CSOs in a variety of ways, including by regional location, size and type of sector, this report puts forth a typology based on the functional role that CSOs are occupying. This functionalist perspective helps to:

- ✗ **Delineate a role for CSOs regardless of their policy or sectorial focus.**
- ✗ **Identify the mechanisms that CSOs are using to influence policies and issues.**
- ✗ **Help CSOs visualize how they may increase their influence over policy making.**

The typology includes a ladder of seven functions that CSOs can choose to work through:

- 1-** Representation in the policy making process,
- 2-** Lobbying on, and advocacy of, policy issues,
- 3-** Monitoring and observation of public institutions,
- 4-** Protection of marginalized and vulnerable citizens,
- 5-** Building the capacity of citizens and groups,
- 6-** Raising awareness of public officials and general public on specific issues,
- 7-** Providing direct social, economic or basic services.

The findings pertaining to the typology point to the fact that:

- ✗ **Most CSOs are filling functions of awareness raising and service provision**
- ✗ **Fewer CSOs are able and committed to working on policy development issues**
- ✗ **Historically, there has been very little success in advocacy and lobbying campaigns.**

- × 93% of surveyed CSOs are formally registered as non-governmental non-profit organizations
- × 62% of CSOs are working at the national level, while 38% are community-based
- × CSOs are active in a variety of sectors
  - // The sectors with the highest coverage are: social development, health, education, human rights and environment
  - // The sectors with the least coverage are: municipal services, urban planning, judicial development, technology and entrepreneurship
- × The majority of CSO efforts are focused on
  - 28% Service provision
  - 37% Capacity building
  - 46% Awareness raising
- × CSOs target a variety of beneficiaries, mainly
  - 40% Women
  - 39.5% Youth
  - 30% Children
- × CSOs exist all over Lebanon and 53% of respondents claim to work across all regions.

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

When it comes to the organizational capacities of CSOs, the report explains that 78% of CSOs do not comply with their mission statements, indicating a grave need to re-align CSOs' activities with their original missions. This was also paralleled by the fact that only 17.3% of CSOs have institutionalized systems and policies. While there might be several reasons for this, these numbers indicate a strong need for organizational capacity building that can improve the internal systems and performance of CSOs.

There is also a need to increase the number of volunteers and full-time staff within CSOs. Most CSOs seem to rely on part-time staff due to their inability to sustain the cost of qualified personnel. Most focus group respondents also admitted to having difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers, especially at the local level. CSOs cited that their internal constraints are mainly:

- × 41.2% The lack of structured human resource systems
- × 60.5% The lack of financial resources

### CAPACITY BUILDING

The report identified the following shortcomings in past capacity building programs

- × CSOs reported that training topics are often redundant and are not based on their needs
- × Training programs do not usually attract the right people from within CSOs,
- × High staff turnover means that new learning opportunities are lost on staff members.

The most cited capacity building needs for CSOs were

- × 32% knowledge and information management
- × 32.2% relations with the media
- × 29% strategic planning

Capacity building should also focus on increasing the social capital of CSOs.

This was evident in the claim that most advocacy and lobbying does not succeed because CSOs cannot generate sufficient citizen pressure on policy makers. Additionally, the following percentage of survey respondents described their relations as mostly 'non-existent'

- × 27% with national government institutions
- × 25% with private sector and
- × 18% with media

### EXTERNAL CHALLENGES

The empirical data supported the initial proposition that the security and political context is perceived as the most imminent external challenge that both small and larger CSOs face:

- × The political system is seen as an external threat in 30.8% of responses,
- × Security threats are seen as an external threat in 28.2% of responses.



## CSOs ROLE IN POLICY MAKING AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

This section in the report highlights the following main observations

- ✗ Policy development in Lebanon follows an unclear process and often occurs in political spheres that CSOs cannot access. 54% of respondents said that they did not participate in any dialogue with national or local authorities.
- ✗ Government authorities rely a great deal on CSOs' opinions, information, and their suggestions for alternatives to current or potential policies. At the same time, CSOs regard their relationship with national institutions as weak or non-existent. This might mean that in the event that relationships are forged, that government will be open to input on policy development from CSOs.
- ✗ While fewer CSOs report working on policy development, those that do experience cooperation from government institutions. Respondents reported that public authorities have experience in relying on the opinions of CSOs and their information and expertise in policy development.
- ✗ There appears to be a strong sense of disillusionment, and CSOs question if policy reform is possible and if the government will respond positively to CSO demands.
- ✗ Interface with local authorities indicates that CSOs might be better at influencing local policies than national level legislation and policy processes.
- ✗ Advocacy campaigns are widely regarded as having failed either because they were not sustainable, or because of the lack of government response to their demands. Over half of the respondents indicated that they have never lobbied or advocated for policy change. From those who did lobby for change only 3.6% claimed that their campaigns were successful.
- ✗ CSOs are more involved in services and local development issues than in policy. There appears to be an unnoticed opportunity to link development work to policy reforms.
- ✗ In the vast majority of cases policy dialogue is initiated by CSOs, as opposed to the 31% of times in which it was initiated by state authorities.

## 1.6

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A WAY FORWARD

The report concludes with recommendations at six levels addressing mainly international organizations and specialized agencies or governmental institutions that aim to promote and support CSOs in Lebanon.

General recommendations include:

- ✗ Advocating for parliament's adoption of anti-corruption laws: Access to information, whistle-blower protection and the discovery of illicit wealth.
- ✗ Enacting an administrative decentralization law driven by social cohesion and local development, to increase local engagement, efficiency and accountability.
- ✗ Reforming the electoral law to increase voter's engagement based on issue-based agendas, decrease the voting age, and control campaign spending.
- ✗ Encourage Ministries to mainstream a youth and gender component.
- ✗ Support the Ministry of Interior in digitizing the CSOs registry and make it available to the public.

Recommendations around priority issues as identified by respondents include:

The general legal recommendation is to enable CSOs to be better informed of, and actively engaged in, monitoring and reforming the Law of Associations. This would serve the objectives of improving the application of the law and ensuring that its application provides the widest margin of freedom of assembly and civic activism through:

### Reform to the legal environment for CSOs to ensure

- ✗ Respect of the law
- ✗ Transparency of CSOs
- ✗ Implementation of the law

Since health and education needs were the most repeated concerns at the local level, one section addresses recommendations that aim at enhancing these services and enabling CSOs to play a more active role in public health and education. The general recommendation for both sectors is to help CSOs develop more technical skills pertaining to their advocating for better health and education as well as providing these basic services where needed through:

- ✗ **Empowering civil society to play a role in providing basic health services**
- ✗ **Reforming educational curricula to strengthen the role of youth in civil society**
- ✗ **Enabling CSOs to have a more proactive role in health and education issues**

The general recommendation pertaining to enhancing the capacity of CSOs in Lebanon is to develop tailored capacity building programs that provide learning opportunities for CSOs at the levels of internal organizational capacity, outreach for policy dialogue, and financial sustainability. This can be achieved through:

- ✗ **Improvements in the quality of existing capacity building programs.**
- ✗ **Provision of capacity building programs that suit the context and needs of CSOs.**
- ✗ **Support of social enterprise development and sustainability.**

The general recommendation at the level of CSO involvement in policy development is to create greater interface opportunities for CSOs with policy makers as well as to educate CSOs on how to take an active part in consultation meetings. This will require working with CSOs as well as policy makers so that both parties can build on each other's knowledge and policy expertise.

This could help achieve:

- ✗ **An opening for CSOs to fully enter the policy making process**
- ✗ **Improvement of communication and interface between CSOs and policy makers**
- ✗ **Increased oversight on the policy development process**
- ✗ **Leveraging CSO policy engagement at the local level**

The general recommendation is for international organizations and donors to develop their programs based on a needs assessment that is conducted in a participatory manner with CSOs. Also, as funding sustainability is a major issue, international organizations should help local CSOs find alternative sources of financing for their activities from within Lebanon's private sector. In order to leverage the role of international organizations, the report recommends working towards:

- ✗ **Improvement of communication between CSOs and international donors**
- ✗ **Promotion of transparency in aid and funding procedures**
- ✗ **The prolonging of programming where possible**

The final recommendation is to develop a results-based strategy that will help unite and leverage efforts by CSOs and the international community. The results-based strategy includes the following six goals that should be the core of any program supporting CSOs:

- ✗ **Improving internal systems and structures of CSOs**
- ✗ **Enhancing the strategic orientations (issues and functions) of CSOs**
- ✗ **Ensuring the organizational and financial sustainability of CSOs**
- ✗ **Leveraging the involvement of CSOs in policy development**
- ✗ **Citizens in communities must be more cohesive and capable of managing tensions**
- ✗ **Citizens in communities must be economically active and entrepreneurial**
- ✗ **Citizens in communities must have access to basic rights and services**



## 2 INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

This report was written as part of the “Regional Capacity Building Program for Civil Society – South Facility”, funded by the EU and implemented locally by Transtec. Beyond Reform & Development (BRD) was awarded the contract for mapping civil society organizations in Lebanon. The following report is based on research carried out over five months and provides a description of the context within which civil society operates in Lebanon as well as an analysis of its role and priority needs<sup>1</sup>.

Across the Middle East and North Africa the mass movements and uprisings of citizens demanding reforms and political change have refocused the attention of international organizations on the role of civil society and non-state actors. Prior to the uprisings, international organizations had dubbed civil society and non-state actors in the region as largely incapable of influencing politics or as co-opted by dictatorship regimes at best.

Juxtaposed to the rest of the region, Lebanon has historically had a very vibrant civil society working on a wide range of political and developmental issues<sup>2</sup>. Governed by the 1909 Ottoman Law of Associations, civil society actors, non-profit institutions, and political parties have enjoyed a great margin of freedom of assembly and self-organization that was historically unique in the region. The right to form self-organized associations was enshrined in Article 13 of the Lebanese Constitution stating:

Lebanon has always had hundreds, and more recently thousands, of associations dedicated to working on issues of governance, development and democratization. According to recent studies there are approximately 1.3 associations per 1,000 inhabitants in Lebanon. Official records obtained from the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities suggest that, as of March 2013, there were 8,311 registered non-governmental organizations.

Despite this dynamism, accurate and reliable information on the nature of these organizations, their functions, membership, scope of work, and overall influence over governance and policy-making is highly limited. Access to, and understanding of, this information is a necessity for any actor wishing to promote and support civil society in Lebanon.

<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed account of these changes in perspective see Francesco Cavatorta, “Arab Spring: The Awakening of Civil Society” in *The Awakening of Civil Society in the Mediterranean* (2012): 75-81.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Nawaf Salam, “Civil Society in the Arab World” *Harvard Legal Islamic Studies Program* (2002): 1-17.

## CSOS IN LEBANON ENJOY A UNIQUE MARGIN OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION COMPARED TO OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES IN THE REGION.

The EU continues to be committed to promoting and nurturing civil society and non-state actors in Lebanon especially after 2005. The EU has successfully launched structured dialogues with civil society to promote the participation of non-state actors in development and governance. In its bilateral relations with Lebanon, the EU has continuously stressed civil society as an important focus for cooperation and dialogue. The mapping undertaken for their report aims to complement the work of the EU by providing up-to-date, reliable information on the state of civil society in Lebanon and the needs and requirements that must be addressed in order to enhance its role.

In the experience of the EU as well as other developmental organizations, mapping has emerged as an important tool and a prerequisite for supporting civil society and non-state actors. Prior to this report, in-depth mapping has been largely overlooked and has been one of the causes of the ambiguity surrounding the work and efforts of civil society and non-state actors.

### Therefore the objectives of this mapping are to

- ✗ Research and categorize existing civil society organizations within a typology of actors,
- ✗ Inform EU decision makers of the potential for, as well as needs of, civil society in Lebanon,
- ✗ Provide a comprehensive overview of civil society actors in Lebanon.

### This comprehensive overview has covered

- ✗ An existing and verifiable number of organizations,
- ✗ Types of activities undertaken by civil society,
- ✗ The geographical focus areas of civil society,
- ✗ An assessment of capacity building needs,
- ✗ An analysis of civil society's engagement in policy making
- ✗ Recommendations for future interventions to support civil society.

### In order to do so, the methodology is designed to overcome the following challenges

- ✗ Absence of a Freedom of Information Law: There are no reliable and accessible sources of information for research on civil society or state institutions.
- ✗ Lack of an agreed upon classification of actors: There is no consensus as to how to classify civil society actors globally and specifically in Lebanon.
- ✗ The tendency to focus only on registered non-governmental groups: There is a rise in the number of informal and unregistered movements that merits careful analysis.

The report mapping methodology is designed to be:

- ✗ **SYSTEMIC** Addressing overall governance system issues pertaining to the role

and type of civil society and non-state actors.

- ✗ **PARTICIPATORY** Engaging and involving civil society and non-state actors in the design, implementation and diffusion of the assessment.
- ✗ **ACTIONABLE** Proposing concrete and practical activities that can be taken to address the needs of civil society and non-state actors.
- ✗ **PURPOSEFUL** Focusing the vision of promoting democratic governance through civil society organizations and non-state actors that can foster democratic values and processes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The conceptual framework was developed based on initial meetings with key informants, as well as on literature on Lebanese civil society which highlighted the following interconnected dimensions that had to be researched:

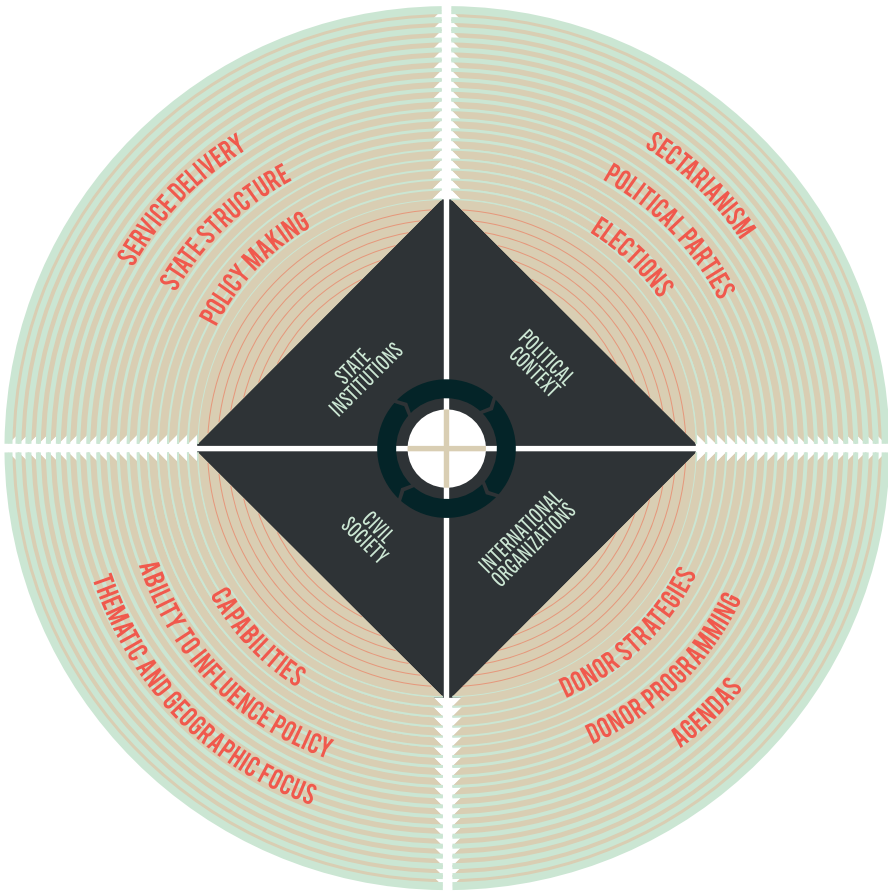


Figure1  
Framework of the Study

Once the framework clearly showed the interconnected nature of these four sets of actors, the methodology was designed to

- ✗ Identify the influence of Lebanon’s state institutions on its developmental and political needs,
- ✗ Research and understand the impact of consociational politics on the potential for civil society to affect policy making,
- ✗ Exhibit the existing state of civil society’s capacities and areas of focus,
- ✗ Explore the role that international organizations are taking and what they can do to support civil society.

Therefore, the methodology was carried out using the following mixed methods

METHOD	TARGET AUDIENCE // GROUP	DATA COLLECTED
SCOPING OF RESEARCH TOOLS	Policy experts and academics	<div>✗ Research questions</div> <div>✗ Methods and tools</div> <div>✗ Suggested typology</div>
ARCHIVAL RESEARCH	Ministry of Social Affairs Ministry of Interior and Municipalities Lebanon Support database	<div>✗ Database of civil society organizations</div> <div>✗ Historical context</div> <div>✗ Existing classification of activities</div>
SURVEY	Civil society organizations (registered and unregistered) across Lebanon – random representative sample	<div>✗ Civil society institutional set up</div> <div>✗ Priority needs</div> <div>✗ Areas of activity</div> <div>✗ Impact on policy dialogue</div>
FOCUS GROUPS	Representatives of civil society organizations (registered and unregistered) across Lebanon – random representative sample	<div>✗ Validation of initial survey findings</div> <div>✗ Capacity building needs</div> <div>✗ Challenges faced</div>
SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS	Representatives of major donors and international organizations	<div>✗ Donor strategies</div> <div>✗ Experience with civil society</div> <div>✗ Perception of needs</div>

The mixed methodology helped ensure that multiple sources of information from the main target groups of the conceptual framework were available for this research.

More specifically the following explains how the methods were applied

- ✗ **DESK RESEARCH** A thorough review of existing reports, strategies and literature available on Lebanon<sup>3</sup>.
- ✗ **QUANTITATIVE DATA** A questionnaire distributed and hosted on Limesurvey and comprised of 111 questions. It was sent to 991 out of the 1,094 civil society organizations that were identified as being active (the remaining number were unreachable via email or telephone). The survey was completed by 518 respondents, representing a response rate of over 50%, with 261 of the respondents providing full answers.
- ✗ **QUALITATIVE DATA** from focus groups: A total of 13 focus groups in different locations across the Bekaa, South, North, Beirut and Mount Lebanon was held

<sup>3</sup> See bibliography for more detail.



covering a sample of 91 participants. Focus groups and visits to localities were accompanied by interviews with local stakeholders as well as municipal members and business associations who knew of, and had worked with, local civil society groups.

✗ **QUALITATIVE DATA FROM INTERVIEWS** A total of 12 interviews with donors and legal experts were conducted to explore the challenges and priorities identified in the focus groups. The interviews helped validate findings and presented actionable recommendations.

## 2.2

## RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

- ✗ Access to data on the number and spread of CSOs was challenging and we generated our sample from the most active CSOs that were found on several lists of donor agencies or public databases. In total our survey reached 991 groups that comprise the most active CSOs in the country, but only 10% of the total number of groups that are allegedly present.
- ✗ Our analysis of funding strategies and donor agendas was based on interviews and secondary research. Too few donors share their yearly plans and budgets to allow for a more rigorous analysis. Additionally, the numbers received by civil society and declared by the donors are much less than the actual amounts brought into the country and that are shaping the agenda.
- ✗ Data collection was conducted between March and July 2014 and was thus influenced by the factors affecting civil society during that period of time, namely the security situation and the tensions emanating from programming on the response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

### Research delimitations

- ✗ The mapping was comprehensive, targeting all types of CSOs (registered and unregistered, local and national, Beirut-based and regional, small and big CSOs, etc...) and all precautions were taken to assure participation of all factions at all levels of work.
- ✗ The sample of 10% of identified organizations was largely representative of: Organizations of varying years of experience, geographical focus, types of activities and sectors covered.
- ✗ The profile of the respondents was representative of gender, age groups, geographical regions and political and religious backgrounds.
- ✗ The mapping was based on contextualizing international approaches to classification of civil society organizations and proposes a new and useful typology for the case of Lebanon.
- ✗ Research was carried out in phases allowing each source of data to be validated and supported by other sources along the way.

# 3

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

This section explains the situation and environment within which CSOs are operating in Lebanon. This analysis highlights the constraints that civil society must deal with at the political, security, and socio-economic levels. The recent crisis caused by the influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon is also presented as a major element of the situation at present.

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## POLITICAL AND LEGAL OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

*“The freedom to express one's opinion orally or in writing, the freedom of the press, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom of association are guaranteed within the limits established by law.”*

*Lebanese Constitution, Article 13.*

Paragraph (B) in the constitution preamble stipulates that “Lebanon is a founding and active member of the United Nations Organizations and abides by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the government shall embody these principles in all fields and areas without exception.”<sup>4</sup> Lebanon ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)<sup>5</sup> in 1972, which provides the main foundations from which all the rights of associations are derived<sup>6</sup>.

**EVERYONE SHALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION WITH OTHERS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO FORM AND JOIN TRADE UNIONS FOR THE PROTECTION OF HIS INTERESTS. NO RESTRICTIONS SHALL BE PLACED ON THE EXERCISE OF THIS RIGHT OTHER THAN THOSE WHICH ARE PRESCRIBED BY LAW AND WHICH ARE NECESSARY IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY IN THE INTERESTS OF NATIONAL SECURITY OR PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC ORDER, THE PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH OR MORALS, OR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF OTHERS.**

<sup>4</sup> Lebanese Constitution. (n.d.) Republic of Lebanon, Ministry of Information. Retrieved July 16, 2014, from <http://www.ministryinfo.gov.lb/en/sub/Lebanon/LebaneseConstitution.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. (n.d.) United Nations for Human Rights Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights. Retrieved June 18, 2014, from <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> VI. Lebanon's International Obligations. Human Rights Watch. September 16, 2010. Retrieved June 7, 2014, from <http://www.hrw.org/es/node/93004/section/10>

While on paper the law protects freedom of assembly, in effect there are a number of political constraints that civil society actors have had to work through over the years. In addition, the weak capacity of public institutions to respond to civil society's demands pose another constraint.

When mass uprisings in the Arab World were accompanied by regime change, many hailed the ‘Lebanese model’ as a formula for stability in divided societies, as Lebanon was able to maintain its pluralistic character despite deep and longstanding political divisions<sup>7</sup>. Lebanon's ability to overcome cycles of conflict was attributed to this power-sharing model, one that guaranteed representation for its main sectarian groups.

Formally, the Lebanese political system does not require religious representation, but informally the system, and all its institutions, is based on the acquiescence of sectarian religious groups in the following manners<sup>8</sup>:

- ✕ Political decisions require a process of consensus building among sectarian leaders whose groups enjoy almost complete autonomy afforded to them by the Ottoman millet system that has been maintained from the mid-nineteenth century<sup>9</sup>.
- ✕ The Lebanese political system's focus on sectarian leadership has emphasised a sectarian identity and belonging, which in turn exacerbated social and political cleavages among the Lebanese<sup>10</sup>.
- ✕ Representation takes place through political parties of a homogenous sectarian base, because there is little incentive for intra-communal parties that would represent a national constituency<sup>11</sup>.
- ✕ Election to office takes place through an electoral system where sectarian belonging is the basis for candidacy, voting, and representation<sup>12</sup>. Sectarianism within institutions requires that civil service appointments, and promotions in the public sector, be based on sectarian belonging<sup>13</sup>.
- ✕ Education policies pertaining to what curricula are taught, where schools are built, and who can access private education are also tightly linked to sectarian power dynamics<sup>14</sup>.
- ✕ The associational sector is ‘sectarianized’, with the majority of NGOs that are supported by the state belonging to established religious groups, or families of sectarian leaders<sup>15</sup>. Sectarian NGOs founded by prominent political leaders, especially after the Civil War, are also primary providers of up to 60% of basic health and education services<sup>16</sup>. Even sports, for example, football and basketball clubs, is a tool for competition between sects characterised with patron-client relations and is financed by sectarian elite<sup>17</sup>.
- ✕ A weak judicial system and accountability mechanisms jeopardize the rule of law and thus the citizens' ability to exercise their rights is almost impossible unless through their political sponsor<sup>18</sup>.
- ✕ Security in Lebanon, like any other public service, is strongly linked to political leadership and sectarian interests and as such exhibits signs of weakness at the institutional level, prompting citizens in many cases to seek security and protection from non-state armed groups<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> See for instance the Lebanon ‘model’ praised as a potential solution for the conflict in Syria by Stephen Rosiny, “Power-Sharing in Syria: Lessons from Lebanon's Taif Experience,” *Middle East Policy* 20, no. 3 (2012): 41-55.

<sup>8</sup> See Tamirace Fakhoury, “Debating Lebanon's Power-sharing Model,” and Ralph Crow, “Religious Sectarianism in the Lebanese Political System,” *The Journal of Politics* 24, no. 3 (1962): 489-520.

<sup>9</sup> Simon Haddad, “Lebanon: From Consociation to Conciliation,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 15, no. 3-4 (2009): 411.

<sup>10</sup> Iliya Hanik, “Toward a New Perspective on Secularism in Multicultural Societies,” in Lebanon in Limbo: Theodor Hanif and Nawaf Salam eds., (Berlin: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2003).

<sup>11</sup> The sectarian homogeneity of political parties cited historically by scholars was evident again in a research conducted on the 14 political parties currently represented in Lebanon's parliament. See Carmen Geha, “Role of Lebanese Youth in Elections and Political Parties: A Comparative Study,” (Beirut: United Nations Development Program, 2013).

<sup>12</sup> See Iliya Hanik, “Voting Participation and Political Integration in Lebanon 1943 – 1974,” *Middle East Studies* 16, no. 1 (1980): 27-48 and more recently Imad Salamey and Rihys Payne, “Parliamentary Consociationalism in Lebanon: Equal Citizenry vs. Quota Confessionalism,” *The Journal of Legislative Studies* 14, no. 4 (2008): 451-473.

<sup>13</sup> On how this causes rampant corruption see Charles Adwan, “Corruption in Reconstruction: The Cost of National Consensus in Post-War Lebanon,” Centre for International Private Enterprise <http://www.cipe.org/sites/default/files/publication-docs/adwan.pdf> (2004), (accessed June 10th 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Charbel Nahas, “Finance and Political Economy of Higher Education in Lebanon,” in Financing Higher Education in Arab Countries: Ahmad Galal and Taher Kanaan eds., Beirut: Economic Research Forum Report (2010), 49-86.

<sup>15</sup> Jad Chaaban and Karin Seyfert, “Faith-based NGOs in a Multi-Confessional Society: Evidence from Lebanon,” Beirut: Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies. (2012), 1-21.



These specificities of the Lebanese system limit the ability of CSOs to influence decision-making within public institutions. Moreover, the geopolitical conditions the country is facing and the local instability and insecurity characterize the broad context within which CSOs function in Lebanon. In particular, since 2011 the Syrian conflict has resulted in the influx of a large number of Syrian refugees, which has again had implications for CSOs.

**ALL INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS SUGGESTED THAT THE LINK BETWEEN CSO WORK AND REFORM OUTCOMES IS DIFFICULT TO PROVE, AND THIS CONTRIBUTES TO THE DISILLUSIONMENT OF ACTIVISTS WORKING ON POLICY DIALOGUE AND POLICY MAKING.**

After 2011, CSOs began providing basic services to citizens and refugee communities. On the other hand, CSOs have recently continued to play the role of a catalyst to empower citizens to advocate for reform and change. Though, to this day it is difficult to prove that the work of CSOs made concrete changes to policies, reforms and governance practices.

<sup>16</sup> Karim Elbayan, "NGO Laws in Selected Arab States," *International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law* 7, no. 4 (2005): 3-27.

<sup>17</sup> See Danyel Reiche, "War minus the Shooting? The Politics of Sports in Lebanon as a Unique Case in Comparative Politics," *Third World Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (2011): 261-277.

<sup>18</sup> Integrity in Reconstruction (n.d.), Integrity Action, Retrieved June 17, 2014, from <http://www.integrityaction.org/sites/www.integrityaction.org/files/documents/files/Lebanon%20Summary.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> El-Hokayem, Emile and Elena McGovern, "Towards a More Secure and Stable Lebanon: Prospects for Security Sector Reform", The Henry L. Stimson Center, February 2008.

<sup>20</sup> CSOs role in policy and policy reforms remains shy for a variety of reasons, most recently this shortcoming was attributed to the way that elites and politicians have succeeded to co-opt and limit the potential of autonomous civic groups. See for instance Janine Clark and Bassel Salloukh, "Elite Strategies, Civil Society and Sectarian Identities in Post-War Lebanon," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 4 (2013): 731-749.

## 3.2

## SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The current security climate in Lebanon can be described as highly tense. All focus group members reported that they felt an increased threat of security incidents. The security situation in Lebanon has been deteriorating since 2004, seeing an increase in the number of assassinations, bombings, sectarian tension and violent incidents<sup>21</sup>.

The assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and subsequent assassinations of March 14th figures furthered the schism between the two rival political camps in Lebanon<sup>22</sup>. The year 2006 marked Israel's declaration of war on Lebanon and the conflict lasted for 33 days with at least 1,100 citizens killed<sup>23</sup>. In 2009, those incidents decreased, only to rise again in 2012.

**AMIDST A TENSE SECURITY SITUATION AND WITHIN A POLARIZED POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT, THIS REPORT FOCUSES ON HOW CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS CAN PROVIDE A COMMON PLATFORM FOR CITIZENS TO CONTRIBUTE TO STABILITY AND TO DEVELOPMENT.**

In the last few years, in tandem to the Syrian conflict, Lebanon witnessed a rise in local tensions as well as suicide bombings which occurred in the suburbs of Beirut, and these continue to threaten security and stability in the country at the time of writing. At present, the security situation is still delicate in many villages bordering Syria, such as Ersal and Wadi Khaled.

There have been six reported bombings in 2014 – up from zero in 2012, and the highest frequency of bombings recorded most recently was in 2005, totalling eight bombings (six of which were political assassinations) that year.

**The political and security environments appear to be having the following implications to the work of CSOs<sup>24</sup>**

- ✗ **THE ON-GOING DEADLOCK OF POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS LIMITS THE ABILITY OF CSOS TO INFLUENCE REFORM AND POLICIES** Focus group participants shared their disappointment in the government and the parliament's response to demands for reform, especially on issues of gender, elections, health and education. When public institutions are in deadlock, CSOs have no formal governmental entity to advocate with.
- ✗ **POLARIZATION AMONG CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISTS** Focus group participants reported that the overall situation in national politics is felt in civil society spheres, with activists having to take sides. Political tensions are making it less possible for citizens from across political and sectarian lines to

<sup>21</sup> Fares El-Zein and Holly Sims, "Reforming War's Administrative Rubble in Lebanon," *Public Administration and Development* 24, no. 4 (October 2004): 280.

<sup>22</sup> See for instance, Krio, Karim, "Is Political Stability Sustainable in Post-Cedar Revolution Lebanon?" *Mediterranean Politics* 13, no. 3 (2008): 445-451.

<sup>23</sup> Why They Died: Civilian Casualties in Lebanon during the 2006 War, Human Rights Watch, September 2007

<sup>24</sup> Findings from focus groups in conflict-ridden areas of the Bekaa, the North and Beirut.

work collaboratively through civic platforms.

✗ **SECURITY THREATS IN THE FIELD** focus group participants in certain areas shared a perception that security threats are escalating. The increase in security incidents, including a rise in crime in localities, has been accompanied by a rise in distrust and intolerance between Syrian refugees and local communities, prompting some CSOs to direct their efforts towards social cohesion and peace-building activities.

Within these intricacies of politics and security in Lebanon, this report focuses on how civil society can provide a civic platform for citizens of all confessional backgrounds and political orientations. With the broad aim of contributing to stability and co-existence in Lebanon, a 'civic' civil society as defined here would be characterized as a set of actors and organizations which would contribute to inclusive and participatory governance and which empower and enable citizens to take part in political, social and economic development.

### 3.3

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION

The social and economic context in this section sheds light on the daily needs of citizens in Lebanon. In line with the historical role that CSOs have played in Lebanon, they have continued to work on providing basic services and to struggle with difficult economic conditions.

Over the last decade, the quality of social services provided by government has been declining due to political and security considerations and because of rampant misuse of public resources<sup>25</sup>.

There is a high reliance on individual and private initiatives in responding to social and economic needs, here the role of CSOs has been critical in providing social and economic services. The following describes some major socio-economic indicators pertaining to socio-economic challenges in Lebanon.

### PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education is losing its credibility vis-a-vis private schools, and many of which are faith-based. A recent study by UNDP shows that the number of students in private institutions had reached 66% in 2010, followed by a 9% increase during the two following years<sup>26</sup>.

One of the main factors behind this increase is the low quality of public education and the Lebanese perception of public institutions. Another factor is the lack of interest and investment by the public sector in the field of education. Incidentally, the annual percentage of the governmental budget dedicated to education is one of the lowest in the world. Lebanon was ranked 167 out of 173 countries in 2011; public funding of education represented only 1.6% of total governmental expenditure in 2010<sup>27</sup>.

### PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

Within the health sector, the state is a weak actor and the private sector is the main provider, as the state's services are inefficient and of low quality. According to OECD (2009)<sup>28</sup> and BEMO (2013)<sup>29</sup> reports, the number of public sector hospital beds represents only 16.6% of the total hospital beds available in Lebanon. Moreover, there are huge disparities between regions, as Mount Lebanon counted 600 beds per 1,000 people in 2013, while the Nabatiyyeh region only counted 16 beds per 1,000 people. This can be attributed to weak planning by central government and insufficient resources for health services distributed at the local level.

Additionally, over the past 20 years the Ministry of Public Health has founded 27 state hospitals, but that half of these have closed due to poor management and financial practices<sup>30</sup>. In stark contrast, by 2009 Lebanon had 175 private hospitals with around 14,500 functioning beds, while in 2000, 134 private hospitals had contracts with the Ministry of Health to treat patients under

<sup>25</sup> See for instance Antoun, Randa. The National Strategy to Combat Corruption, Beirut: United Nations Development Program, 2008.

<sup>26</sup> U.N. Development Program in Lebanon, مكافحة الفساد في القطاع التربوي، (Lebanon: UNDP, 2013), available from <http://www.lb.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/Governance/Publications/ANTI%20CORRUPTION%20BOOK%20-%20Dem%20Gov%20-%20Dec%202013.pdf>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

<sup>30</sup> LEBANON: Patients suffer privatized, politicized healthcare (n.d.). Retrieved August 1, 2014, from <http://www.irinnews.org/report/77000/lebanon-patients-suffer-privatised-politicised-healthcare>

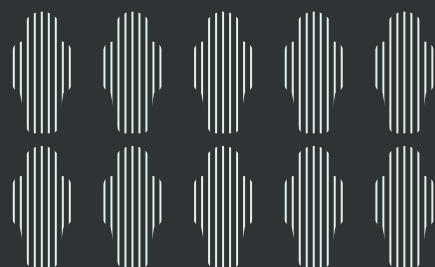
180,850

TOTAL NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN LEBANON IN 2014



72,813

LEBANESE UNIVERSITY



108,035

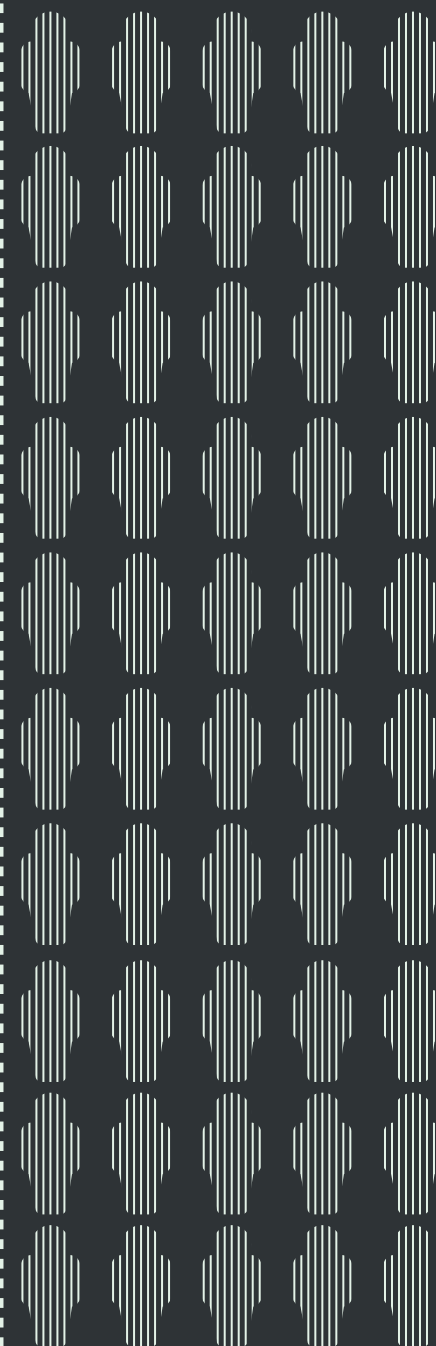
OTHER UNIVERSITIES



10,000 STUDENTS

942,391

TOTAL NUMBER OF PUPILS IN LEBANON IN 2014



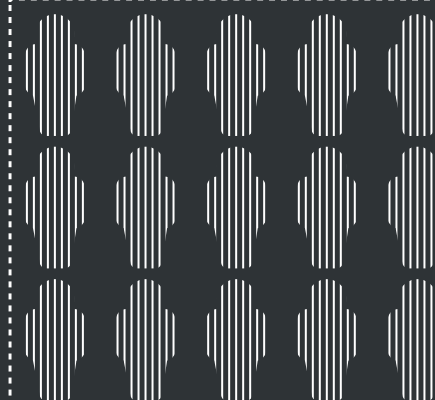
497,530

IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS



285,399

IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS



159,462

NEITHER OF THESE - PRIVATE  
SUBSIDIZED INSTITUTIONS

public healthcare. This came at a time when of a total of over 1,500 beds in state hospitals, only 300 are functioning.<sup>31</sup>

## INFRASTRUCTURE

According to the World Bank's 2013 competitiveness report, one of the key challenges Lebanon is facing is the development and maintenance of an aging infrastructure that was severely damaged during the Civil War. The indicators of the World Economic Forum are revealing as the country ranks 144th and 115th (out of 144 countries) respectively<sup>32</sup> with regards to the state of its electricity supply and roads. Lebanon was also ranked 141st out of 144 countries in terms of the quality of the overall infrastructure.

## UNEMPLOYMENT

The high debt ratio of over 180% of GDP in 2012 lowers the potential for investment and job creation<sup>33</sup> causing Lebanon to face high unemployment rates. The unemployment rate stands at 19.8% among youth aged between 15 and 19 years old (2009) and a total rate of 24% (2009).<sup>34</sup> This is mainly due to the deterioration of economic growth, and weak policies to motivate private sector development, specifically small and medium enterprises; in addition, the mismatch between the needs of the labour market and the education system means that young people do not have the necessary skills to be economically active as entrepreneurs or employees. This is leading to a high immigration rate of 8.5%<sup>35</sup> and a "brain drain" among the youth.

**LOW QUALITY OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES, RISE IN UNEMPLOYMENT, AND A DETERIORATING INFRASTRUCTURE PROMPT CSOS TO HAVE TO PLACE THEIR EFFORTS IN COMPLEMENTING GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN HOLDING PUBLIC OFFICIALS ACCOUNTABLE.**

The critical status of the public sector in Lebanon is a result of the weak institutional apparatus of a failed post-war state building process. Lebanon's institutions are ranked very badly in the World Economic Forum survey; judicial independence is ranked 131th out of 144, and diversion of public funds ranks at 123th, whereas the country ranks 127th out of 177 countries in the 2013 Corruption Perception Index<sup>36</sup>. In addition, in 2011, Lebanon suffered from having 28.5% of its population below the poverty line, including 8% in extreme poverty,<sup>37</sup> and these numbers are sure to be increasing with the influx of Syrian refugees, seeking jobs and providing cheap labour in some industries.

As a result of the socio-economic situation, and in order to fill the void, the private sector and CSOs are taking over some basic public service provisions,

such as health and education. Additionally, the rise of syndicates within public administration, the education sector and among employees working for the electricity providers, and others are one of the positive results of the situation, as it allowed employees to organize and refocus their work towards their own rights and priority issues, rather than political and sectarian affiliations.

## THESE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS ARE HAVING THE FOLLOWING IMPLICATIONS ON THE WORK OF CSOS<sup>38</sup>

✗ **CSOS ARE NEEDED TO COMPLEMENT GOVERNMENT SERVICES** Within this socio-economic context, it is not surprising that a significant percentage of CSOs have been focusing on complementing the government's role in terms of service provision, predominantly in the education and health sectors. Rather than acting to hold the government accountable, CSOs place much of their effort on filling the gap in government services. One group of these CSOs are faith-based, supported by political parties and are community based-organizations<sup>39</sup>. They contribute to the perception that the state is weak and citizens need to resort to non-state providers.

✗ **CHALLENGES TO THE MANAGEMENT OF HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES** The socio-economic context affects the ability of CSOs to access financial resources. Focus group participants stated that they are mainly limited to either international agencies, if their agenda falls within providing such services, or to political figures and religious institutions whose agenda, in most cases, is to build citizens' loyalty. However, as funding may increase or decrease, CSOs have difficulty in maintaining quality human resources. They heavily rely on part-time workers and have high staff turnover.

✗ **CSOS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE A MAJOR EMPLOYER** Increasing numbers of young people are considering finding jobs in the development sector as there might be more opportunity than in other sectors, though pay is often less than elsewhere and job security is an issue. However, there is no doubt that some international organizations' employment packages are better than those found in the private sector, making them attractive to young talent.

✗ **A NEW FOCUS ON SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP** Over the last couple of years, more CSOs are turning to social entrepreneurship and social innovation to address community issues. This is down to two main factors: Firstly, there is a need to respond to the imminent need for employment opportunities for the youth through enterprise creation. Secondly, as social needs are increasing, social entrepreneurship is gaining momentum and is helping local citizens find innovative and sustainable solutions to their social problems<sup>40</sup>. More CSOs are changing their typical non-for-profit model and adopting more of a social enterprise model to generate revenue that allows them to self-sustain<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Health at a Glance, تقرير منظمة التعاون والتنمية في الميدان الاقتصادي retrieved from [http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/health\\_glance-2009en/0303/index](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/health_glance-2009en/0303/index).

<sup>32</sup> The Global Competitiveness Report 2012-2013. 2013. Retrieved August 10, 2014, from <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-report-2012-2013/#section=countryeconomy-profiles-lebanon2013/#section=countryeconomy-profiles-lebanon>

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Finance. DEBT AND DEBT MARKETS, 2013 (A Quarterly Bulletin of the Ministry of Finance Issue No. 24, Quarter I, 2013). Beirut, Lebanon

<sup>34</sup> Kavar, M., Tzannatos, Z., (2013). Youth employment in Lebanon: Skilled and Jobless. Beirut, Lebanon. The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

<sup>35</sup> The World Factbook Lebanon. Central Intelligence Agency. 2014. Retrieved July 18, 2014, from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html>

<sup>36</sup> Transparency International. Corruption Perception Index 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results>

<sup>37</sup> Better Living Conditions for Lebanon's Poorest. (n.d.). Retrieved July 17, 2014, from <http://go.worldbank.org/CPVT6D9A40>

<sup>38</sup> Findings mainly from focus groups with representatives from CSOs in Tripoli, Beirut, and South.

<sup>39</sup> For instance the Hariri Foundation for Human Development is supported by the Hariri family and serves mostly in Sunni populated areas, the Sadr Foundation is supported by Amal foundation and serves mostly in Shi'a populated areas, the Rene Moawad Foundation is supported by the Moawad family and serves mostly in Christian populated areas...

<sup>40</sup> See for example 15 newly launched social enterprises as part of an incubator initiative on [www.nabad.aec.com.lb](http://www.nabad.aec.com.lb)

<sup>41</sup> See for example 15 newly launched social enterprises as part of an incubator initiative on [www.nabad.aec.com.lb](http://www.nabad.aec.com.lb)

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SYRIAN CRISIS  
ON CSO STRATEGIES<sup>42</sup>

The fact that the Lebanese government did not sign the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees means that there has not been a single, concrete and unified effort to respond to the influx of Syrian refugees to Lebanon since 2011. Since the start of the conflict, Lebanon has maintained an open borders policy with regard to the Syrian refugees, due to past relationships with the country<sup>43</sup>.

International community funding was low during the early phases of the crisis, but with the number of registered Syrian refugees passing one million, funding increased significantly by the end of 2013, as per the table below<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> More information is available on the timeline published by the European Commission, made available on the following link: [http://syrianrefugees.eu/?page\\_id=163](http://syrianrefugees.eu/?page_id=163), internet.

<sup>43</sup> Lebanon – Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict, World Bank, 20 September, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Syria Regional Refugee Response, the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR, Inter-agency Information Sharing Portal. Retrieved from <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>.

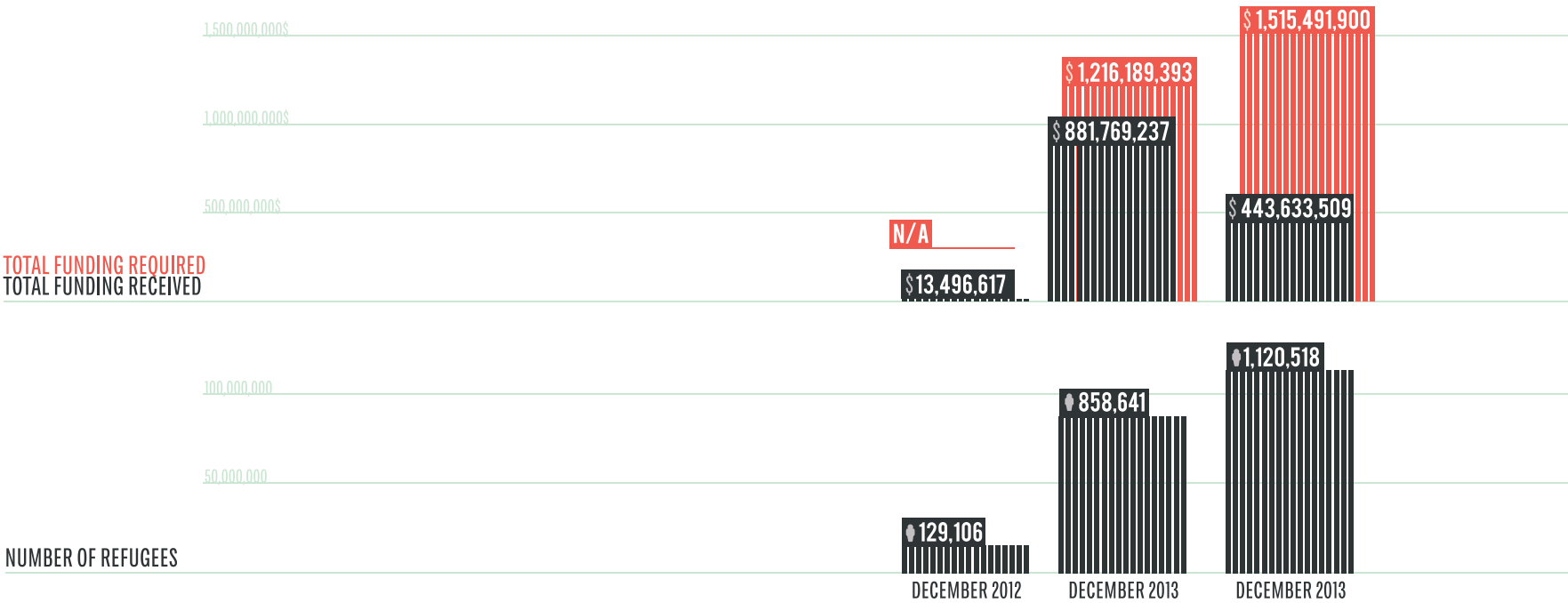


Figure3  
correlation between refugees and  
CSOs Funding

Although socio-economic challenges existed long before the Syrian crisis, where impoverished regions lacked proper infrastructure, water and sanitation, and health care amongst other issues, the increasing number of Syrian refugees, the rising political and social pressure, and the need for additional resources have worsened the situation.

The increased numbers of refugees and their continuous influx has increased demands on the country's infrastructure and on socio-economic services<sup>45</sup>. The economic implications of this crisis have been reflected in increased food prices, reduced employment opportunities, and higher rental costs. Social and environmental effects include reduced access to health care, overcrowded schools, a deterioration of water quality, and inadequate water management across the country<sup>46</sup>.

**LEBANON HAS NOT RATIFIED THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR REFUGEES AND AS SUCH ALL RESPONSES TO SYRIAN REFUGEES HAS BEEN INFORMAL THROUGH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, CSOS OR POLITICAL GROUPS.**

Scarcity of resources, employment opportunities and access to social services are some of the reasons for a rise in tensions and hostility and increasingly fragile relations between host communities and refugees<sup>47</sup>.

There are increasing risks of discrimination and racism against Syrian refugees in Lebanon, and already some municipalities are making decisions forbidding the movement of Syrian refugees in their communities after a certain hour, and in other cases, they have refused to host them in their areas.

**THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE NEED FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC SERVICES BY REFUGEES AND MANY VULNERABLE LEBANESE COMMUNITIES HAS BEEN VERY LIMITED SO FAR, FORCING CSOS TO HAVE TO EXPAND THEIR EFFORTS TOWARD RELIEF AND HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT.**

**THE SITUATION PERTAINING TO LOCAL TENSIONS STEMMING FROM THE REFUGEE CRISIS, AS WELL AS THE AVAILABILITY, OR LACK OF AVAILABILITY, OF FUNDING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC SERVICES HAS THE FOLLOWING IMPLICATIONS FOR CSOS<sup>48</sup>**

**✗ CHANGE IN THE PRIORITIES OF CSOS**

Due to the magnitude of the crisis, in addition to the donors priorities, many CSOs are now focused on humanitarian relief work among refugees and providing basic services to host communities. Many issues related to reform, fighting corruption or improving public services appear to have been sidelined for the time being.

**✗ EXPANSION IN SIZE TO DELIVER RELIEF WORK**

In response of the need to address the crisis, international organizations are extending their support to CSOs working with refugees. This has meant a rapid increase in the size of operations by CSOs, often without clear systems and internal procedures. This has weakened internal governance of CSOs and caused some to have to shift away from their original mission.

**✗ SHIFT TOWARDS DIRECT SERVICE DELIVERY**

As CSOs are taking a significant role in the humanitarian aid work, and with the gradual shift toward development among international actors with local stakeholders such as municipalities, CSOs need to work more in the field directly with their beneficiaries. The situation helped some CSOs prove their capacity as a credible partner within their municipality and local community, and these organizations have played different conflict mitigation roles at various times, such as building consensus among stakeholders and building the capacity of local authorities.

<sup>48</sup> Findings mainly from focus groups with representatives from CSOs in Tripoli, Beirut, and South.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

<sup>46</sup> Lebanon – Economic and Social Impact Assessment of the Syrian Conflict. World Bank. 20 September, 2013.

<sup>47</sup> See more on the water crisis affecting both Syrians and Lebanese in "Syria Crisis: Child Protection," a report by WASH program (UNICEF, available at [http://www.unicef.org/lebanon/Programme\\_Factsheet.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/lebanon/Programme_Factsheet.pdf), Internet).

<sup>36</sup> Transparency International: Corruption Perception Index. 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2013/results>





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# 4

## OVERVIEW OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

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## HISTORY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISM

Historically, the associational sector has focused on providing supplementary social and economic services to those provided by the state as well as to advocating for policy demands. The earliest account of voluntary associations in Lebanon dates back to the 16th century while the 19th century marks the point of growth of civil society organizations<sup>49</sup>. The 1909 Ottoman Law of Associations is still applicable to this date. It is possible to view the phases of civil society development in Lebanon as comprising of the following:

### × GENESIS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Between the inception of modern day Lebanon in 1923 until the end of the 1950s, civil society organizations began to flourish and were mainly characterized as being affiliated to the recognizable religious institutions at the time.

### × ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM

Encouraged by the Social Development Plan of President Fouad Chehab, the period from 1958-1975 saw a rise in the number of organizations working on social and economic issues outside of sectarian communities and religious groups.

### × ACTIVISM DURING THE CIVIL WAR

Between 1975 and 1990, civil society organizations shifted their focus to humanitarian needs and began working on coordinating efforts at the local level to respond to the crisis of governance caused by the Civil War<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>49</sup> Geoffroy Dasprenont, "The Development of Civil Society in Lebanon from the Ottoman Empire to the 21st Century: A Driver of Political Changes, 2011 <http://www.medeas.be/2011/12/the-development-of-the-civil-society-in-lebanon-from-the-ottoman-empire-to-the-21st-century-a-driver-of-political-changes/>

<sup>50</sup> See for instance Farid El Khazen, *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon 1967-1976*, (London: IB Tauris, 2000).

### × POST-WAR ACTIVISM

The Ta'if Agreement, which brought an ending to the Civil War, was accompanied by the birth of a new type of civil society organizations that focused on complementing and not substituting the role of government. Development issues, including a rise in rights-based discourse, characterized this period. However the presence of Syrian tutelage signalled a constraint on civil society engagement in policies pertaining to political issues (specifically elections and anti-corruption)<sup>51</sup>.

### × POST-2005 FORMS OF ACTIVISM

The Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon reinvigorated the role that civil society organizations could play in policy and political reform<sup>52</sup>. This phase was characterized by a surge in the number of registered organizations and by the enlargement of their scope of work to include advocacy and more direct campaigning activities<sup>53</sup>.

This study showed that more than 21% of existing civil society organizations existed prior to 1995 and revealed that many groups that are active now registered after 2005.

## THE POST-2005 PERIOD WITNESSED A RISE IN THE NUMBER OF SAMPLED CSOS IN LEBANON AND A WIDENING IN THE SCOPE OF THEIR WORK.

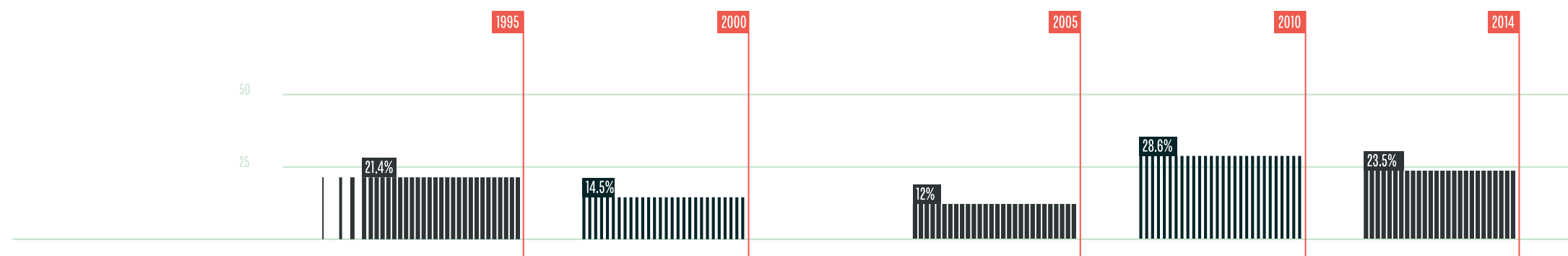


Figure 4  
Date of registration of CSOs before  
1995 till 2004

<sup>51</sup> During the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon registration of NGOs was not granted, for example to certain groups such as the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections. See Janine Clark and Bassel Saloukh, "Elite Strategies, Civil Society and Sectarian Identities in Post-War Lebanon," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45, no. 4 (2013): 731-749.

<sup>52</sup> Karam Karam, "Civil Associations, Social Movements and Political Participation in Lebanon in the 1990s," in *NGOs and Governance in the Arab World*, Edited by Sara Ben Nafissa (Cairo: American University in Cairo press), 321-323.

<sup>53</sup> See for instance, Joulia Chouair, "Lebanon: Finding a Path from Deadlock to Democracy," (Beirut: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Carnegie Paper no. 64, 2006). On expanded scope after 2005, see "Assessment of Capacity Building Needs of NGOs in Lebanon," (Beirut: United Nations Development Program), 6.



These numbers confirm that after 2005 there was a new era of political and legal freedom that allowed for organizations to flourish<sup>54</sup>. It also indicates an increase of interest by international organizations to support civil society organizations. Interviews with donor organizations for this report revealed that the change in regional and foreign policies towards Lebanon enabled them to do more overt work with the associational sector and as such also expanded sources of funding available to newly registered groups.

<sup>54</sup> This assertion was echoed in a number of academic sources including Oussama Safa, "Getting to Arab Democracy: Lebanon Springs Forward", *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 1 (2006): 22-37.

## 4.2

### A LEBANON-CENTRIC DEFINITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The literature around civil society mapping, classification and typologies is vast and proposes that civil society organizations can be categorized based on a range of criteria including: scope of work, geographical location, type of membership, nature of activities, and types of demands<sup>55</sup>.

The most common non-profit classification system is the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE), which classifies all tax-exempt organizations for governmental usage of the generated statistics<sup>56</sup>. A second common classification system is the International Classification of Non-profit Organizations (ICNPO). The ICNPO was developed to categorize non-profit organizations across the world<sup>57</sup>.

Other EU typologies, such as those used in Sri Lanka and the Philippines, proposed that three main levels were used to describe organizations, by area of operation (such as grassroots, faith-based, community-based), type of structure (such as formal, unions, professional or cultural associations), and membership (such as umbrella organizations, coalitions, sectorial partnerships)<sup>58</sup>.

#### WITHIN THE LEBANESE CONTEXT THREE PARAMETERS FOR CLASSIFICATION NEED TO BE CONSIDERED

##### ✗ DISTINCTION BETWEEN AL-MUJTAMA AL-AHLI VERSUS AL-MUJTAMA AL-MADANI

Ahli, implies community or 'kinship' based on historical family or sectarian ties, rather than class or social movements, which are covered by the term al-mujtama al-madani. Al-mujtama al-madani, which carries a willingness to move away from traditional structures and towards a more civic community<sup>59</sup>. This report mainly studies organizations of a madani, or civic, nature.

##### ✗ DISTINCTION BETWEEN FORMAL REGISTERED GROUPS AND INFORMAL GROUPS

The number of unregistered groups and movements is increasing and the report considers these in the sample identified for this mapping.

**CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS IN THIS REPORT ARE THOSE ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO CIVIC PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE, AS SUCH FAITH-BASED AND PARTISAN NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE STUDY.**

<sup>55</sup> For example, we can distinguish between urban and rural civil society, environmental groups and human rights groups, research organizations versus charity organizations, etc... See for instance criteria for classification by Stoddard 2009, Kaldor 2003, Salmon and Anheier 1996.

<sup>56</sup> The NTEE classifies nonprofit organizations according to their primary fields of activity, purposes, governance model, religious affiliation, and clientele. Developed by Virginia Hodgkinson and Christopher Troppe in "A New Research and Planning Tool for Managers: The national taxonomy of exempt entities," *Non-Profit Management and Leadership* issue 1 (1991): 403-414.

<sup>57</sup> The basis of this classification system is the "principal activity" of the organizations or the types of services and goods they provide. See Lester Salamon and Helmut Anheier, "In Search of the Non-Profit Sector II: The Problem of Classification," *Working Papers of the John Hopkins Comparative Non-Profit Sector Project* (1992).

<sup>58</sup> Civil Society Mapping in Asia: Case Study on Civil Society Organizations in the Health Sector in the Philippines, December 2010, retrieved from [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/a/a5/Mapping\\_Philippines\\_2010.pdf](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/a/a5/Mapping_Philippines_2010.pdf) and Civil Society Mapping in Asia: Case Study on Civil Society Organizations in Sri Lanka [https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/9/97/Mapping\\_Sri\\_Lanka\\_2010.pdf](https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/aidco/images/9/97/Mapping_Sri_Lanka_2010.pdf)

<sup>59</sup> See Omar Traboulsi, interview by Qantara.de, 27 June 2010, available from [http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show\\_article.php/\\_c-593/\\_nr-8/\\_p-1/html?PHPSESSID=5;Internet](http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-593/_nr-8/_p-1/html?PHPSESSID=5;Internet).

### ✗ DISTINCTION BETWEEN POLITICALLY AND NON-POLITICALLY AFFILIATED GROUPS

Most active political leaders and parties tend to create their own organizations to help them provide services, receive funds and organize activities within various target groups (youth, women, scouts, farmers, etc...). These groups are usually active, well-funded, have access to resources and thus shape an integral part of civil society make-up in the country<sup>60</sup>.

### ✗ DISTINCTION BETWEEN FAITH-BASED AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS

Religious institutions in Lebanon provide significant resources and funding to a number of organizations working on charity, service delivery and public liberties. They often mainly serve a constituency that is of a certain religious group.

These distinctions highlight the need to define civil society organizations as those that are working intra-confessionally on issues of public concern. The delineation carves a space for a subset of potentially broader civil society that promotes civic values, active participation, and that works on public, rather than sectarian, interests.

## THE DEFINITION OF CSOS IN THIS REPORT SEEKS TO DELINEATE GROUPS AS AUTONOMOUS FROM SPONSORSHIP BY POLITICAL AND/OR RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS.

For the purpose of this report civil society organizations (CSOs) are defined as those groups, formal or informal, that are active in the public sphere and working on issues of interest to all sectarian groups without direct and overt funding from political parties and religious organizations. These constitute an important subset of a larger sphere of civil society organizations. The importance of this subset is that it can claim to advocate for policy reforms without being motivated by sectarian interests. These CSOs are therefore a platform that can bring Lebanese citizens together aside from their religious affiliations to work on issues of common good.

## CSOS IN THIS REPORT ARE NON-SECTARIAN NON-PARTISAN ORGANIZATIONS, ACTORS OR MOVEMENTS WORKING ON ISSUES OF PUBLIC INTEREST AND TARGETING CITIZENS FROM ALL CONFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS.

<sup>60</sup> See for example Melani Cammett M. and Sukruti Issar, "Bricks and Mortar Clientelism: Sectarianism and the Logics of Welfare Association in Lebanon", World Politics 62, no. 3 (2010): 381-421.

## THE REPORT RECOGNIZES THAT OTHER DEFINITIONS COMPRISE A WIDER ARRAY OF ORGANIZATIONS INCLUDING

✗ The World Bank has adopted a definition of civil society developed by a number of leading research centres "the term civil society to refer to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labour unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations."<sup>61</sup>

✗ Non-State Actors (including Civil Society Organizations) as per the European Union are actors that "gather the main structures of organized society outside government and public administration; are independent of the state; often result of grass-roots initiatives seeking to bring social changes; are active in different fields (poverty reduction, emergency, Human Rights, environment etc.)."<sup>62</sup>

While these two definitions are widely cited, this report is based on a Lebanon-centric definition which excludes faith-based organizations as well as partisan organizations on the basis that these organizations constitute politically sponsored groups. For civil society to be independent of the state of Lebanon it needs to work outside sectarian confines.

<sup>61</sup> World Bank. Defining Civil Society. July 22, 2013. Retrieved from <http://web.worldbank.org/WEB/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK:220476~theSitePK:228717,00.html>

<sup>62</sup> European Commission. Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid. Civil Society a Vital Development partner. 2012. Retrieved from [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/index_en.htm)

## A FUNCTIONALIST TYPOLOGY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

The report has divided CSOs based on their sectors of activity as well as the types of activities they undertake. The research, however, proposes a typology based on function. The functionalist approach used here is based on the following assumptions:

- × **Regardless of the sector or thematic focus of CSOs, they all play a part in policy dialogue and governance depending on the function undertaken, which varies across a ladder of functions.**
- × **The seven functions identified help uncover the exact role that CSOs ascribe to when engaging with a specific issue.**
- × **The seven functions are also areas that correspond to types of capacity building programming that will be addressed in this report.**

**REGARDLESS OF THEIR SECTORIAL FOCUS, CSOS CAN CHOOSE DIFFERENT FUNCTIONS TO INFLUENCE POLICIES RANGING FROM PROVIDING A DIRECT SERVICE OR REPRESENTING CITIZENS' INTERESTS VIS-À-VIS A POLICY ISSUE.**

The following typology helps in assessing the capacity of organizations as per their function and the level of influence they have on decision making related to public issues.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>63</sup> ESCWA, دليل بناء قدرات الشراكة، Beirut, Lebanon. Retrieved from <http://css.escwa.org.lb/SDD/1703/GilbertDoumit.pdf>.

FUNCTION	DESCRIPTION
REPRESENTATION	CSOs are able to contribute to the policy-making process and voice their constituencies' concerns directly to policy makers, at the local and national levels.
LOBBYING AND ADVOCACY	CSOs are able to formulate policy solutions and recommend reforms at the level of practices, laws or policies at the local and national levels.
MONITORING AND OBSERVATION	CSOs are capable of influencing citizens' opinions through sharing information on the performance of local and national government.
PROTECTING MARGINALIZED CITIZENS	CSOs can guarantee and protect the rights of marginalized citizens and minorities.
BUILDING CAPACITY	CSOs can build the capacity of citizens' groups to enhance civic participation at the local and national levels.
RAISING AWARENESS	CSOs can make citizens more aware about major issues and their behaviours towards them.
SERVICE PROVISION	CSOs are capable of providing services and goods to fill the local and national government roles.

According to the survey respondents, the below chart describes how CSOs are distributed according to their functions; they are clearly focused on raising citizens' awareness, building their capacity, and advocating for reforms in addition to their role of service provision.

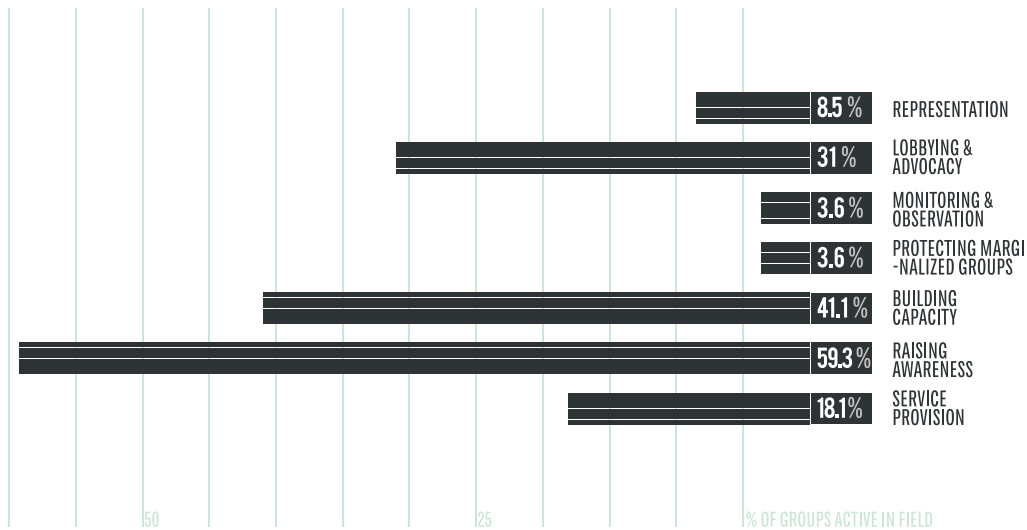


Figure5  
CSOs Functions

### 3.4 PROFILE OF CSOs IN LEBANON

Despite several initiatives undertaken to map the civil society sector, there are no accurate, official or accessible records on those organizations' mission, scope and size. After strenuous efforts to obtain official records about the registry of CSOs from the Ministry of Interior and Municipal Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and comparing hard copy databases, the following numbers represent the closest possible approximation to the real figures

**By April 2014, according to the latest records of the Ministry of Social Affairs, there are 8,311 civil society organizations registered and an additional 180 youth and sports clubs.**

The section below describes the major characteristics of CSOs in Lebanon using the quantitative data collected during the study. The survey respondents are divided between those formally registered in the Ministry of Interior and Municipal Affairs (93%) and the remaining 7%, which are informal and not registered in any government records.

#### TYPES OF CSOS

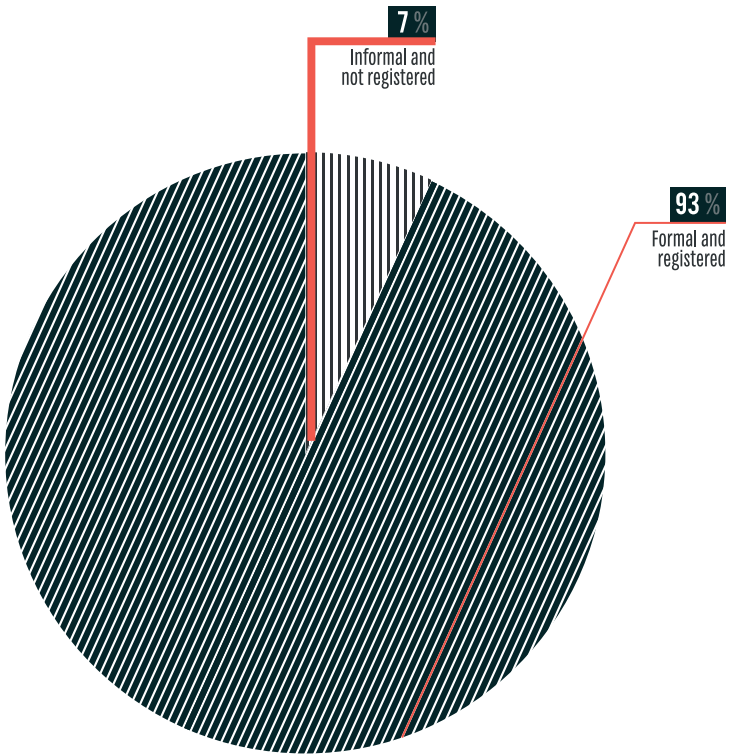


Figure6  
Formal and Informal CSOs

SCOPE OF WORK

62% of CSOs responded that their organizations' mandate is national, either because they have a national geographic coverage, or because their mission statement addresses a national issue, while 38% said that they are community based.

CSOS SCOPE OF WORK

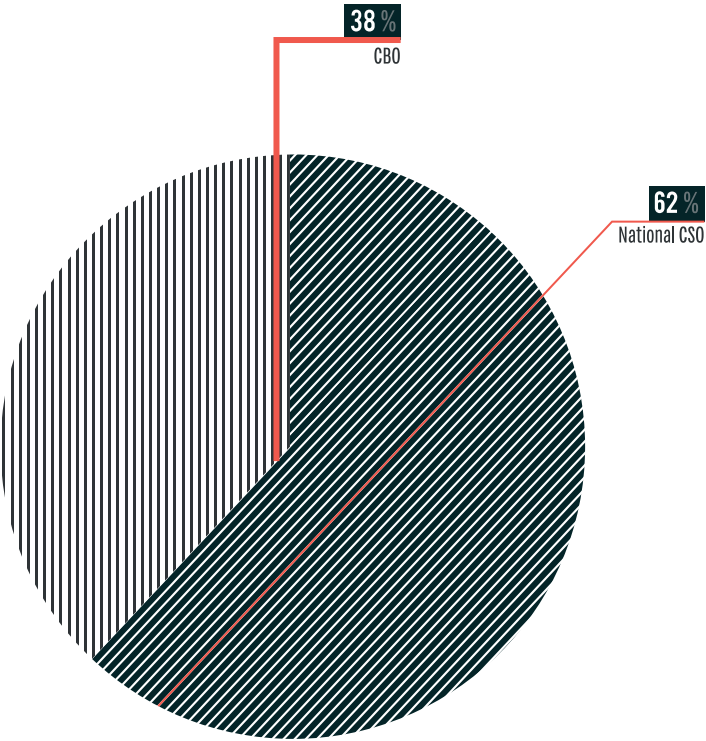


Figure7  
Scope of work of CSOs

TYPE OF ACTIVITIES

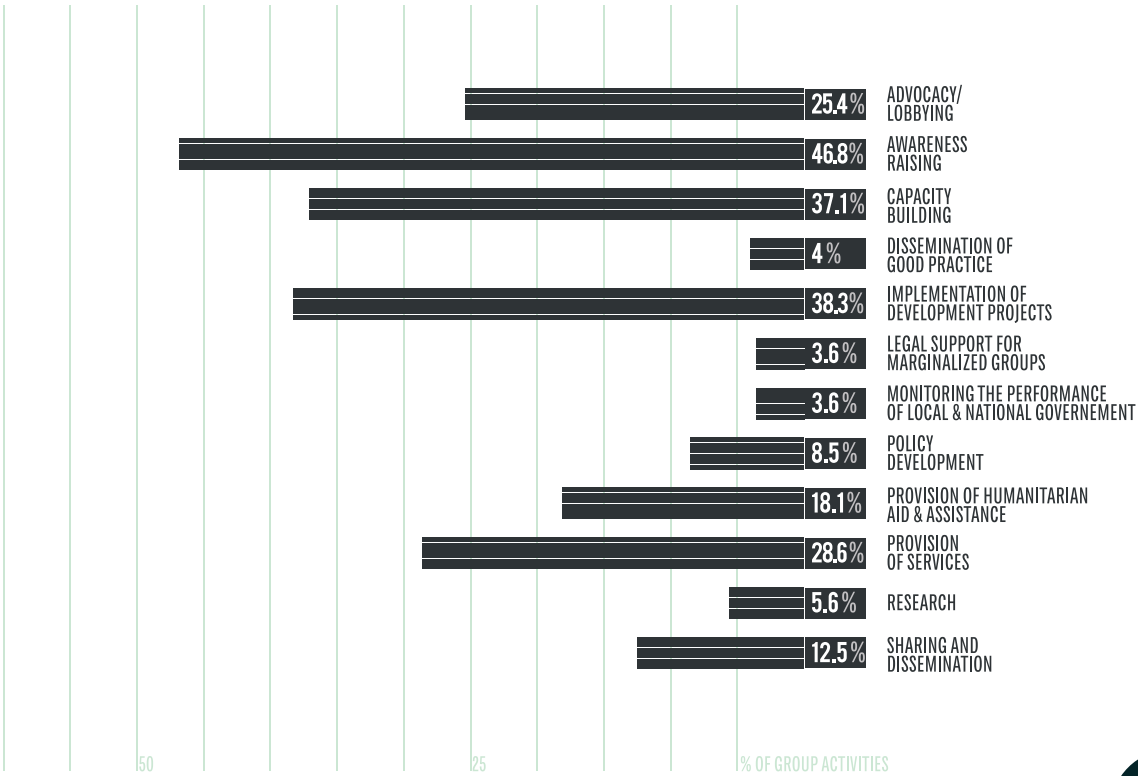


Figure7'  
CSOs ACTIVITIES

TARGETED BENEFICIARIES

The CSOs' responses indicate that some beneficiaries are targeted by more organizations than others, for example, women, youth, children and refugees receive more attention than disabled people, the elderly, workers and the poor.

BENEFICIARIES OF CSOS

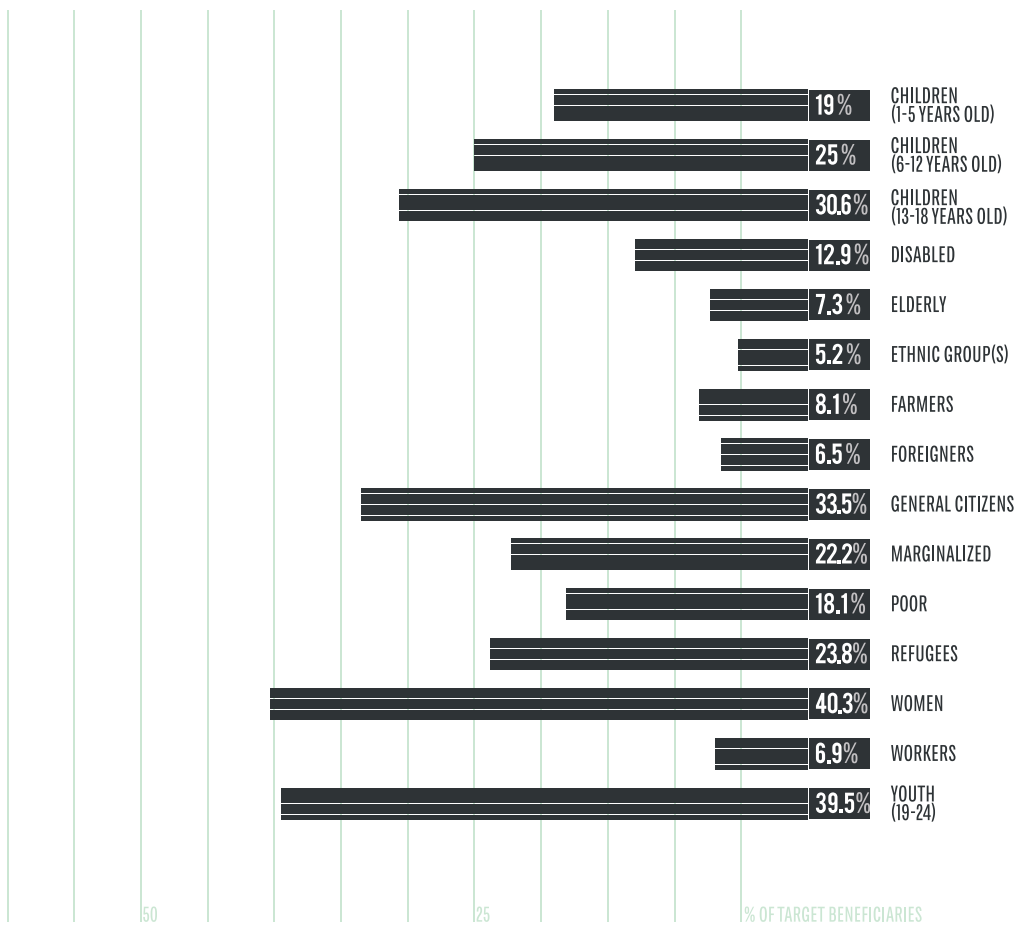


Figure8  
Target Beneficiaries

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Survey respondents are concentrated in the North with 17.1% of CSOs, and the South with 9.7%, but less so in the Bekaa (6%), while most of the 53% of the organizations that have a national focus are based in Beirut, in addition to the 6% that are based in Beirut and serve only in the capital. A separate category of CSOs comprises those active across all of the country.

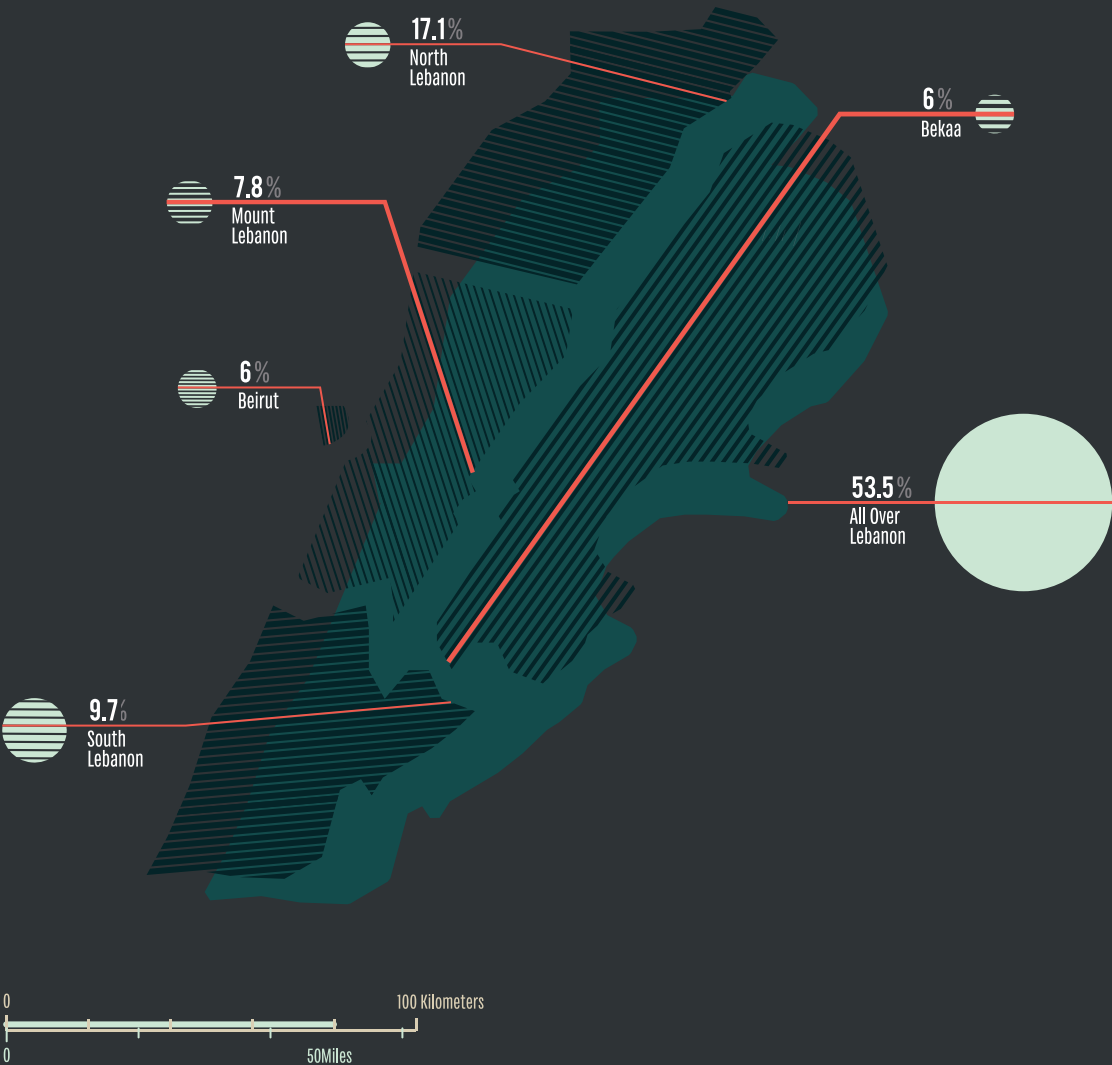


Figure9  
GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS OF CSOs  
IN LEBANON

HUMAN RESOURCES (full time and part time staff)

Most CSOs in Lebanon are small in terms of human resources; with 77.4% having less than 10 employees. There is high reliance on part-time employees, with 70.5% of organizations employing part-time staff.

Few organizations make use of volunteers, with 72.1% having less than 50 volunteers involved. Most informal organizations mainly rely on volunteers instead of staff.

STAFFING OF CSOs

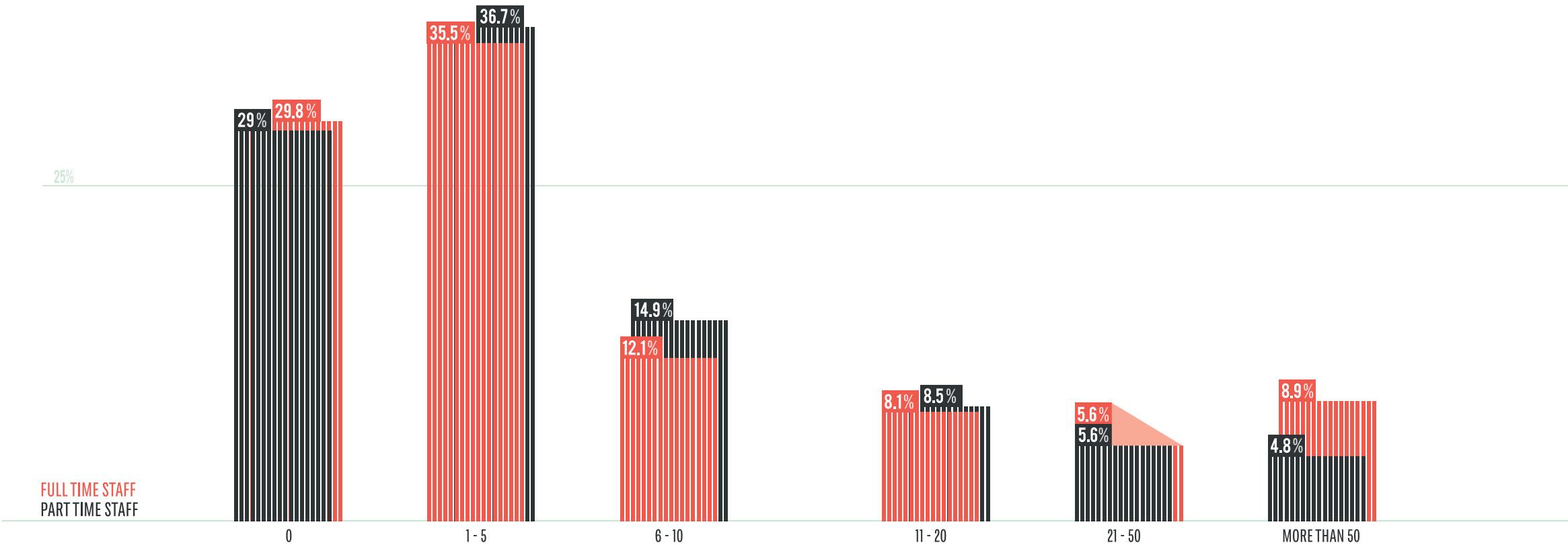


Figure10  
Percentage of CSOs in reference to number of full time and part time staff

VOLUNTEERS IN CSOs



Figure11  
Percentage of CSOs in reference to number of volunteers

ANNUAL BUDGET

More than 74% of respondent CSOs have a budget of less than US\$ 250,000, while only 6.3% have a budget that exceeds one million dollars.

ANNUAL BUDGET OF CSOs

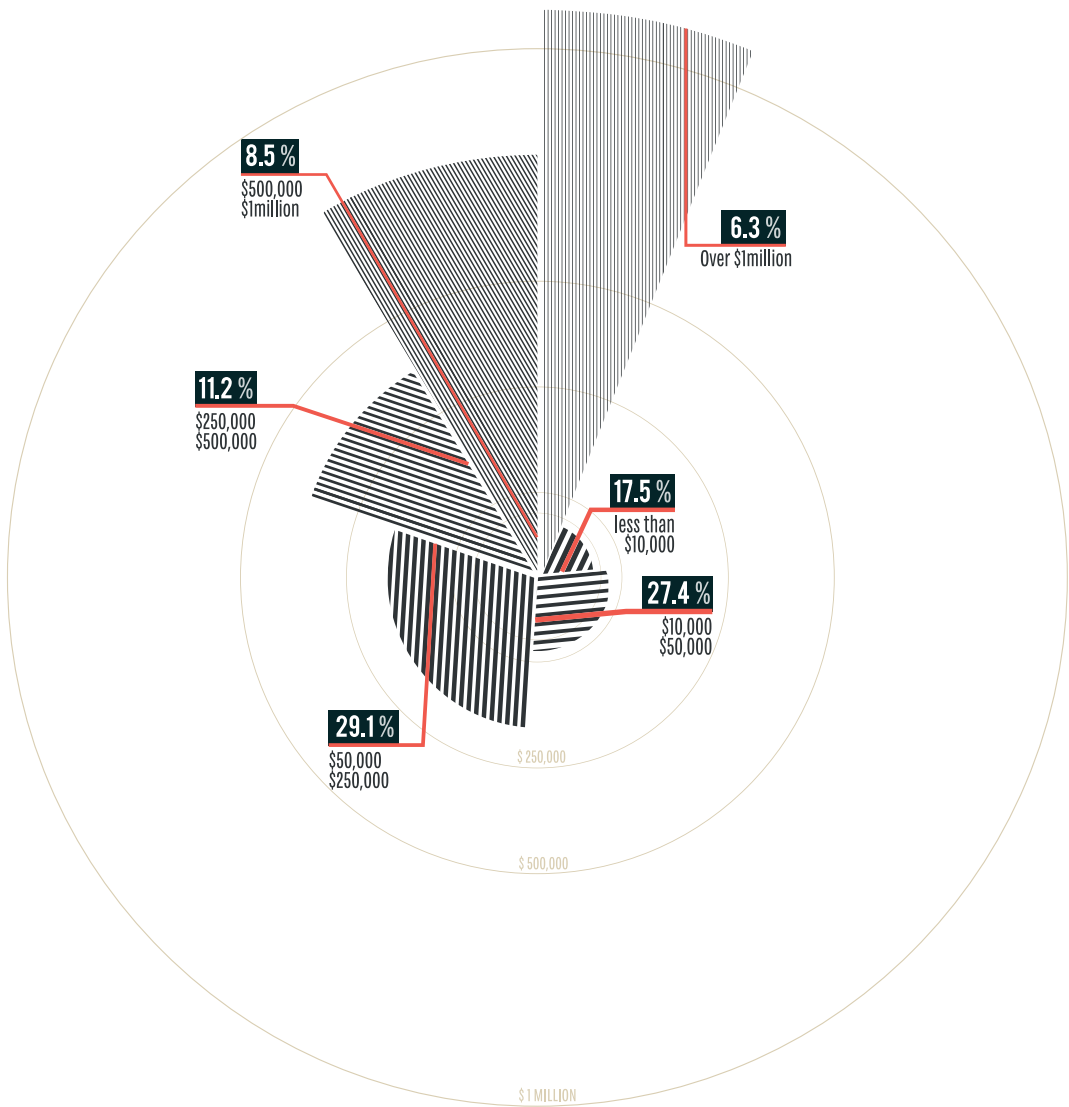


Figure12  
Annual Budget of CSOs in Lebanon

FUNDING SOURCES OF CSOs

SOURCE OF FUNDING

74.2% of the respondents receive funding from international organizations and donors, 43% receive funding from private donations, while private sector funding stands at a mere 19%.

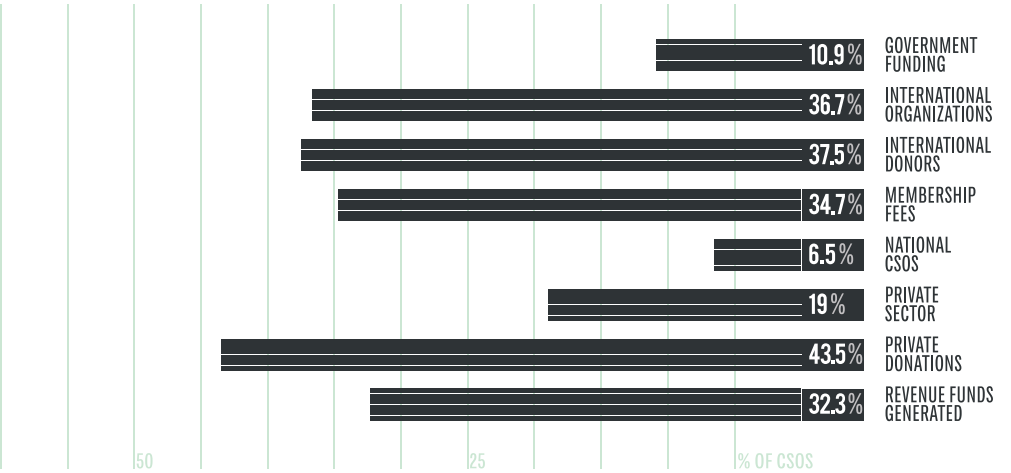


Figure13  
Sources of Funding of CSOs

CSOs SYSTEMS

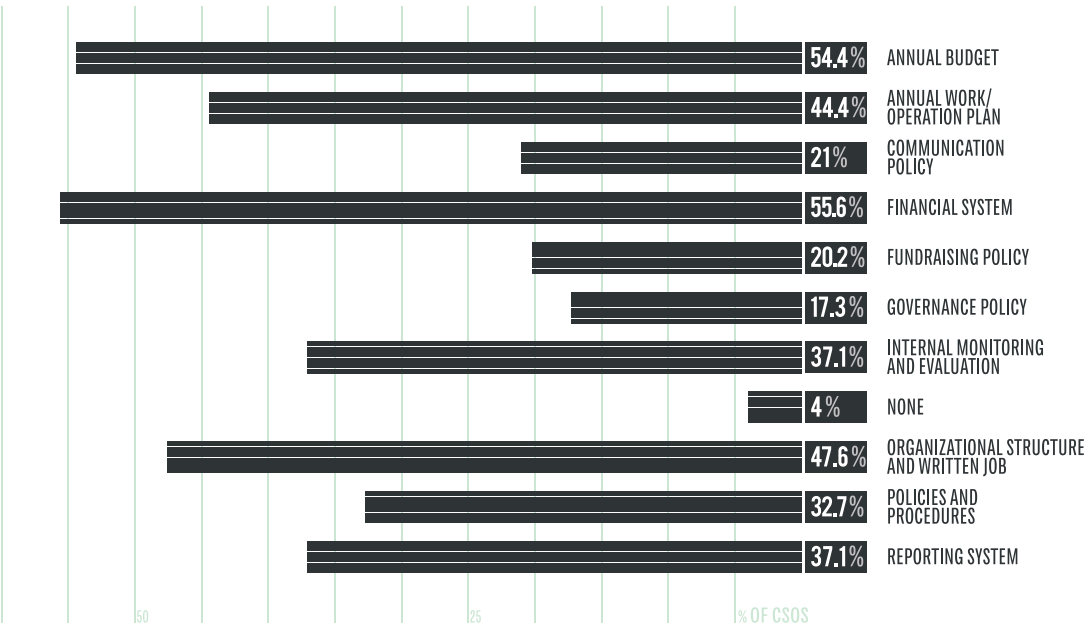


Figure14  
Percentage of CSOs having referred to policies and procedures



AVAILABLE SYSTEMS, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

54% of CSO respondents reported that they have financial systems, 47.6% have an organizational structure and 54.4% have an annual budget. At the same time, only 17.3% have a governance policy, 20.2% have a fundraising policy and 21% have a communication policy. It is important to mention that 4% of CSOs have no policies and procedures.

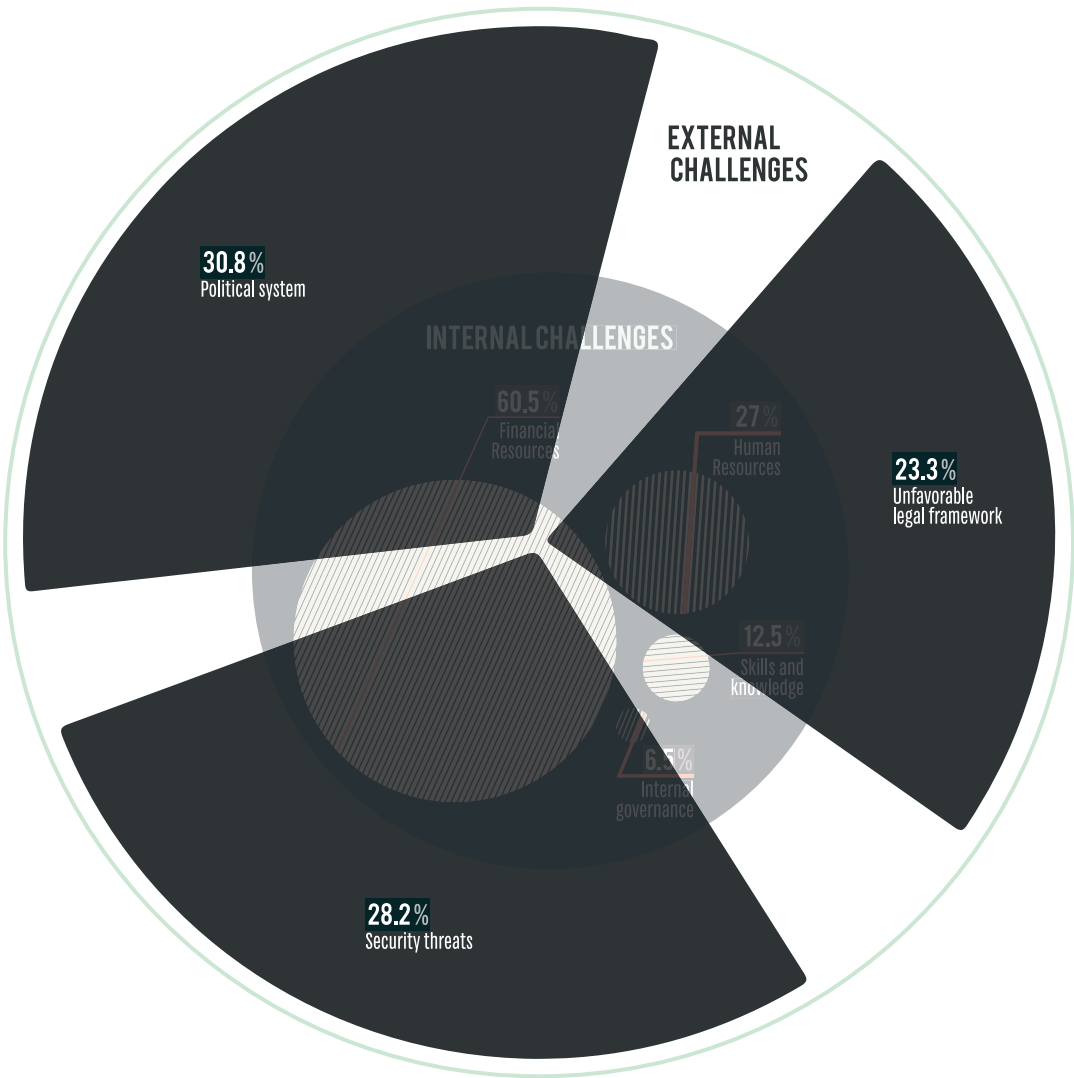


Figure 15  
External Challenges and Constraints  
Faced by CSOs in Lebanon

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

The three most frequent responses related to perceived external challenges by CSOs are: 30.8% regarding the political system, 28.2% regarding security threats and 23.3% regarding the unfavourable legal framework.

INTERNAL CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

The most frequent response regarding internal challenges facing CSOs is financial resources, at 60.5% of responses, while human resource issues come next at 27%.

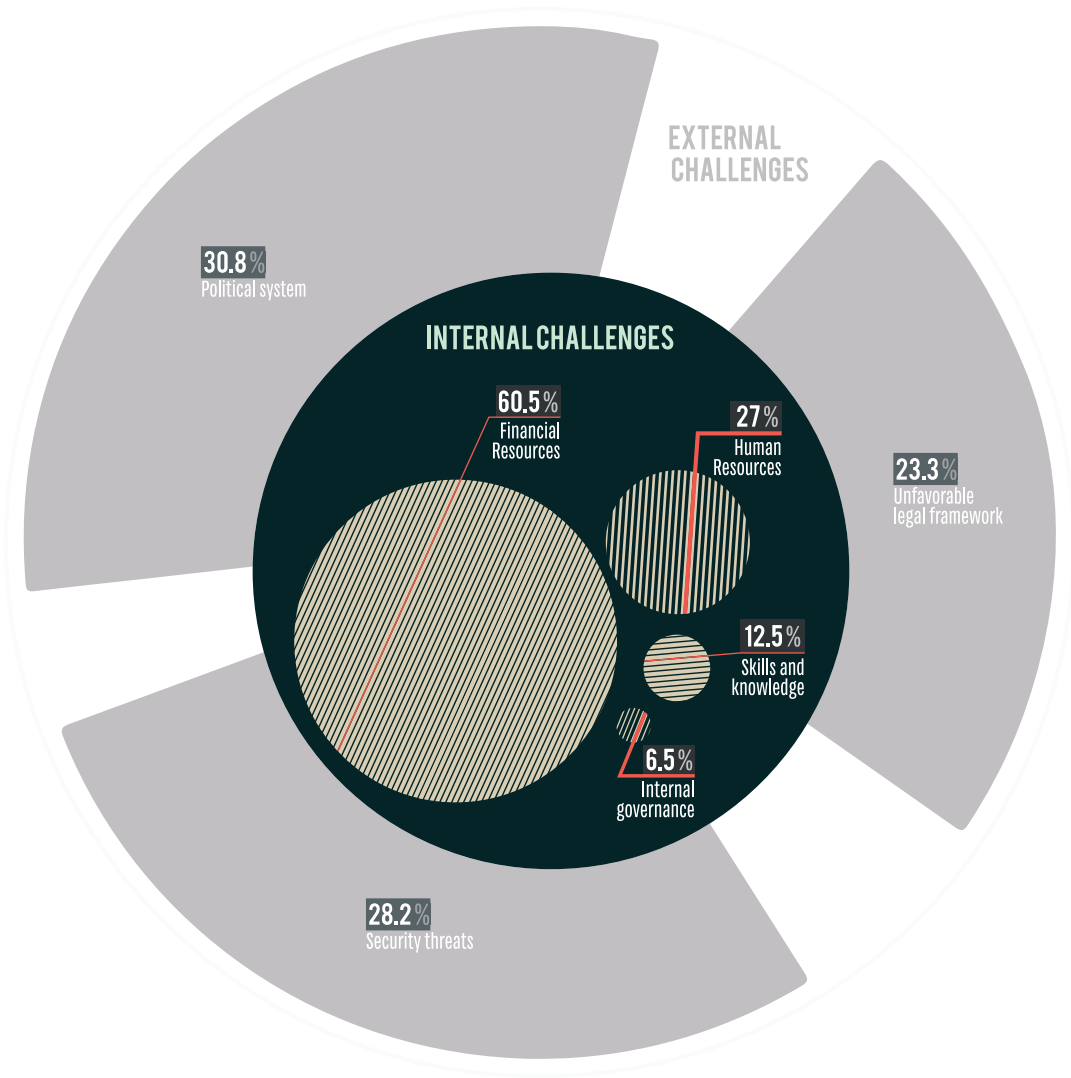


Figure 16  
Internal Challenges and Constraints  
Faced by CSOs in Lebanon

## NOTABLE OBSERVATIONS ON THE PROFILE OF CSOs

Based on these findings the following are some notable observations which were addressed in the focus groups and which are tackled in the remainder of the report:

- ✗ Only 31% of CSOs are engaged in lobbying and advocacy efforts, which would constitute the main function that enables CSOs to engage in policy dialogue. The focus of CSOs on direct service delivery and on raising awareness indicates a potential internal weakness in their capabilities as well as weakness in the government's responses to lobbying and advocacy.
- ✗ Less than 10% of CSOs appear able to function as a representative body that can contribute to the policy making process. Again, this might indicate an internal weakness or that policy making is a distant and daunting arena for CSOs.
- ✗ CSOs tend to focus on similar targeted beneficiaries: women, youth, children and refugees. This can be attributed to the fact that these beneficiaries are indeed perceived as the most vulnerable in Lebanon. However, development reports also show great vulnerability among citizens with special needs, the elderly and impoverished citizens. As such, the reason for this focus by CSOs can be attributed to the availability of donor funding that is skewed in favour of programming for youth, women, and refugees.
- ✗ Hiring full-time staff appears to be a challenge that may create high turnover of personnel within CSOs. This can be attributed to the fact that funding is often for short and medium term projects, which renders CSOs incapable of hiring full time staff on long-term contracts.
- ✗ Although the Law of Associations is clear and, when compared to other Arab countries, relatively enabling for CSO formation and operation, the legal framework is still perceived as a challenge. This might indicate a lack of know-how among CSOs in terms of legal issues, or indicate a bureaucratic nature of legal procedures that slow down the work of CSOs.

# 5 FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the findings from the survey, focus groups and interviews pertaining to five levels of analysis

- × Legal Environment
- × Capacity Development Needs
- × Engagement in Policy Development
- × Role of International Organizations

## 5.1

### LEGAL ENVIRONMENT FOR CSOs

*During notification, “founders must immediately provide a signed and stamped statement which includes the address of the association, a statement of its goal, its main office, the names of those in charge of running its affairs as well as their titles and location.”*

*Art. 6, section I, Ottoman Law on Associations Law, 1909*

The legal framework for establishing associations in Lebanon is fairly simple and normally well applied. The law guiding such matters is the oldest in the Levant<sup>64</sup>, and dates back to 1909, when Lebanon was still under Ottoman rule. Establishing an association follows a “notification system” or in Arabic “Elm wa khabar,” **the association, once formed, is expected to notify the Ministry of Interior of its existence, without the need to wait for permits or licenses for its creation, as long as its purpose is not illegal.**

Article 1 of Section I of the Ottoman Association Law defines an association as *“a group composed of several individuals who unite their information and efforts in a permanent fashion and the goal of which is not to divide profit”*.<sup>65</sup>

This however should not be understood to mean that associations are not allowed to generate revenue<sup>66</sup>, but that profit cannot be distributed, it should be reinvested in activities related to the association’s purpose.

In case associations fail to notify the government of their establishment, the law (Article 13) imposes monetary fines and even imprisonment of the founders. The Law of 1909 charges the Ministers of Interior and Justice with execution of its provisions.

However, the law is somehow out-dated and is “highly anachronistic, with repeated

<sup>64</sup> Dalia Al-Awqati, The Future of Civil Society in Human Rights Protection in the 21st Century. Unpublished Master’s Degree. 2012. Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

<sup>65</sup> Kareem Elbayer, NGO Laws in Selected Arab States. The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, 7(4). (2005). Retrieved August 6, 2014, from [http://www.ijnl.org/research/journal/vol7iss4/special\\_1.htm](http://www.ijnl.org/research/journal/vol7iss4/special_1.htm)

<sup>66</sup> Ghassan Moukheiber, & ADDL (n.d.). انشاء وإدارة الجمعيات. الناصرة لبنان. Retrieved September 2, 2014, from <http://www.ghassanmoukheiber.com/showArticles.aspx?aid=16>

references to imperial authorities and ministries that no longer exist”.<sup>67</sup> The law also has several limitations and shortcomings, and its implementation by the Ministry of Interior has not always been compliant with the law itself.

The most important discrepancy resides in the notification phase of an association's establishment.

SOME OF THESE LIMITATIONS ARE ADDRESSED BELOW<sup>68</sup>

In practice, authorities were putting forward conditions of approval by the Ministry of Interior during the establishment phase, which, in theory, should not take place under a notification system.<sup>69</sup> The actual process that is being implemented requires the association to fill in a form that is referred to as a ‘talab’ which literally means ‘request’.<sup>70</sup> The administrative office then processes the paperwork, with the association not considered registered until the notification request is approved, a registration number is given to the association, and it is published in the official gazette.

THE LEBANESE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND MUNICIPALITIES, BETWEEN 1996 AND 2005, HAD REFUSED REGISTRATION TO THE LEBANESE ASSOCIATION FOR DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS (LADE) AMONG OTHERS BECAUSE ITS WORK WAS OVERTLY POLITICAL. LADE WENT ON TO REGISTER AND EXPAND ITS EFFORTS SOON AFTER THE SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL.

There exist several associations that government authorities took several months and, in some extreme cases (Helem<sup>71</sup>), years to deliver a notification receipt. This receipt is important because without it, associations “could not take full advantage of the rights and privileges afforded to registered legal entities”.<sup>72</sup>

One of those privileges is the right to have a bank account. Without a registration number, an association is not allowed to have a bank account, which decreases the probability of receiving funding from donors. Despite that, in 2003, the State Consultative Council issued a confirmation that it is not obligatory for an association to receive a permit as a prerequisite to exist.<sup>73</sup> The enforcement of this practice depends on the views of the Minister of Interior at any given time. In 2008, the Minister of Interior instructed administrators that registration numbers should be given within 30 days of the date of notification. These instructions were not respected after Fouad Seniora's cabinet was changed.

67 Elbayan, K. (2005). NGO Laws in Selected Arab States. The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law, 7(4). Retrieved August 6, 2014, from [http://www.icnl.org/research/journal/vol7iss4/special\\_1.htm](http://www.icnl.org/research/journal/vol7iss4/special_1.htm)

68 The authors interviewed two lawyers who take cases of non-profit organizations in Lebanon.

69 Internal Governance for NGOs in Lebanon. Ministry of Social Affairs, IEC Unit. Beirut, Lebanon

70 MP Moukheiber, G., & AADL (n.d.). إنشاء وإدارة الجمعيات الخيرية. Retrieved September 2, 2014, from <http://www.ghassanmoukheiber.com/showArticles.aspx?aid=16>

71 Helem is an NGO that offers protection to the Lebanese LGBT community. It presented its notification to the Mol in 2004, but still has not received its receipt of registration on the grounds that homosexuality is illegal by law.

72 NGO Law Monitor: Lebanon. May 1, 2014. Retrieved July 17, 2014, from <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/lebanon.html>

73 Internal Governance for NGOs in Lebanon. Ministry of Social Affairs, IEC Unit. Beirut, Lebanon

Lastly, the law states that CSO members need to be at least 20 years old. This can be seen as limiting the potential for recruiting youth as members and as volunteers.<sup>74</sup>

The table below provides a description of the legal framework governing the CSO sector, including the 1909 Ottoman Association Law and its advantages and shortcomings.<sup>75</sup>

Organizational Forms	The same 1909 Association Law governs all types of associations. There are some forms that have other special laws, such as religious endowments, or foundations and cooperatives. The actual law does not differentiate between political organizations, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations, community-based, family-based or other forms of foundations. Though, after notifying the Ministry of Interior, an association's papers will circulate to other ministries, depending on its purpose, for approval.
Registration Body	The Ministry of Interior is the main registration body; though the Ministry of Social Affairs should give its approval for most organizations that work in the field of social affairs. The Ministry of Youth and Sports is also a registration body for all Youth and Sports related clubs and organizations.
Approximate Number	The Ministry of Interior's registry shows that in 2014, a list of 8,311 associations, including at least 200 local branches of international organizations, are registered at the Ministry of Interior alone. The database at the Ministry is not digital, nor updated. Many of these organizations might not be active.
Barriers to Entry	Mandatory notification of association establishment is required, and associations need to wait until a registration number is issued. Lacking a number, there are limitations to its activities, such as opening a bank account. As for registration fees, the real cost is 500,000 Lebanese Pounds (around 333 US Dollars), but associations need to ensure an office address, lawyer's fees for legal papers, and to submit internal by-laws.
Barriers to Activities	Within Lebanese law, some issues are not well defined, or defy human rights norms and are left the Minister's discretion such as LGBT or Civil Peace or Public Morals issues.

74 Lebanon's legal voting age is 21, unlike the vast majority of the world where the voting age is 18.

75 The format of the table is adapted from ICNL's NGO Law Monitor: Lebanon.

Barriers to Speech and/or Advocacy	There are no barriers to freedom of speech and/or advocacy.
Barriers to International Contact	There are no barriers to International Contact.
Barriers to Resources	There are no legal barriers to resources, whether from domestic or foreign sources. There are weak judicial transparency and accountability mechanisms to control corruption within associations.
Barriers to Assembly	Though assemblies also require a notification and not a license by law, the government has wide discretion to prevent assemblies; assemblies are banned on public roads; and there are excessive criminal penalties for "illegal" assemblies. Several cases of assemblies have been prohibited in Beirut during the last year under the pretext of threats to security. The source of the order to ban an assembly is still unclear as both the Municipality of Beirut, the Governor (Al-Muhafez) and the internal security force claim that the other parties instigated the bans.

## 5.2 THE PERSPECTIVE OF INFORMAL AND UNREGISTERED GROUPS

The unregistered groups who participated in the focus groups were a representative sample of campaigns, movements and initiatives working on health issues, political reform, women's rights, and urban policies. They explained unanimously that the main reason why they have not started a CSO is mainly because the legal framework can be limiting and that there are a lot of complex regulations involved; registration can hinder their ability to quickly respond to the crisis situations that the country often goes through.

BELOW ARE OTHER REASONS THAT THE GROUPS GAVE



Figure 17  
Additional Reasons for CSOs  
Non-Registration

The above shows clearly that informal and unregistered groups can be an important part of the broader set of CSOs in Lebanon. Whilst they agreed that avoiding registration could either be intentional (to avoid legal procedures or extra costs) or as a result of their desire to react spontaneously (such as the need to immediately react to a crisis), none of them stated that the law is unclear.

It is safe to conclude, therefore, that the legal framework is enabling for CSOs to register and operate in Lebanon, while noting the following potential threats to the freedoms allowed by law

- There is a precedent of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities having forbidden or refused registration of organizations working on political issues,

- ✗ There is a sense among informal groups that registration requires work and extra expenses which are unnecessary, whereas the law should be seen as safeguarding the work of such groups,
- ✗ Registration is required for setting up a bank account and receiving funds, and this could well be a double-edged requirement, as on the one hand it increases the accountability of financing for CSOs, and on the other hand it may stop certain financial transactions which the government would not approve of.

## 5.3

### CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Forming CSOs in Lebanon has been affected by the major crises faced by the country such as: the 2005 withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, the 2006 war with Israel, the 2008 political deadlock and sectarian tension, the 2011 Syrian refugee influx. Because of this, the number of organizations fluctuates regularly, with many of them becoming dormant and others emerging as a result of a crisis.

This section presents the main findings and analysis pertaining to the internal capacities of CSOs to act on issues of public interest and on policy reform. It is based on a representative, random sample of CSOs that were proven to be

- ✗ **Actively engaged at present in implementing programs and projects**
- ✗ **Responsive to the survey request and questions**
- ✗ **Hosting a number of staff and volunteers**
- ✗ **Known for their field credibility**

**CSOS IN LEBANON COMPRISE A RELATIVELY LARGE NUMBER OF ORGANIZATIONS (ESTIMATED TO BE OVER 8,000) BUT FOR A REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE CHOSEN FOR THIS REPORT, IT APPEARS THAT SIZE OF CSOS IS RELATIVELY SMALL, WITH OVER 80% HAVING LESS THAN 10 STAFF MEMBERS.**

The above criteria were important to verify that the sample consists of CSOs from all over Lebanon, from different regions, sectors and filling various functions within the typology proposed here. In addition, the criteria above were used to determine that no CSO from the sample which completed the survey was not active in the field today or reporting incorrect information.

**When it comes to size, most CSOs in Lebanon are small organizations, more than 80% have less than 10 staff members, more than 75% have less than 20 volunteers and 75% have a yearly budget less than US\$250,000.** This indicates as a starting point that capacity building is required to increase the size and skills of internal human resources as well as sustaining and expanding financial resources.

Despite more than two decades of investment by the donor community in civil society capacity building including the most recent examples, MEPI, AFKAR, Development Market Place, Expand Your Horizon, NGO Summer School, NGO Academy and more, the study confirms that Lebanese CSOs are suffering from weak institutional capacity, low performance, and a limited competence in policy development.



The following section summarizes the key observations related to civil society capacity.

GOVERNANCE NEEDS

CSOS' NON-COMPLIANCE TO MISSION STATEMENTS

A CSO's mission statement is a declaration of the intentions and aspirations of the CSO toward a particular change in society. Compliance with the mission statement is an indicator of the level of focus, professionalism and specialization. When organizations were asked to indicate to what extent they believe their activities are in line with their mission statements, the study shows that 78% of CSOs had a mission statement, out of which only 48.37% of CSOs expressed that their activities are totally compliant with their mission statement, therefore more than half of CSOs are conducting activities which are not within their stated goals.

This deviation from the mission statement is even more acute within small organizations, with 61.7% of small CSOs reporting that they conduct some activities outside their mission statement.

MISSION STATEMENT

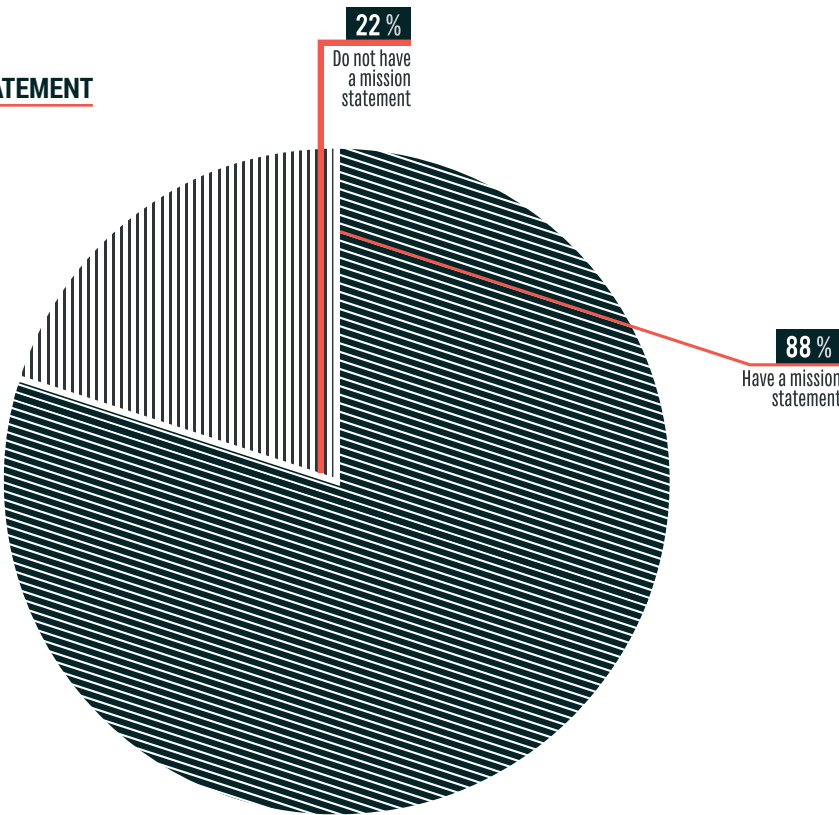


Figure18  
Existence vs. Lack  
of Mission Statement

MORE THAN HALF OF SURVEYED CSOS ADMIT THAT THEIR ACTIVITIES ARE NOT IN LINE WITH THEIR MISSION STATEMENT.

Several reasons stated during the focus groups might explain why many CSO activities are not compliant with their mission statement

- ✗ The CSOs' need for funding makes them compromise their mission statement by following the donors' priorities and strategies;
- ✗ The CSOs' internal governance systems are weak or non-existent;
- ✗ Some of the CSOs lack specialization and are initiated in response to a crisis that a community or the country is facing.

Another reason may be that the volatility of the political, economic, social and security situation requires a high speed of adaptation from CSOs in order to respond to increasing needs among citizens that are not fulfilled by the government. Interviews with representatives of international organizations, for instance, verified this and claimed that recently the Syrian crisis and donor priorities are diverting NGOs from their original focus, as a result, many CSOs don't focus on what drove their initial success.

FRAGILE INTERNAL GOVERNANCE AND WEAK STRATEGIES

Governing bodies within organizations, specifically the board and elected bodies, are largely responsible for preserving the mission statement and setting the strategy of the organization; 61.4% of CSOs respondents reported that they have a board of directors and 44.8% have a general assembly.

GOVERNING BODIES WITHIN CSOs

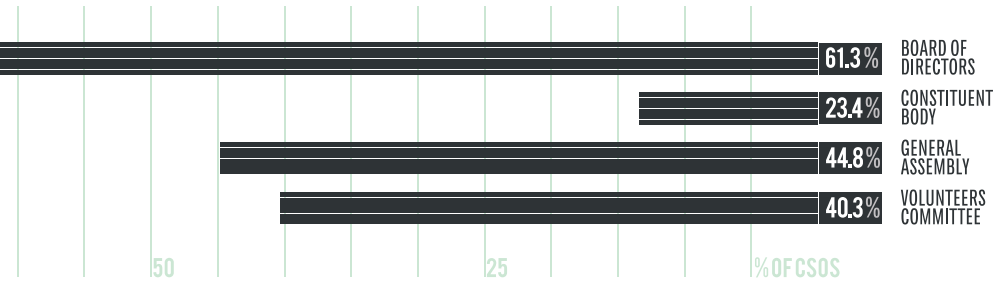


Figure19  
Percentage of CSOs with the  
referred to governing bodies

Among the CSOs that have governing bodies many said that they were not active. Additionally, 52.7% of both small and large CSOs stated they do not have a three-year strategy.

The reasons behind the weak governance systems and lack of strategy within organizations could be either the result of a lack of awareness, or skills to build such systems, and develop strategies, especially within newly created organizations. It might also mean that CSOs often require more flexible systems which cannot accommodate multiple internal layers. It is important to mention that the format of the internal by-laws used by the Ministry of Interior,

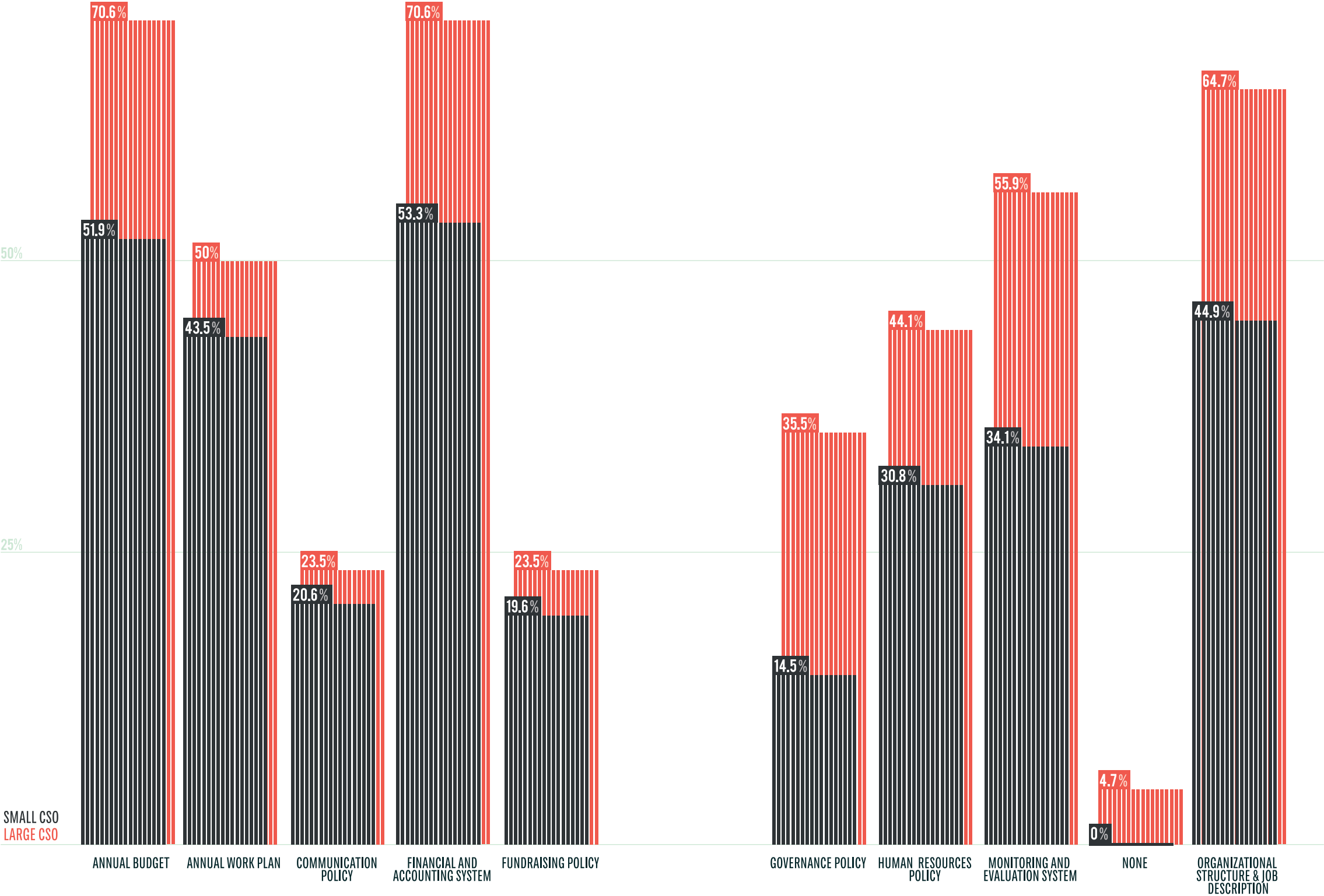


Figure20  
Percentage of CSOs having the referred to systems and policies



that includes a governance structure, encourage founders of CSOs to use it, despite its lack of suitability for all types of CSOs. Then, when CSOs decide to change or adapt their structure, they are faced with bureaucratic difficulties in registering it at the Ministry of Interior. In one focus group, participants agreed that they were unsure of how to amend their bylaws and often end up sticking to the structure they submit formally to the Ministry (though the law allows them to change this).<sup>76</sup>

LIMITED APPLICATION OF INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

Policies and procedures in organizations allow CSOs to institutionalize their practices and become more effective and sustainable. Only 17.3% of CSO respondents have an official governance policy, 20.2% have a fundraising policy, 21% have a communication policy and 32.7% have a human resources policy.

The survey results show that small CSOs have even weaker institutional systems and policies, as shown in the figure above.

<sup>76</sup> Focus group with local CSOs in the Bekaa region.

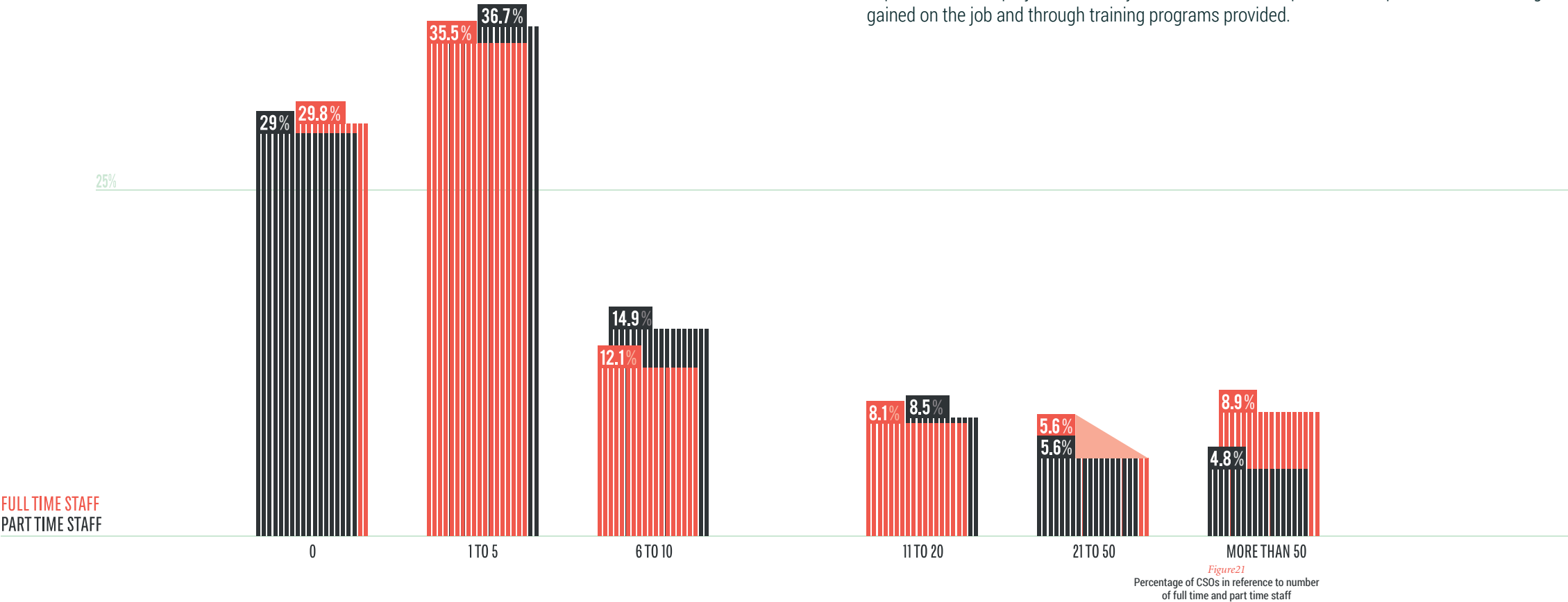
During all focus groups, participants expressed the importance of such systems and policies, but noted that they had difficulty implementing them. The reasons cited were either that they developed them, but lacked 'know-how' to implement them, or they tried at least once to develop them and they failed. At the same time CSOs understood the need for internal institutional systems and had experienced adhering to these systems partially to satisfy donor requirements for funding.

DEPRECIATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES DUE TO STAFF TURNOVER

Human resource development and retention in CSOs is critical for their performance and ability to create impact. 77.4% of CSO respondents reported that they have less than 10 employees and that they suffer from high staff turnover, mainly due to the fluctuation in funding. Most CSOs, mainly the smaller ones, rely heavily on part-time staff as a way to reduce their costs. Participants in one focus group regretted that they provide rounds of training to new staff but then watch them leave due to funding not being sustainable.

In addition, many qualified staff leave small CSOs to join international organizations partly because they receive more competitive remuneration packages. One interview respondent at an international organization explained that they usually find and recruit skilled staff from within local CSOs and that in most cases individuals would accept joining an international organization, leaving behind CSOs in need of qualified staff.

This is resulting in the loss of qualified staff among CSOs and their having to recruit new, less capable staff on a project basis, they are thus unable to capitalize on experience and learning gained on the job and through training programs provided.



LIMITED VOLUNTEERS IN THE NON-PROFIT SECTOR

Volunteerism is important as it not only engages citizens in public affairs, but it is also an indicator of the health of the CSO culture and the commitment to the cause it is struggling for. Volunteers provide an essential resource that can leverage the efforts, credibility and outreach of Lebanese CSOs.

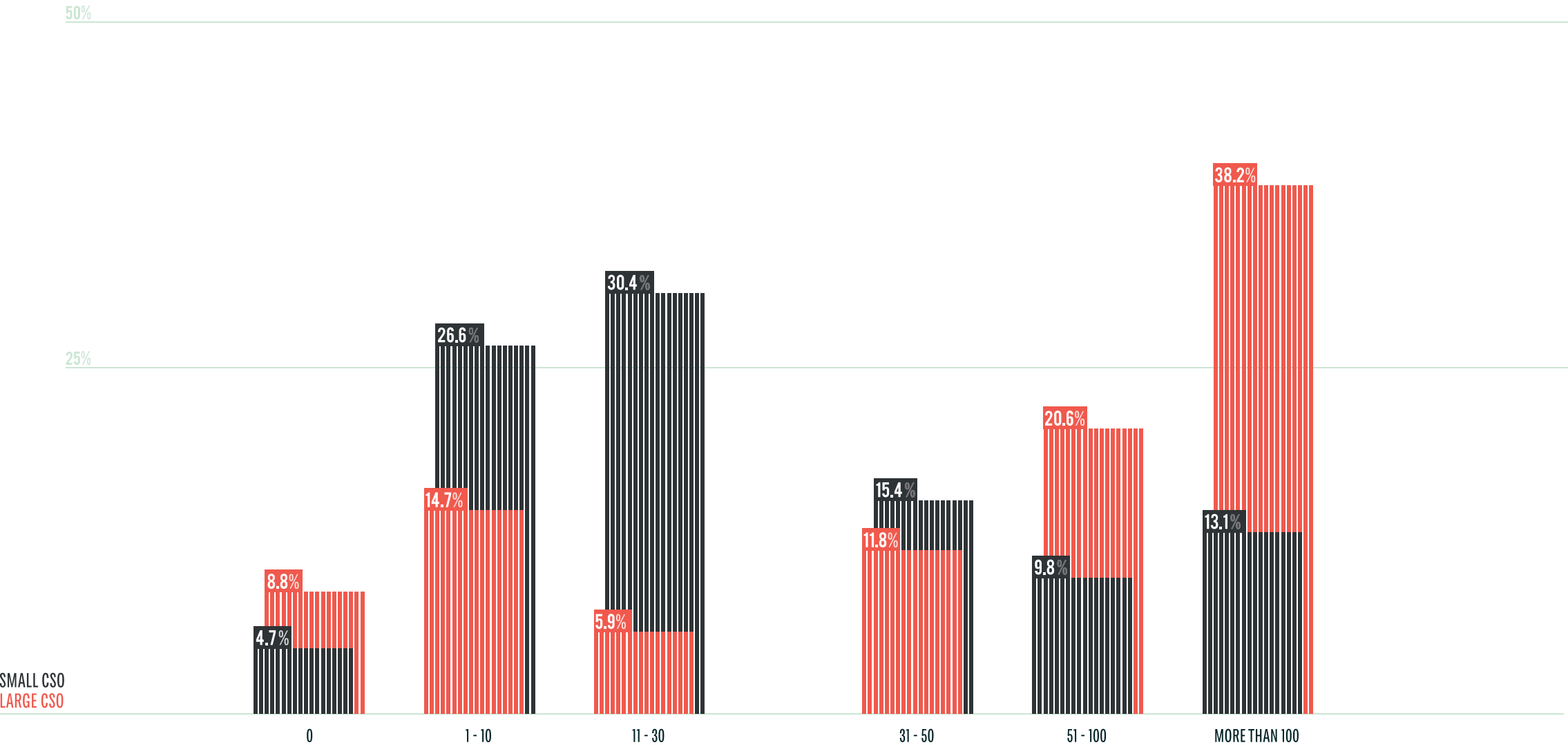


Figure22  
Percentage of Small vs. Big CSOs having the referred to number of volunteers

72.1% of CSO respondents reported that they have less than 50 volunteers. During the focus groups most CSOs expressed that they have difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers.

The study shows that respondents from smaller and community-based organizations have easier access to volunteers than larger CSOs, but that the latter seem to have better structures in place to manage larger number of volunteers.

During focus groups, participants cited multiple reasons for volunteer disengagement: The internal reasons are mainly the lack of a volunteer strategy and management structure within the CSOs, the absence of incentives and opportunities for participation in decision making, and the perceived redundancy of activities by CSOs.<sup>77</sup>

As for the external reasons cited, the socio-economic problems facing young people make them more focused on finding income generating activities, and the practice of paying volunteers by some international organizations makes it difficult for CSOs to sustain their numbers when a project's funding ends.

ORGANIZATIONAL NEEDS

CHALLENGES TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

One main factor in determining whether a CSO will be successful is its internal management capacities and the leadership skills within its board and staff members. Management, leadership and internal governance systems were identified below as factors contributing to weakening the performance of the surveyed CSOs. 41.2% of respondent CSOs consider that their main internal constraint is human resource management. The following graph shows that not only is staff management a priority, but that 52.9% reported that that resource management was the most critical constraint. Only 17.6% perceive internal governance as a challenge, though it appeared to be one of the weakest organizational dimensions within CSOs in the previous section.

MANAGING HUMAN RESOURCES IS ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS AMONG CSOS THAT ARE BOTH SMALL AND LARGE IN SIZE IN TERMS OF STAFF MEMBERS.

While smaller CSOs tend to have less human resource capacity, 38.8% of small organizations' respondents considered human resource management to be the most important internal constraint.

<sup>77</sup> Interview with civil society activist with over 15 years experience, citing their experience in trying to recruit volunteers who would refer to CSO work as 'boring and redundant over the years.'

INTERNAL CONSTRAINTS BY CSOs

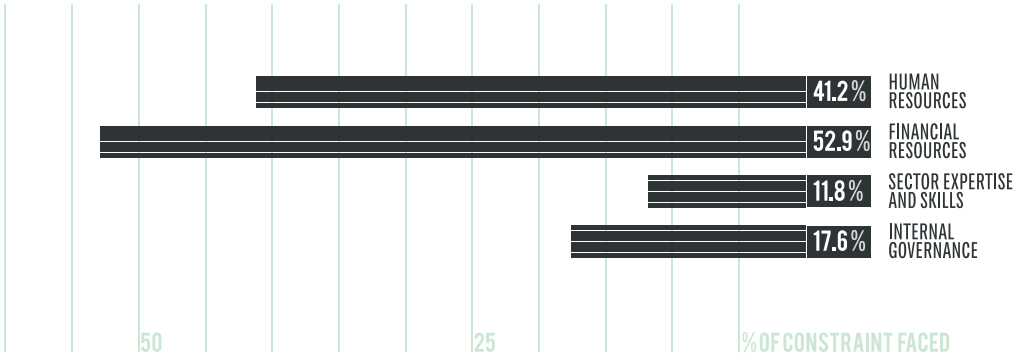


Figure 23  
Percentage of CSOs in reference to internal constraints faced

REDUNDANCY IN TRAINING AND UNSATISFIED CAPACITY NEEDS

CSO capacity needs range from leadership skills, management skills and technical expertise related to the sectors they work in, such as education, health, environment, agriculture, gender, and youth among others.

CSOs are aware that they lack some skills related to internal management, approach and activities conducted, relations with stakeholders and the media. Smaller CSOs participating in the study have more capacity needs, especially the newly established CSOs, as shown in the figure below.

CSOS ADMIT TO BEING IN NEED OF CAPACITIES IN INTERNAL MANAGEMENT AS WELL AS ON TECHNICAL AND THEMATIC ISSUES PERTAINING TO THEIR FUNCTION OR TO THEIR SECTORS.

It is important to highlight that during focus groups, participants reported that they need technical expertise in the subject area they are working in as much as they need other skills. According to them, this is contributing to the lack of focus and the loss of credibility of CSOs with their stakeholders. Smaller CSOs also tend to have a higher need for sector expertise, mainly because they have little access to training opportunities.

50%

25%

SMALL CSO  
LARGE CSO

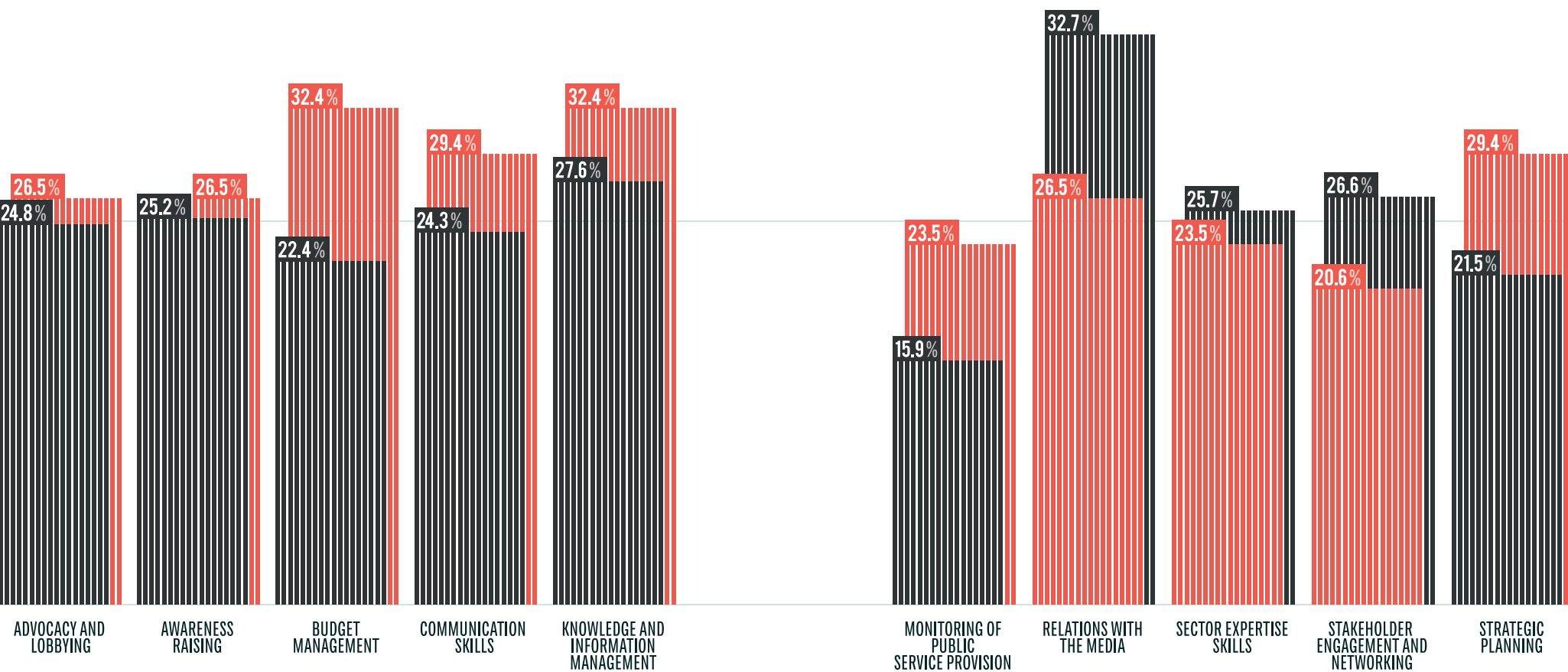


Figure 24  
Percentage of CSOs who chose  
referred to topic as a capacity need

Most CSOs that participated in the focus groups expressed that although they have attended several training programs, they still lacked capacity in the areas they were trained on.

When asked for the reasons, the following were mentioned

- ✗ Many of the existing capacity building programs are not tailored to the needs and to their context, are not differentiating between nascent and seasoned CSOs, national and community based, or small or large CSOs.
- ✗ There is high turnover of staff and volunteers in CSOs and they cannot preserve the learning acquired through capacity building programs nor invest it within participating CSOs.
- ✗ Some CSOs tend to send the same representatives to participate in the programs and, in certain cases, their intent is simply to have someone attend rather than selecting the person who can benefit the CSO.
- ✗ Capacity building programs are mostly designed in training and seminar formats using traditional training methods and approaches, therefore they are not effective in developing the skills and attitude of participants.
- ✗ There is not much follow up to these programs such as coaching, mentoring, learning by doing, study visits, and exchange platforms, to allow integration of the learning acquired, if this information were integrated, the CSOs performance could improve.
- ✗ Recruitment of participants for capacity building programs is often targeting the same CSOs and not reaching out to CSOs that have a greater need of assistance, nor does it take place in communities outside the capital. There is duplication of certain training topics, which were mostly cited as: leadership, project management, communication, advocacy and citizenship.

ACCORDING TO TWO INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS WHO HAVE WORKED WITH LEBANESE ACTIVISTS FOR OVER 15 YEARS, COACHING AND TAILORED MENTORING IS MUCH MORE EFFICIENT THAN TRAINING PROGRAMS TARGETING LARGE NUMBERS OF PARTICIPANTS.

5.4 CSO SECTORS AND PRIORITIES

There are many national and local priorities that CSOs can, and are, actively working on. Though there are CSOs active on most of these political and socio-economic issues; the survey highlighted that some priorities were under represented by CSOs when compared to others. Only 12.9% of CSOs are focusing on social development, 2% are focusing on economic development, and 1.2% on entrepreneurship (despite high rates of unemployment).

The fact that some key sectors are being neglected may be due to several factors. Firstly, it may mean that CSOs are unaware of the potential links between certain sectors. For instance Information and Communication Technology as well as the energy and agricultural sector can be very promising for employment among youth.

SECTORS COVERED BY CSOs

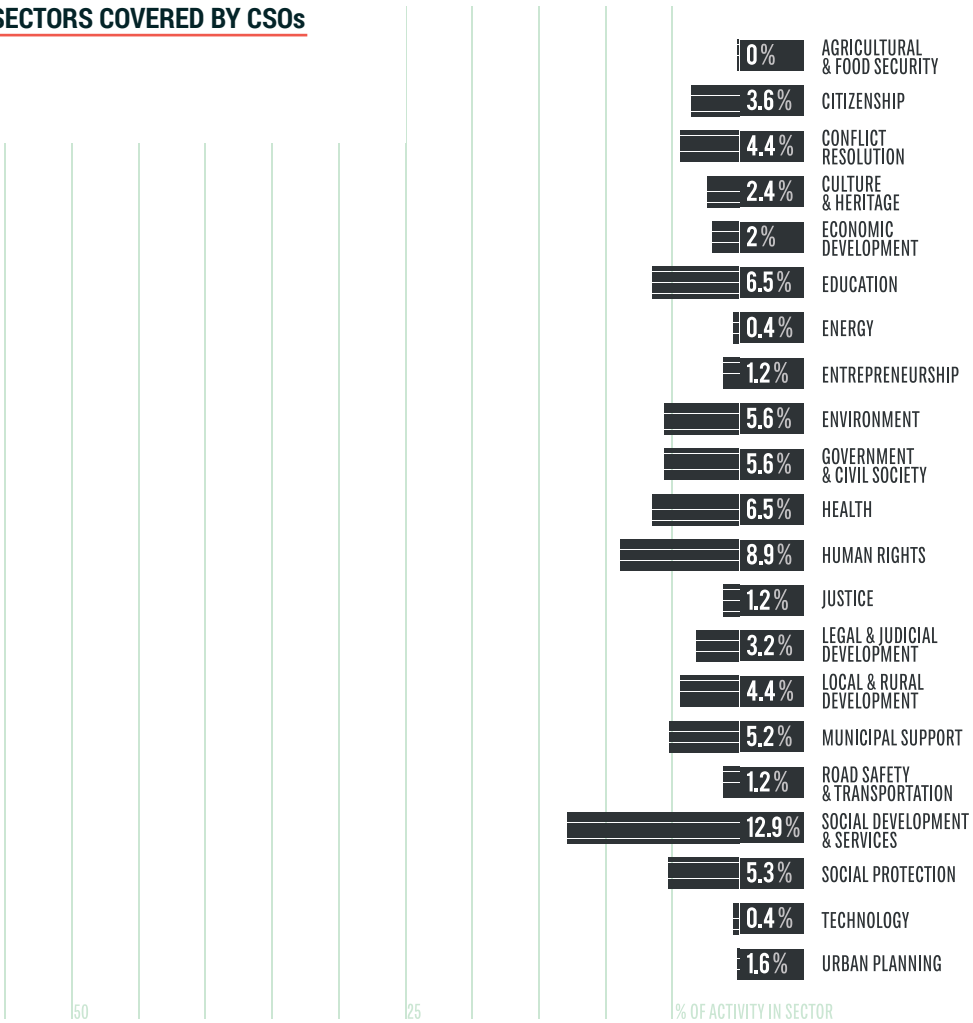


Figure25  
Sectors of Operation of CSOs in Lebanon

However, there remains a focus on vocational training at the expense of more entrepreneurial or IT-related work. This might mean that CSOs are not conducting thorough needs assessments before identifying their priorities and programs. Finally, there might also be a correlation for funding that tends to centre on similar priorities and sectors, at the expense of others, as shown below.

FOCUS ON SERVICE DELIVERY AND RAISING AWARENESS

CSOs are undertaking a variety of activities to address the issues they regard as a priority. 46.8% of CSO respondents reported focusing on awareness raising, 38.3% on implementing development projects, and 37.1% on capacity building. Fewer CSOs are working on research, monitoring and policy development.

ONE OF THE MOST RECURRENT REASONS CITED FOR LITTLE INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT WAS THE EXPECTATION THAT THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT WILL NOT UNDERTAKE MAJOR POLICY REFORMS DURING THIS PERIOD.

Most CSO representatives expressed that their focus was on awareness raising, capacity building and development project implementation and less on research, and policy development. This is even clearer in community-based organizations where there are immediate needs for basic services and less opportunities to work directly with policy makers. One of the most recurrent reasons cited for the lack of involvement in policy development was the expectation that the Lebanese government will not undertake major policy reforms during this period.

CSOs SYSTEMS

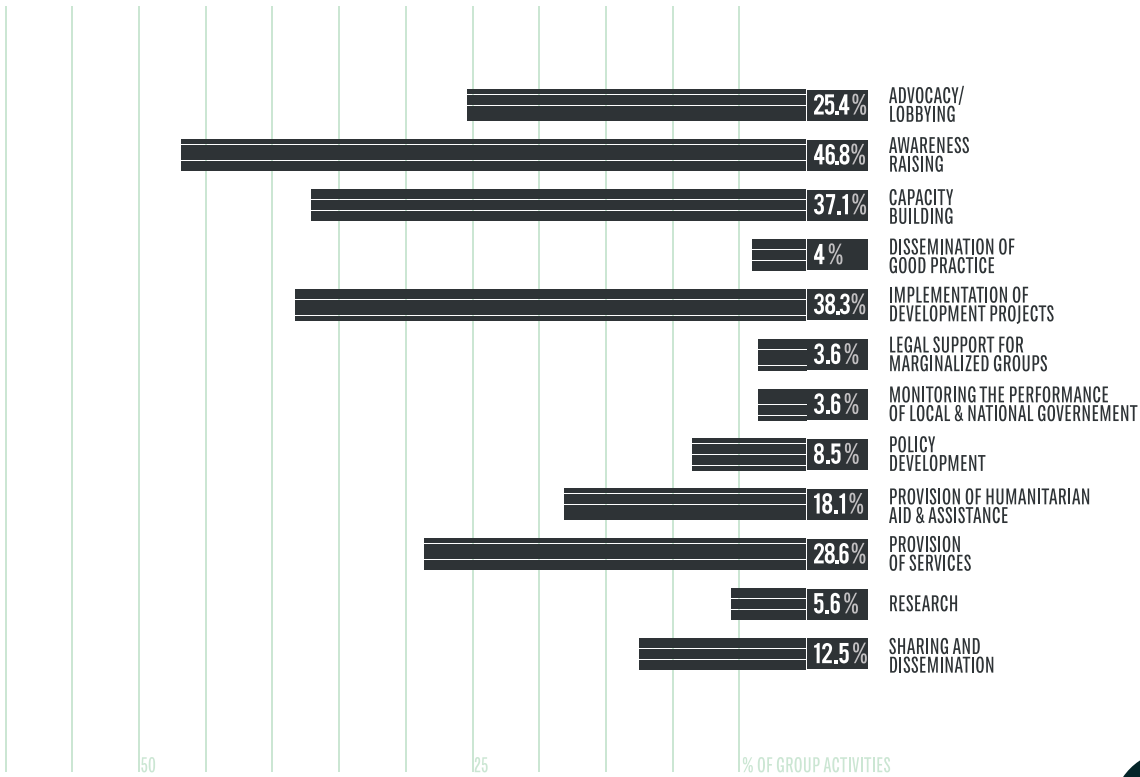


Figure 26  
CSOs ACTIVITIES

BENEFICIARIES AND RESPONSE TO PRIORITY NEEDS

The goal of any CSO is to improve the quality of life of all segments of society, and mainly the most vulnerable. Women and youth are the most targeted sectors by respondent CSOs with 40.3% working with women and 39.5% working with the youth. Other beneficiaries are less targeted, despite being vulnerable, such as the elderly, farmers, workers, the disabled and ethnic groups.

CSOs, during focus groups, expressed that all beneficiaries are equally important as they are marginalized, but the selection of beneficiaries depends on the availability of resources and capacities to work with them.

BENEFICIARIES OF CSOs

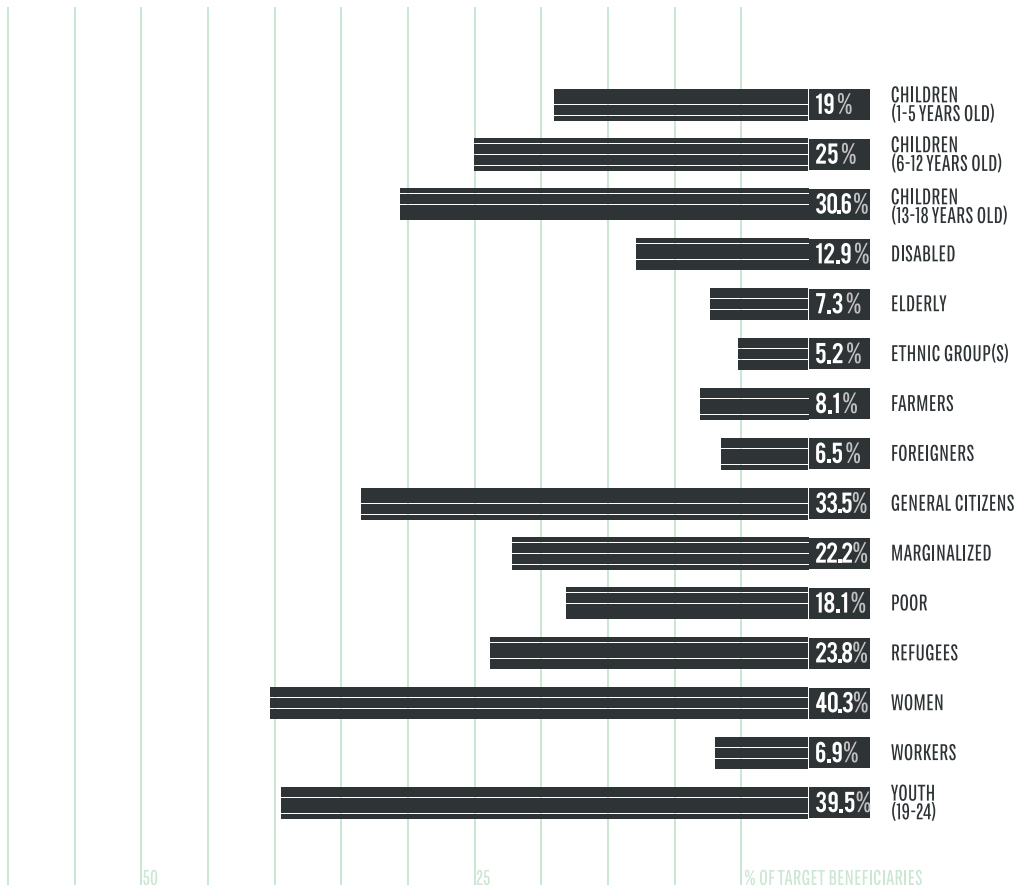


Figure27  
Beneficiaries of CSOs

CSO OUTREACH

The role that CSOs can play in inclusion and enhancing participation of citizens is affected by its ability to reach out to and involve diverse stakeholders. 53% of CSO respondents reported that they work on a national level, but they continue to struggle to engage citizens from different backgrounds. The survey showed that only 27.4% of CSOs have secondary offices in Lebanon, with 72.6% indicating that they only have one office.

IN THE BEKAA, CSOS ARE COMPLAINING THAT LOCAL TENSIONS COINCIDED WITH A DECREASE IN PEOPLE SHOWING UP TO THEIR EVENTS AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS.

During the focus groups, CSOs reported that one major challenge to work on a national level, in addition to availability of resources, is sectarian tension.

LIMITED SOCIAL CAPITAL

Relationship between CSOs and stakeholders is a requirement to scale up impact and mobilize resources, access and support. Survey respondents reported that 28.4% have no relationship with government officials, for example. The most difficult relationship to maintain was with national government institutions, with the majority of CSOs reporting this to be the case, while the most competitive relationships are with the private sector and other CSOs, according to 9.5% of respondents.

CSOS WITH OFFICES ACROSS LEBANON

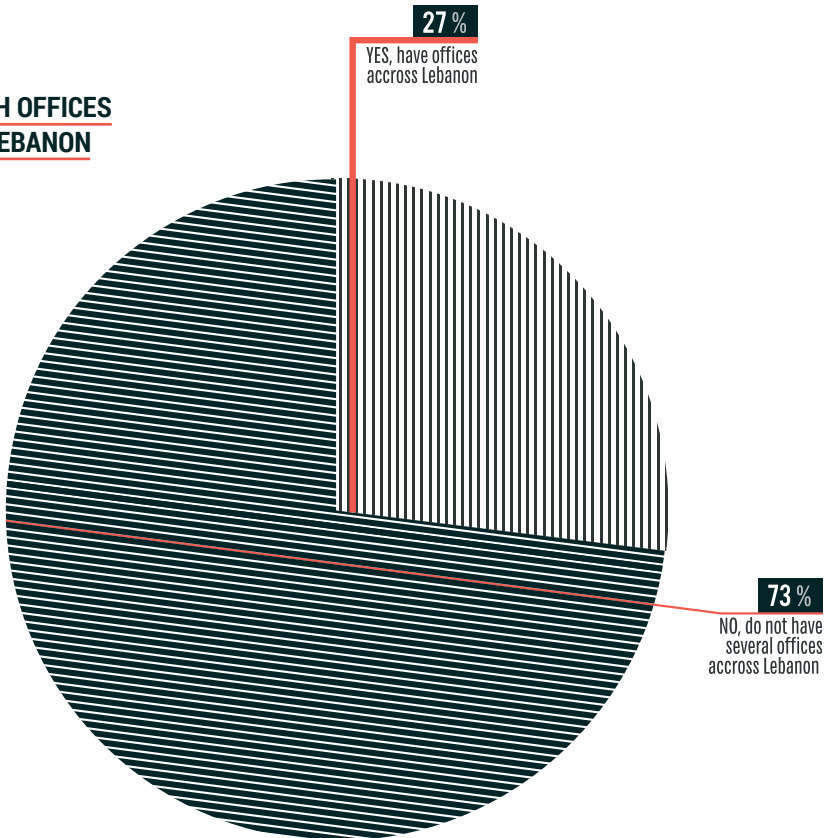


Figure28  
CSOs With Offices Across Lebanon



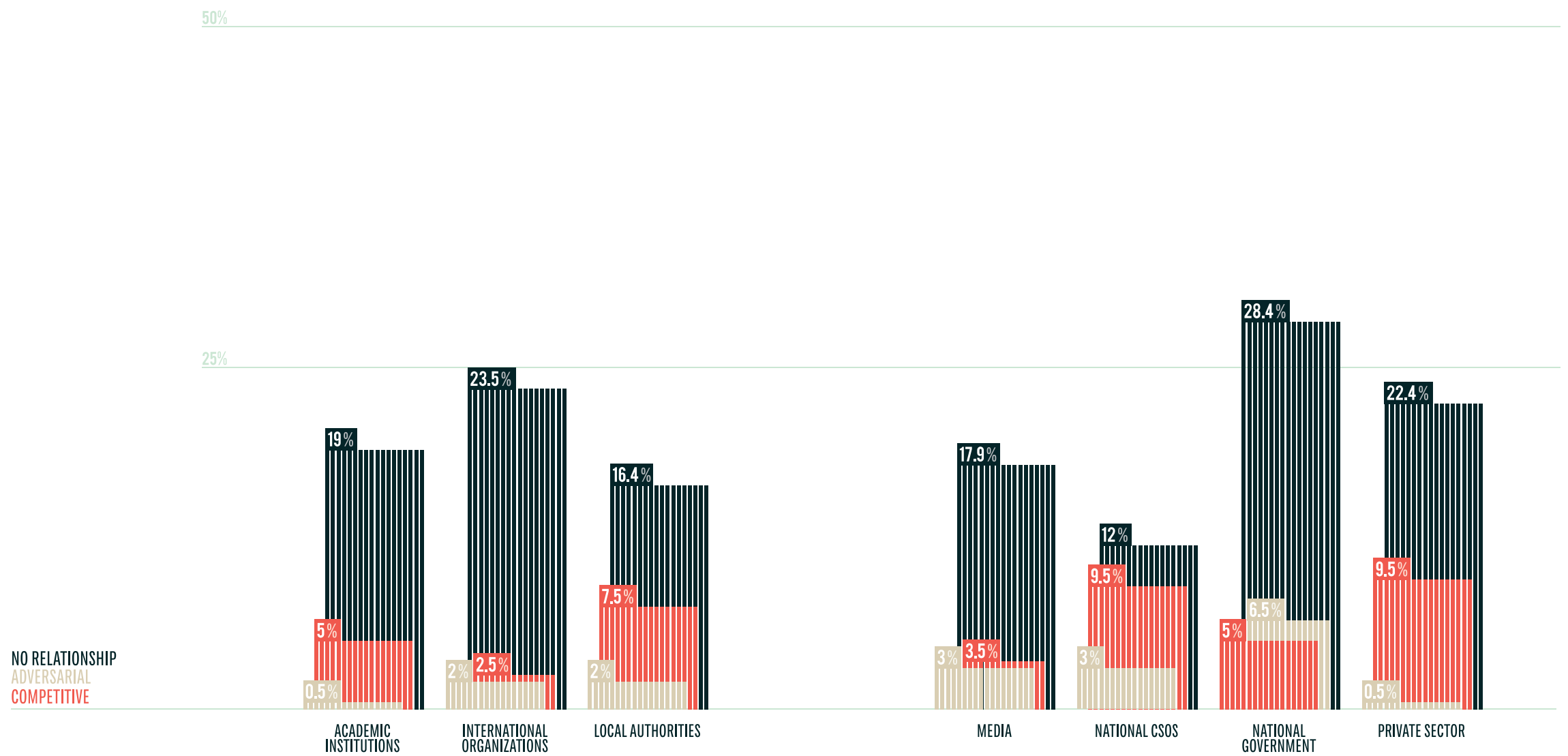


Figure 29  
Relationship with Skateholders

CSO ROLES IN NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Building partnerships, networks and coalitions is one strategy to leverage a CSO's impact. 45.3% of respondent CSOs are not part of any network or coalition. CSO respondents reported that there are high levels of competition among CSOs, which is reflected in their inefficiency in joining networks and coalitions.

ONE PATTERN IN PARTICIPANT RESPONSES DURING FOCUS GROUPS WAS THE ADMITTING THAT BUILDING CONSENSUS ON ISSUES AND ON STRATEGIES IS DIFFICULT AND THIS HINDERS THEIR ABILITY TO ESTABLISH NETWORKS AMONG THEMSELVES.

Among the reasons cited in focus groups for the competition among CSOs was: Power struggles, political polarization and access to funding. CSOs explained that many of them tend to collaborate with regional organizations working on similar issues for the purpose of getting more information related to their area of expertise, and to ensure more sustainability

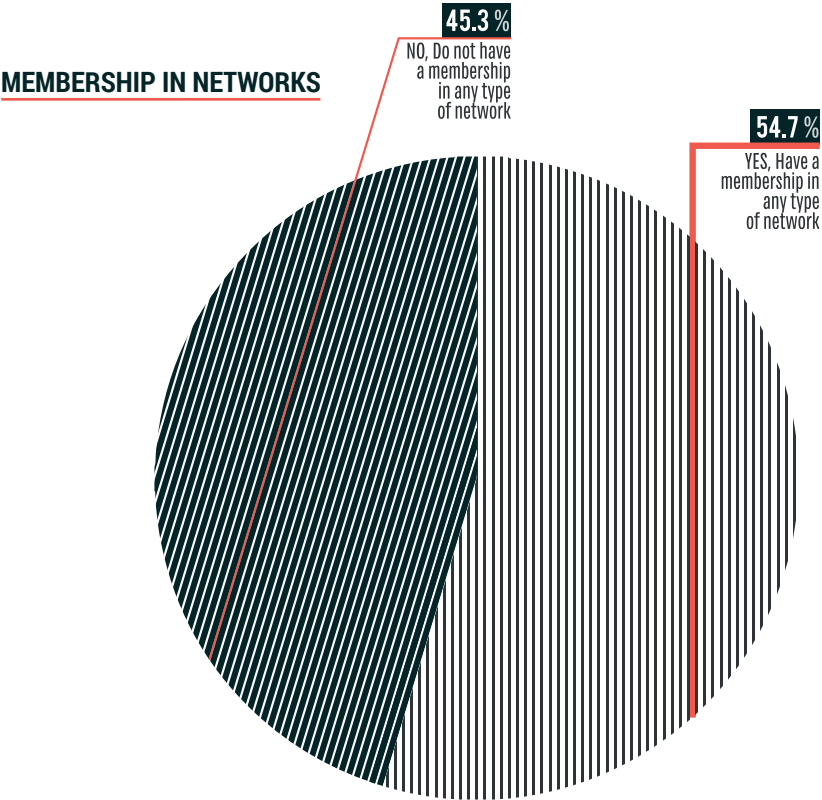


Figure30  
Membership in national, regional and international networks

and regional or international support. Focus group participants claimed that CSOs in Lebanon rarely become part of national networks, mainly because of competition over funds, as well as the difficulty in finding consensus.

SCALABLE AND EXPORTABLE EXPERIENCES TO THE MENA REGION

It is interesting to note that 21.1% of CSOs in Lebanon succeeded in expanding their expertise and activities to other countries in the MENA region, mainly after the Arab uprisings, during which time there was a rise of civil society in these countries.

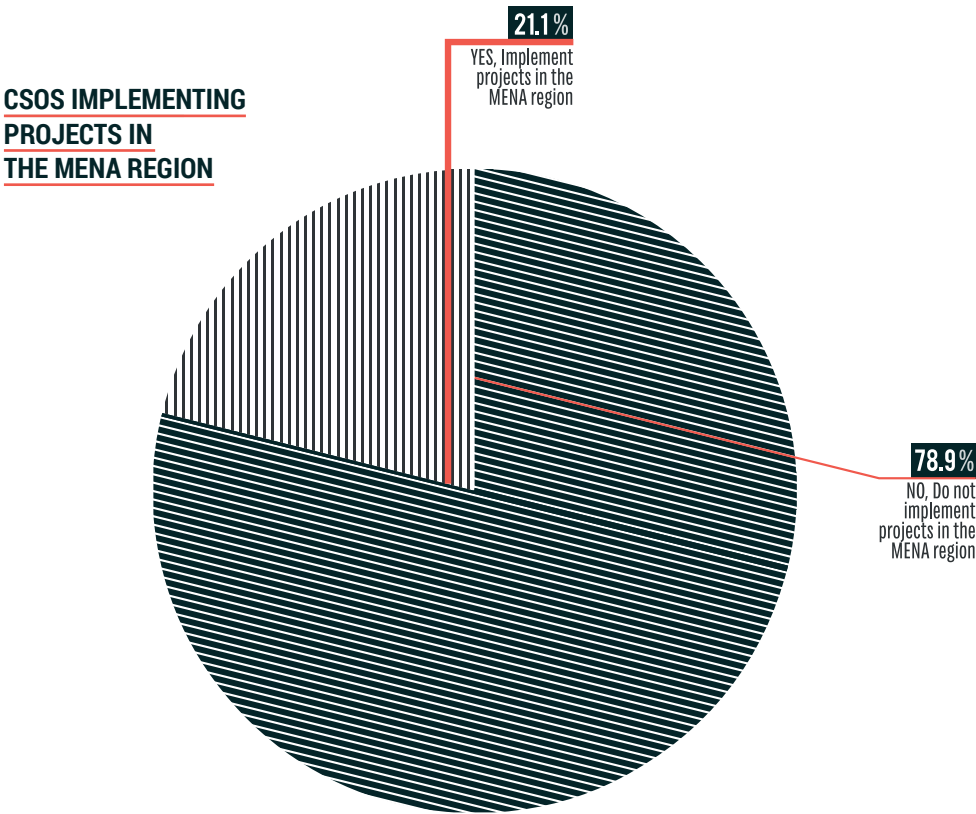


Figure31  
CSOs that Implemented Projects in The Region

Several interview respondents, who are seasoned CSO activists, are assuming key positions and taking consultancies within international organizations looking for Arabic speaking staff to work in Arab countries.

EXTERNAL CHALLENGES TO THE WORK OF CSOS

There are multiple external challenges facing CSOs in Lebanon that affect their performance and the potential to expand their activities. In line with the security and political analysis described above, 30.8% of CSOs reported that the political system is a major challenge and specifically that sectarian tensions affect their work. CSOs reported during focus groups that the political system

is the main reason behind their disillusionment that CSOs can have a concrete role in reform and policy making.

Another challenge becoming significant, with 28.2% of CSOs highlighting it, is security threats, which make difficult for CSOs to operate freely and to engage all community members. Again, this is in line with the contextual constraints discussed earlier and has a negative influence over the CSOs' role, especially in communities that have witnessed security tensions in the past three years. All focus group participants expressed the need to be better equipped to pre-empt social tensions, engage municipalities in playing a more proactive role and to build social cohesion within local communities.

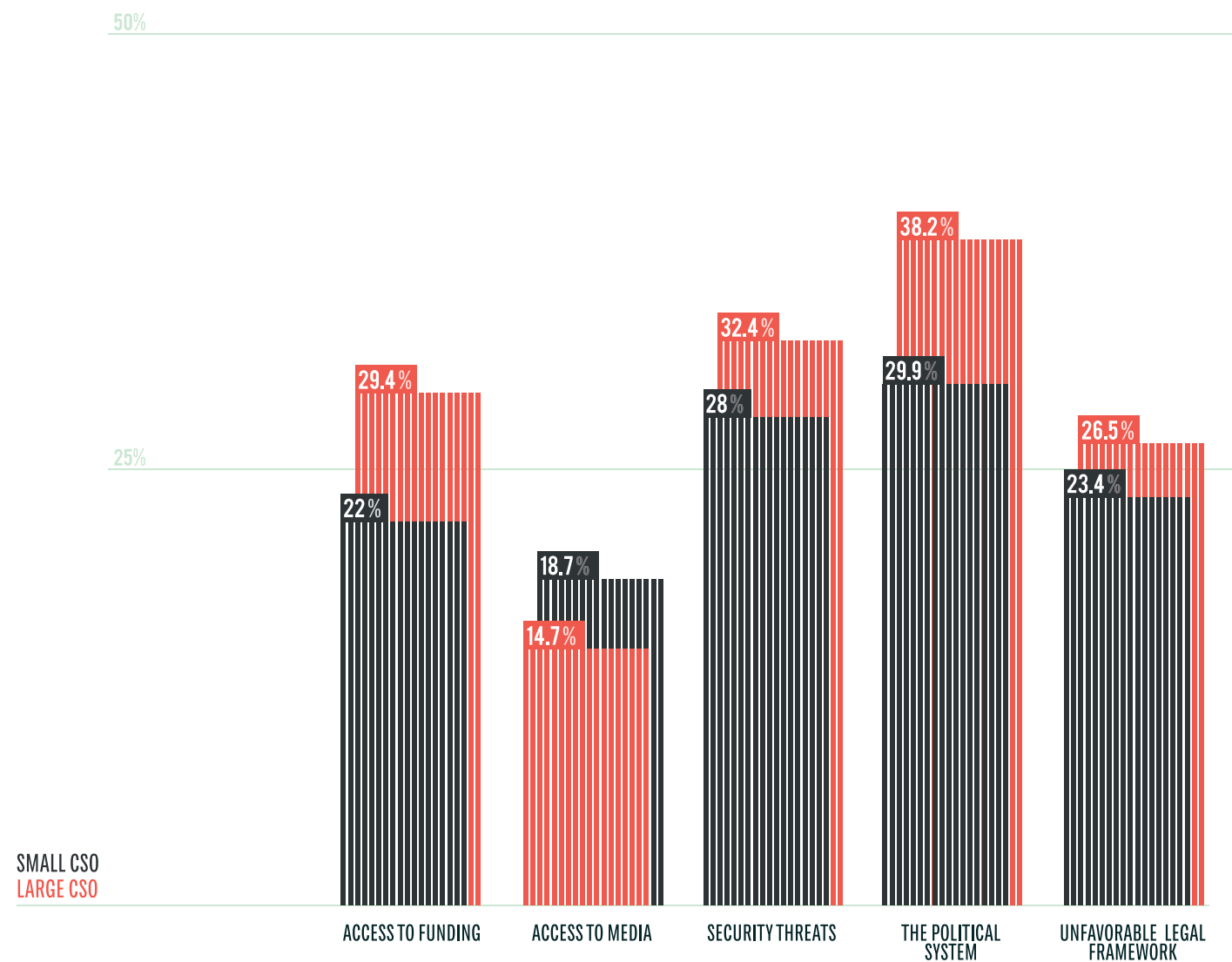


Figure 32  
External Challenges Facing CSOs

### RISE OF INFORMAL GROUPS AND CAMPAIGNS

Over the last few years, informal groups have begun campaigning against sectarianism, demanding access to public spaces, reforming the public health sector, fighting corruption, stopping censorship, campaigning against violence, providing humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees and working on many other issues. Most of them are self-funded, volunteer-based, and display frequent usage of social media to make their claims known.

## 5.5

### ENGAGEMENT IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The policy development process, from assessing needs, identifying priorities, setting the agenda and formulating a policy, to implementing and monitoring it, is a very technical one and requires resources and capacities that are, in general, difficult to find within Lebanese CSOs. Several policy issues await to be solved that have been neglected by governments and where CSOs are unable to influence from outside of government.

Policy decisions could be at the level of legislation, strategy or institutional practices. More than 300 proposed laws<sup>78</sup> and many reform strategies in education, health, social protection, environment, ICT and more have been developed, but never adopted or implemented.

CSOs stumble upon a number of challenges within the political system that limit their ability to influence policy making, these include

- ✗ Absence of clear commitment to reform and adoption of new policies by recent governments,
- ✗ Weak human and financial resources within government institutions that are needed to implement policy proposals,
- ✗ A volatile political and security situation that makes socio-economic reforms and demands by CSOs less of a priority for political leadership.

<sup>78</sup> Rima Zahar, "وظيفة النيابة في لبنان: مريحة وسريعة في أن سقنا", ELAF, February 8, 2012. Retrieved August 6, 2014, from <http://www.elaph.com/Web/news/2012/2/719554.html>

### MAJOR OBSERVATIONS

#### UNCLEAR INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR POLICY MAKING

It is difficult to capture the formal or informal patterns of the policymaking process in Lebanon. The presence of grand coalitions and absence of freedom of information often means that policy decisions are made behind closed doors.<sup>79</sup> Policy is often made under urgent conditions, without a clear path for developing solutions and in response to evidence-based problems. At the legislative level, very few MPs are involved in the legislative process. While MPs have the role of liaising with citizens, often they are not the sole decision makers.

<sup>79</sup> See for instance Brenda Seaver, "The Regional Sources of Power-sharing Failure: The Case of Lebanon," *Political Science Quarterly* 115, no. 2 (2000): 247-271.

**INTERVIEWERS WHO WORKED ON REFORM CAMPAIGNS CLAIMED THAT POLITICIANS HAVE COUNTER ARGUMENTS AS TO WHY CERTAIN NEW POLICIES CANNOT PASS AND AS SUCH REMAIN ALOOF TO DEMANDS BY CSOS FOR POLICY REFORMS.**

Within this situation, it becomes unclear for CSOs which route to take in order to influence and be part of the policy development level. A few examples portray this reality clearly: It took almost a year to agree on the current cabinet,

<sup>59</sup> See Omar Traboulsi, interview by Qantara.de, 27 June 2010, available from [http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show\\_article.php/\\_c-593/\\_nr-8/\\_p-1/\\_html?PHPSESSID=5](http://www.qantara.de/webcom/show_article.php/_c-593/_nr-8/_p-1/_html?PHPSESSID=5), Internet.

during which parliamentary affairs were put on hold, ending recently with the parliament extending its own term, a President has not been elected according to the constitutional deadline, and a public budget has not been voted for since 2005.

CSOs therefore cannot clearly plan how they can contribute and affect policy development. In addition, neither the executive, nor the legislative branch of the government has clear communication mechanisms with civil society. Any engagement with policy makers relies today on the personal connections of civil society actors, rather than on clear legal and institutional mechanisms with policy makers. While consultations do exist between Parliament and CSOs, they depend on the individual readiness of MPs and not on any formal mechanism.

When participants were asked to indicate what types of mechanisms for the participation of civil society in Lebanon exist at the local level and the national level, they chose the following

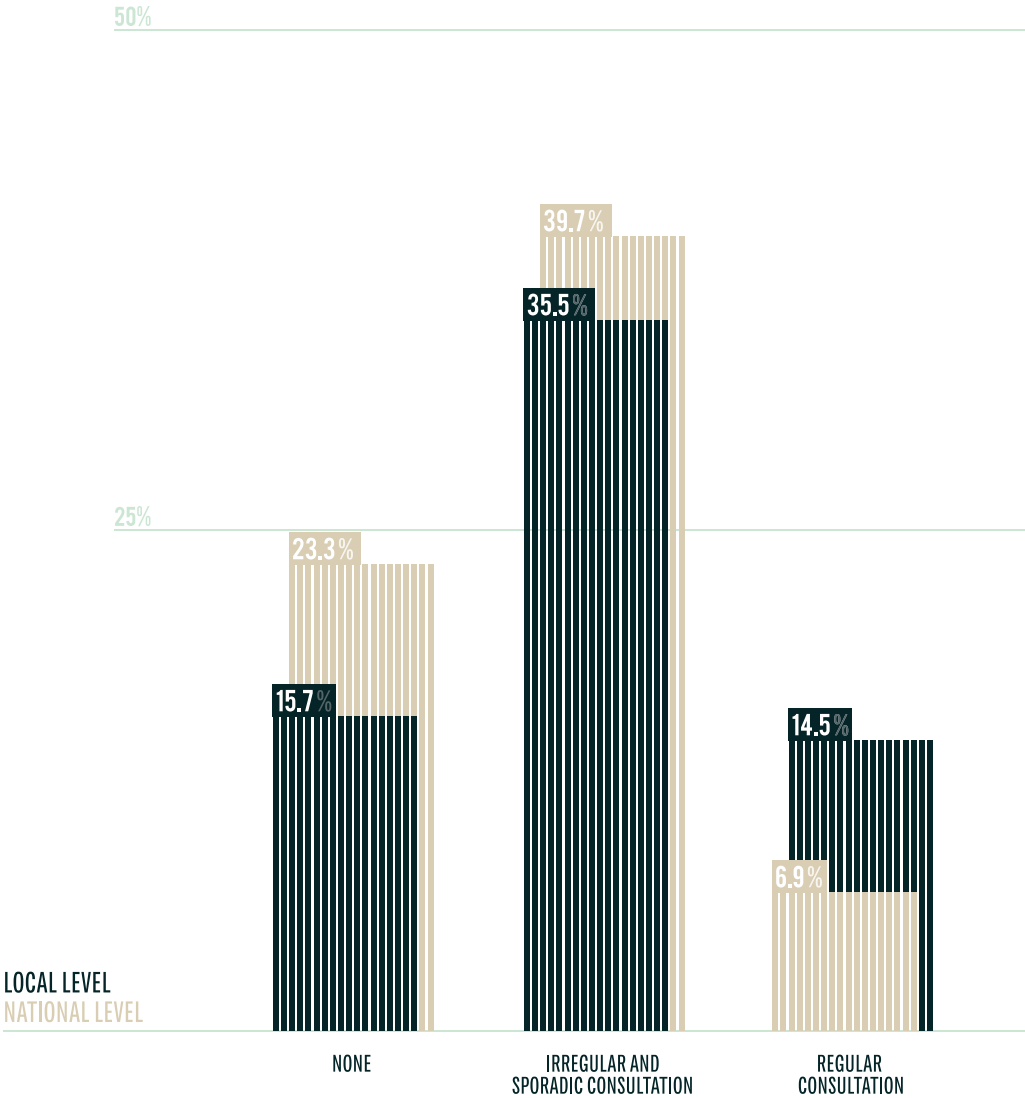


Figure 33  
Mechanism for the participation of civil society on the local and national levels

EASIER CSO ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL POLICY DEVELOPMENT

On a local level, we can observe better engagement of several CSOs in policy development because of proximity, local relationships and type of issues dealt with. In addition, we can observe today an urgent need for locally based CSOs to assist municipalities in the response to the Syrian crisis, which is indirectly creating an opportunity for collaboration.

Local policy development is still weak because of limited decentralization of power and authority at the local level. Though the political context might be more enabling on a local level, the weak capacity of municipalities in policy development affects local CSOs in their attempts to influence them.

Survey respondents were asked to describe their relationship with different stakeholders; the results of the survey indicated the following

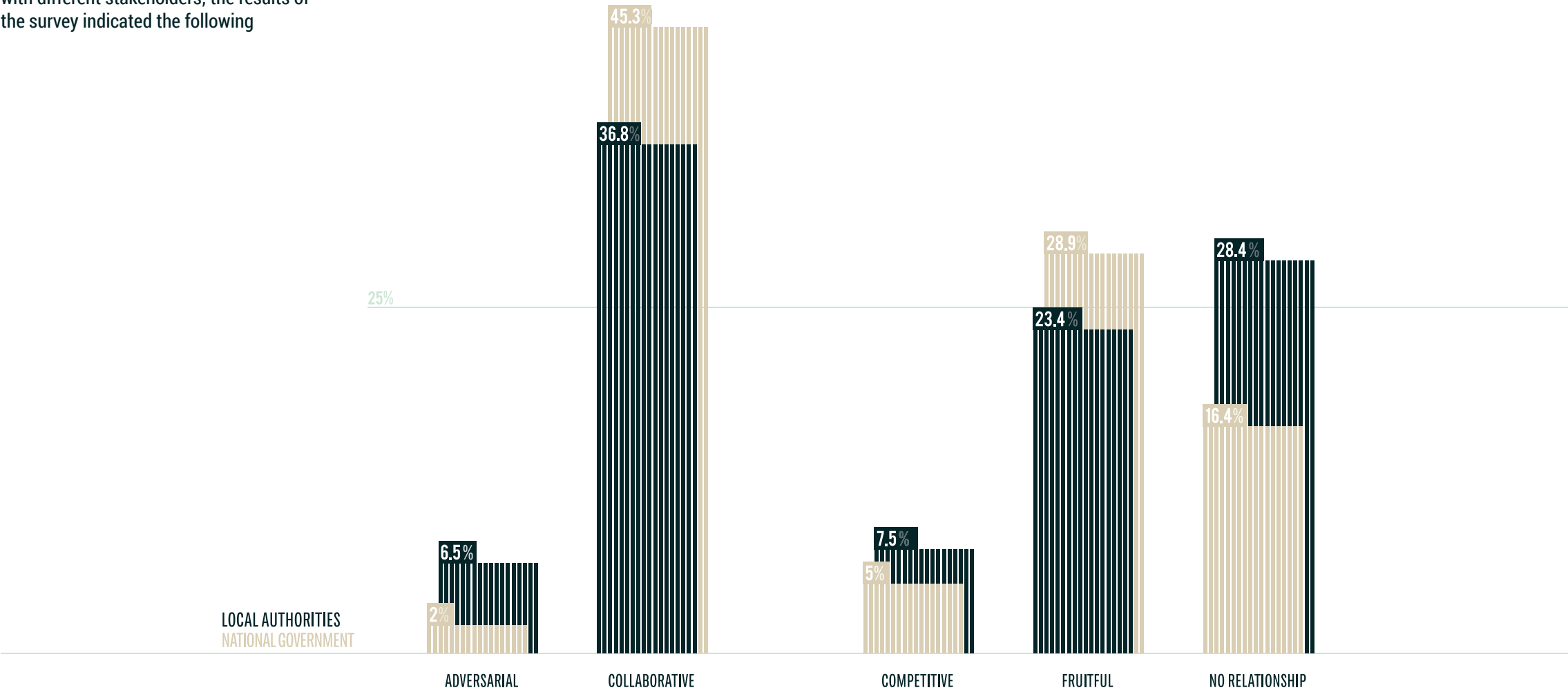


Figure 34  
CSOs relationship with national government and local authorities

The survey results revealed that 46.0% of CSOs have experience of participating in policy dialogues with national or local government authorities over the last three years, of which 26.4% having participated more than 10 times in the period.

A more detailed display of the results showed the following

PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DIALOGUE FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS

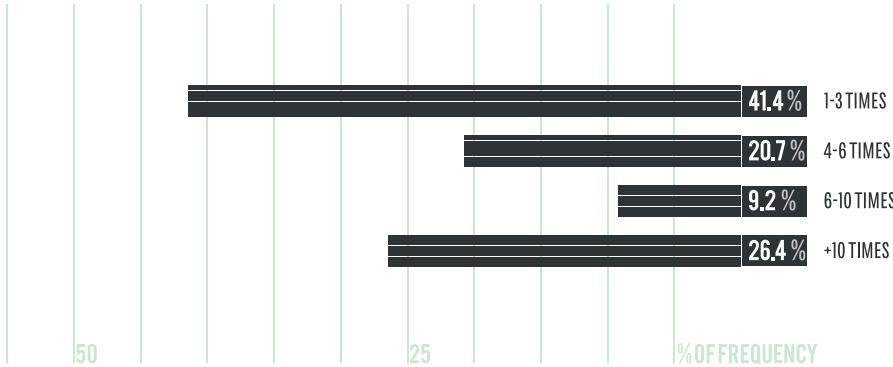


Figure36  
Frequency of Participation in Policy Dialogue over the Past Three Years

PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DIALOGUE

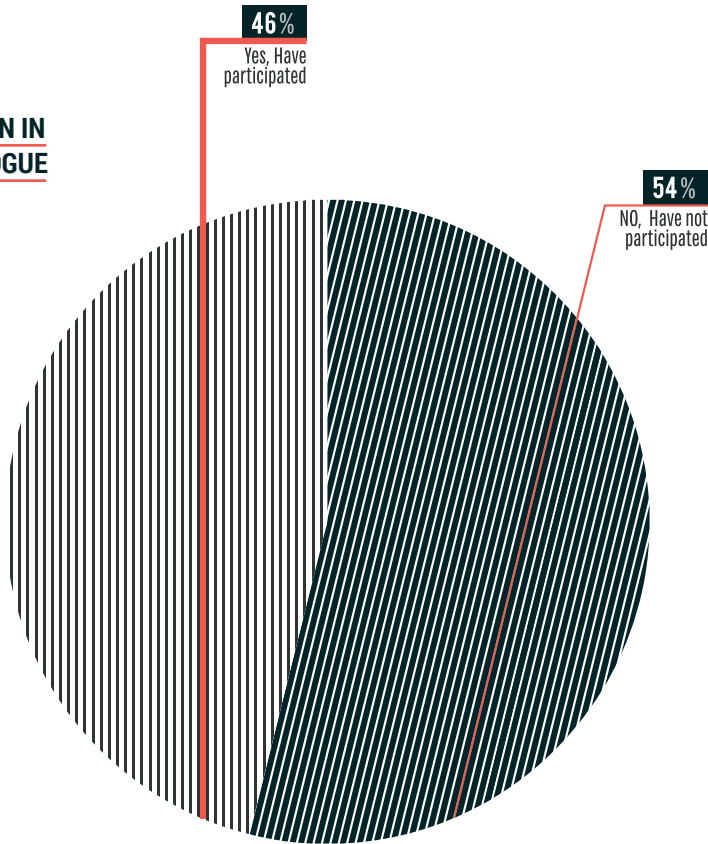


Figure35  
Participation in policy dialogue with national or local authorities over the past three years

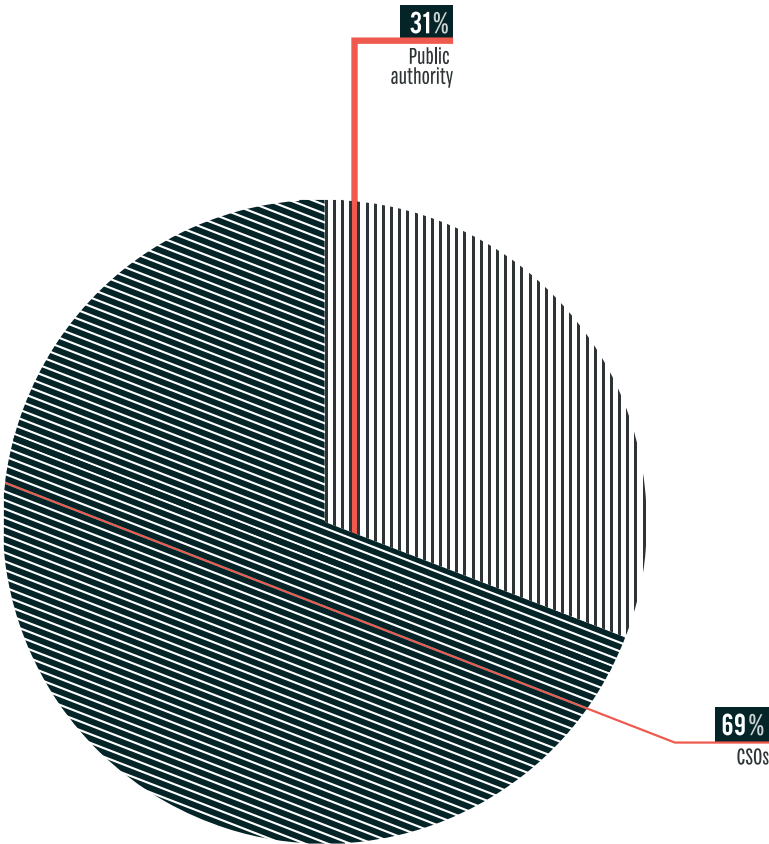


Figure35  
Policy initiated by CSOs versus public authority



GOVERNMENT’S WEAK RESPONSE TO CSO ROLE IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The government of today, in its executive and legislative branches, responds indifferently to CSOs as they lack: Social capital and public support for their demands, the technical capacity to contribute to legislation, and financial resources to sustain their engagement in a long term policy process.

IN THE VAST MAJORITY OF CASES POLICY DIALOGUE IS INITIATED BY CSOS AS OPPOSED TO ONLY 31% OF TIMES WHEN IT IS INITIATED BY STATE AUTHORITIES.

The CSOs that participated in policy dialogue were asked to specify who initiated the dialogue, responses indicated that 69.00% of the policy dialogues were initiated by CSOs and 31% were initiated by public authorities.

While 46.0% of respondents indicated that they had participated in policy dialogues in the last three years, BRD found that 49.7% have lobbied for policy change, with 50.3% indicating that they have never lobbied for policy change. From the 49.7% who have lobbied for policy change, 78.8% said that their lobbying was successful.<sup>80</sup>

Survey respondents were asked to indicate what kind of challenges and restrictions they face in their operating environment; from the results BRD were able to identify that 12.5% indicated that access to information is a challenge, with 31.00% indicating that the political system is a challenge, 16.1% indicated that access to policy networks and governmental entities is a challenge, and 28.6% indicated that security threats are a challenge.

THE NATURE OF THE RESTRICTIONS/CHALLENGES

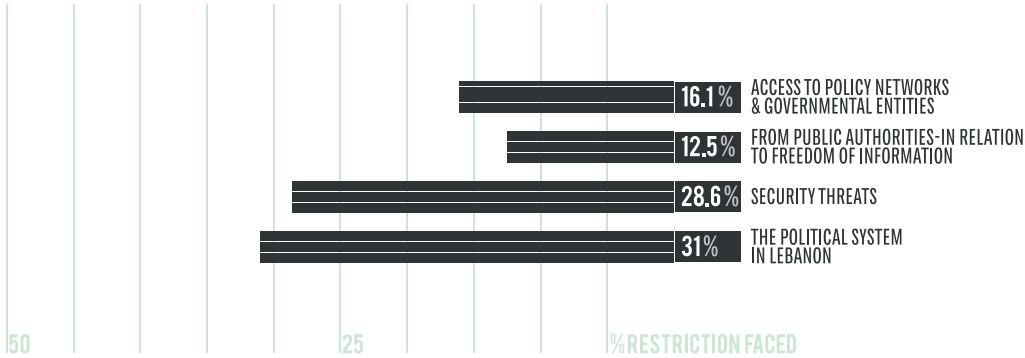


Figure38  
Nature Of Restrictions Facing CSOs in Lebanon

<sup>80</sup> Beyond Reform and Development, "Lebanon Civil Society Mapping Survey" Survey. Beyondrd.net. Beyond Reform and Development, May 2014.

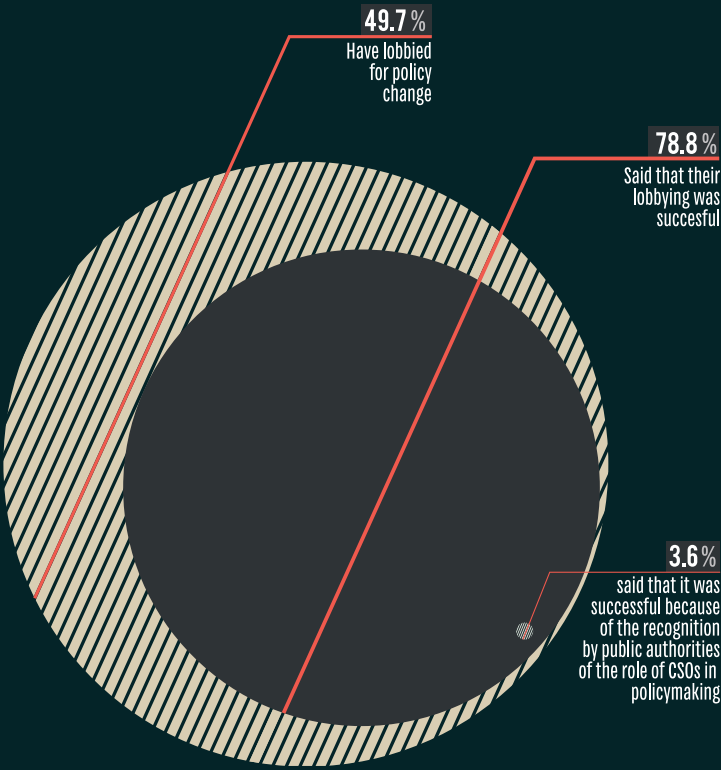


Figure37  
Highlights on policy participation

LIMITED SUCCESS OF CSOS’ ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

In most cases, advocacy campaigns came out of projects funded by donors. When funding stops after a year or two, those campaigns stop being active, even if their goals have not been met. Policy development is a long cycle and requires long-term engagement, even more so in a country like Lebanon where policymaking faces a stalemate.

THE NATURE OF RESTRICTIONS AND CHALLENGES

“HAQQI ALAYYI”, A YOUTH VOLUNTEER-BASED GROUP, ADVOCATED FOR AN INCLUSIVE AND JUST HEALTHCARE SYSTEM; THEY NEVER CONTINUED AND THE CAMPAIGN STOPPED WITHOUT CREATING ANY TANGIBLE RESULTS.

NAHWA AL-MUWATINIYA, AN ESTABLISHED NGO, HAS ADVOCATED WITHIN A NETWORK COMPOSED OF DECISION MAKERS, CSOS, PUBLIC SERVANTS, AND SYNDICATES FOR AN ACCESS TO INFORMATION LAW. AFTER MUCH EFFORT AND MANY CONTRIBUTIONS, A DRAFT LAW WAS SUBMITTED TO PARLIAMENT, BUT ADVOCACY EFFORTS STOPPED DUE TO LACK OF FUNDING FOR THE NETWORK.

FEWER THAN 4% OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS CONSIDERED THAT LOBBYING PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS FOR POLICY REFORM HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

From the 46% who have participated in policy dialogue, 62.4% confirmed that the policy dialogue was part of a development project, as opposed to 37.6% who indicated that it was not. Only 3.6% indicated that the lobbying was successful.

The following reasons were cited as being behind the lack of success

WHAT ACCOUNTS FOR CSO LACK OF SUCCESS IN AFFECTING CHANGE OF LAW/PUBLIC POLICY

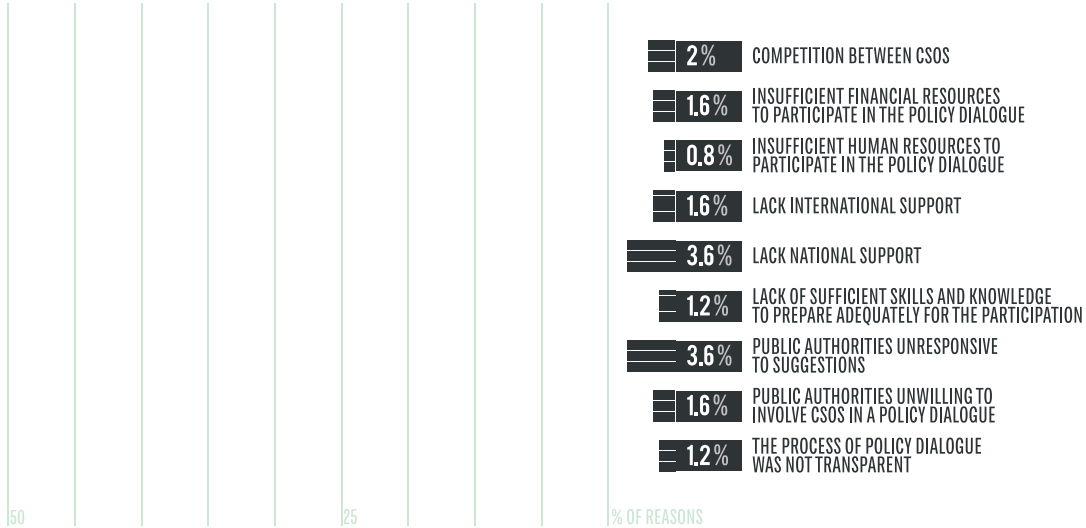


Figure39  
Reasons behind lack of success in affecting public policy

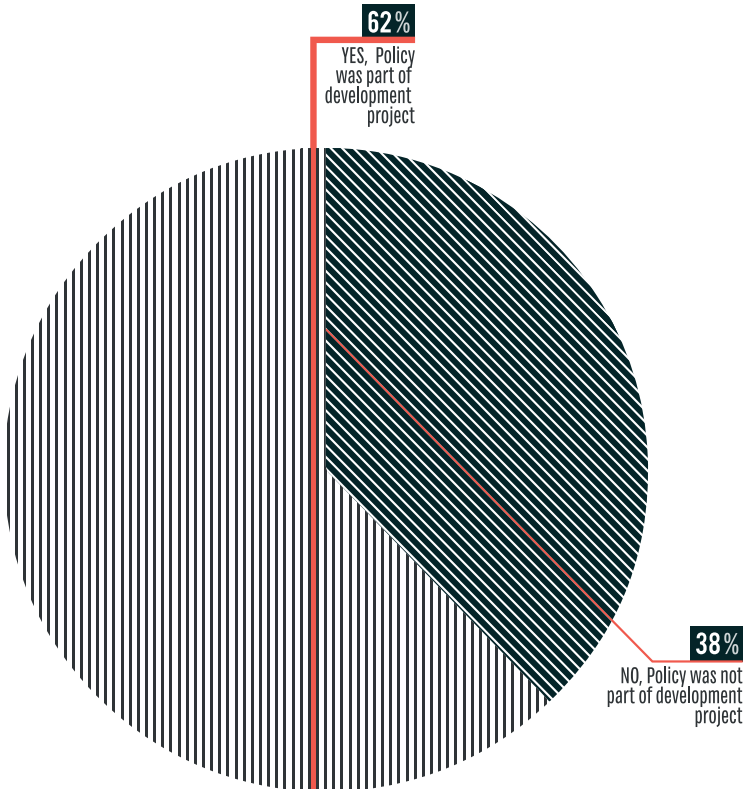


Figure40  
Policy dialogue as part of development projet

75%

Most CSOs in Lebanon are small in size and in budget, which might account for their limited capacity to mobilize citizens and create sufficient pressure to influence policy outcomes.

In linking the annual budgets of CSOs to the number of volunteers that they have, we found the following results

50%

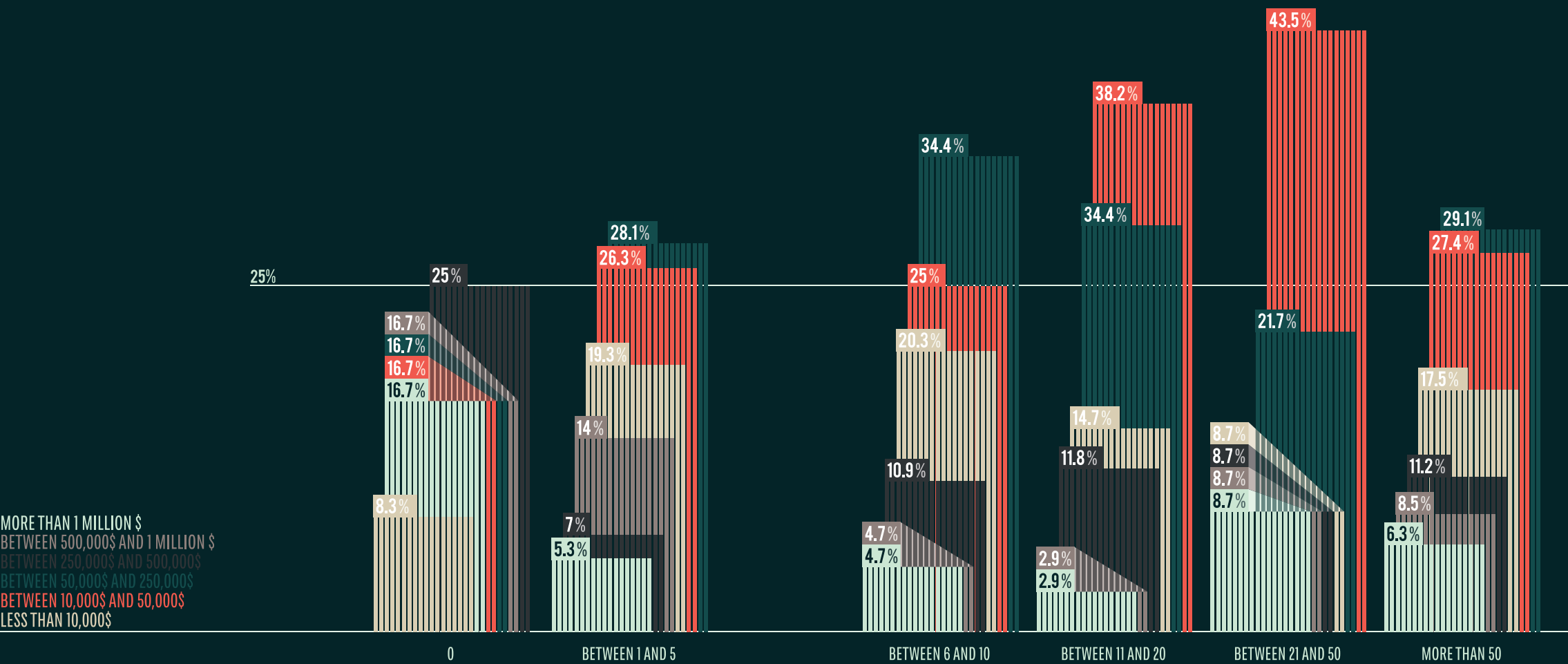


Figure 41  
Annual budget and number of volunteers

These CSOs, in line with the discussion in the previous section, lack the organizational capacity that hinders their ability to position themselves as suppliers of information, research and knowledge that might be valuable to policy makers to be better informed in a policy development process. Only 8.5% of the surveyed sample work on policy development, while 25.40% indicated that they work on advocacy and lobbying.

ONLY 8.5% OF THE SURVEYED SAMPLE WORK ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT, INDICATING AN OVERALL LOW LEVEL OF ENGAGEMENT IN THE POLICY PROCESS.

In addition, the weak institutional capacities of CSOs, in terms of governance, structure and financial sustainability, pose critical challenges for CSOs to organize and mobilize around policy issues.

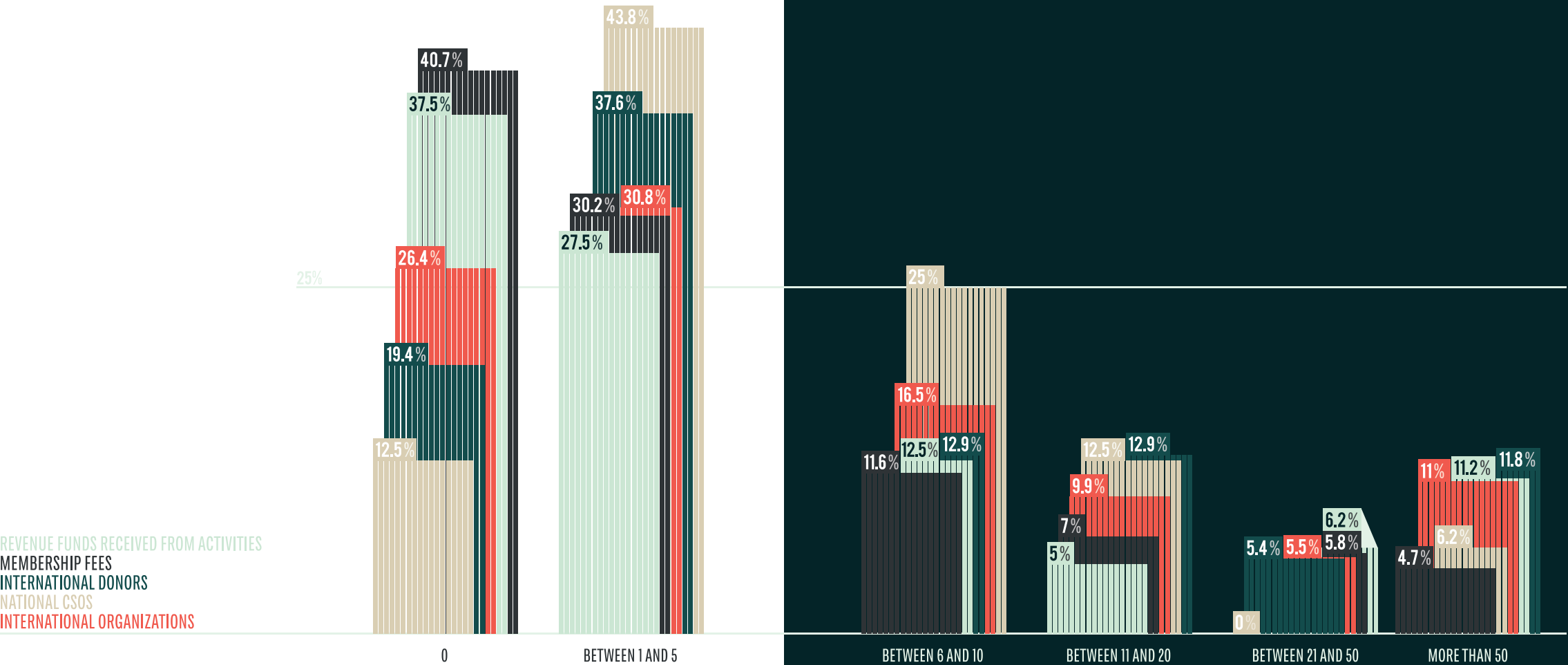
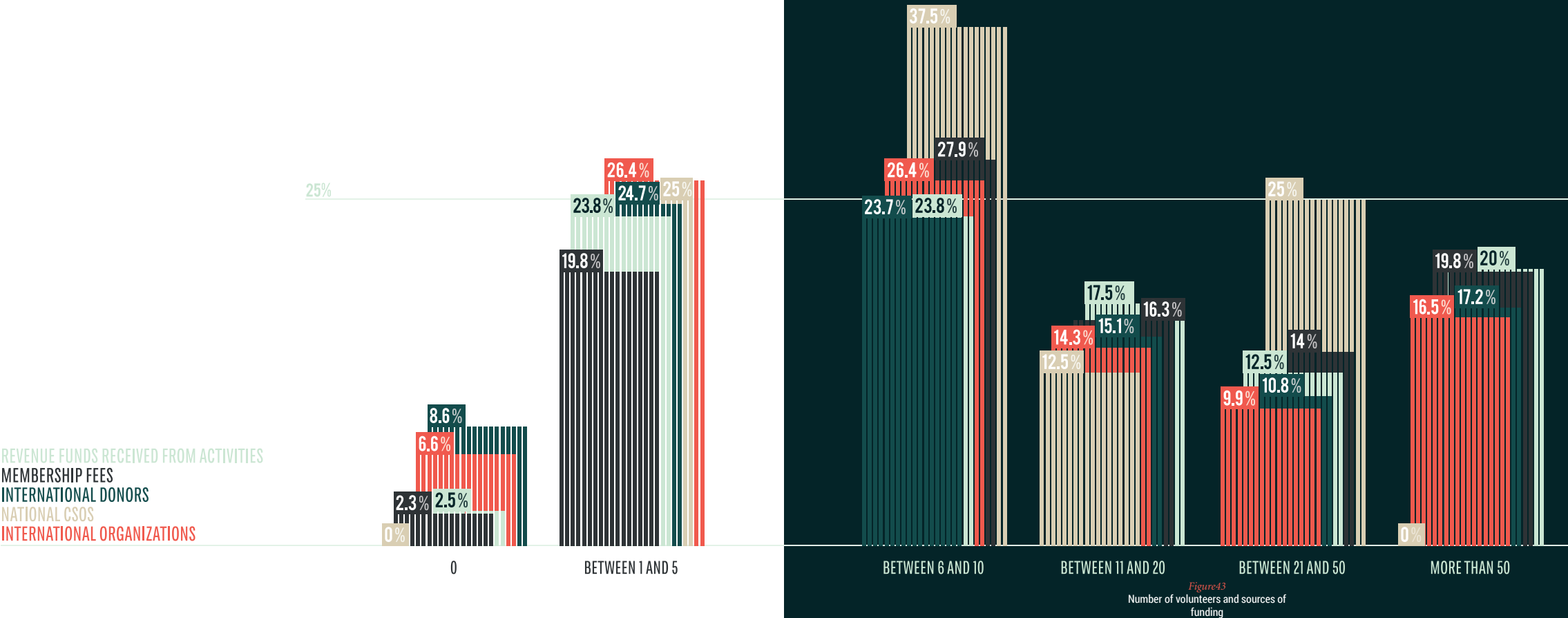


Figure 42  
Full-time staff and sources of funding

From the survey responses BRD found that the highest number of full-time staff (hereunder: more than 50) is available in CSOs that receive income from international donors (embassies and foreign governments). While CSOs that generate income from their own activities and membership fees had the highest number of volunteers.

The size of CSOs, and the fact that many of them have no sustainable revenue streams, makes the sustainability of their lobbying efforts questionable. When it comes to the main stages of policy development: issue identification, agenda setting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, civil society lacks the ability to follow public institutions throughout these phases and their role tends to be limited to articulating demands and stating priorities.

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS ADMITTED TO FOCUSING MORE ON DEMAND ARTICULATING AND STATING PRIORITIES WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO REALLY FOLLOW AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS.



75%

50%

Although relations with public institutions are cited as weak by survey respondents, it is noteworthy that government does rely on CSOs for information and opinions on policy issues.

When survey respondents who have participated in policy dialogues were asked to indicate what authorities requested of them as part of their participation in the policy dialogue, they indicated the following

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION IN POLICY DIALOGUE

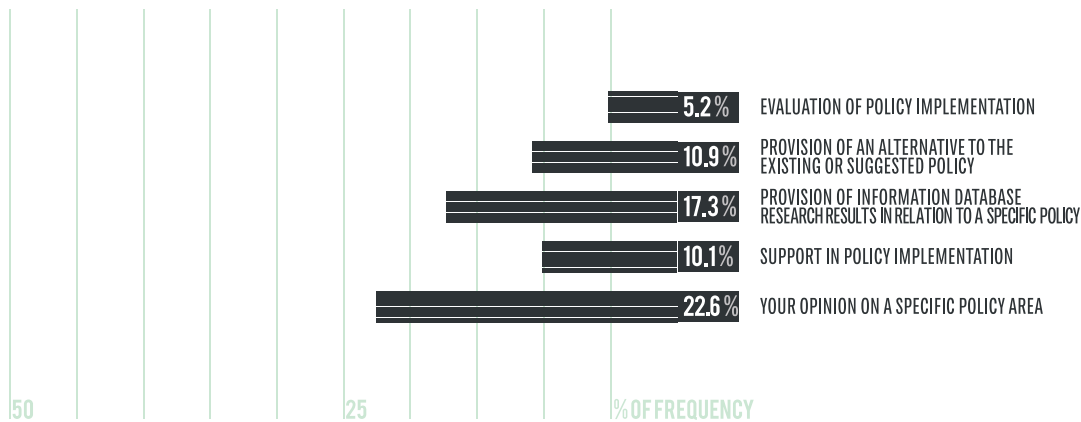


Figure44  
Requirements for participation in policy dialogue

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR CSO LOBBYING

The survey highlighted that 58.6% of the CSOs that receive funds from international donors have engaged in activities related to lobbying for policy change, as opposed to only 32% of CSOs that receive funds from local government that engage in the same kind of activity. This means that CSOs are supported by international donors to engage in lobbying for policy issues.

**GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES RELY A GREAT DEAL ON CSOS' OPINIONS, INFORMATION, AND ALTERNATIVES FOR POLICIES. AT THE SAME TIME, CSOS REGARD THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AS WEAK OR NON-EXISTENT. THIS MIGHT MEAN THAT IN THE EVENT THAT RELATIONSHIPS ARE FORGED, THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE OPEN TO INPUT ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT FROM CSOS.**

LOBBYING FOR POLICY CHANGE

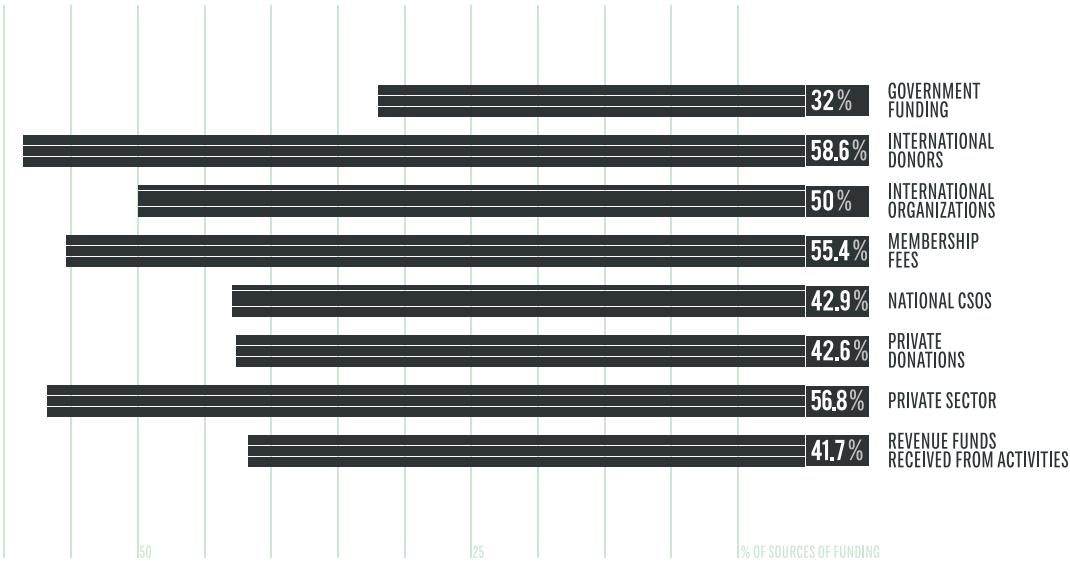


Figure45  
Sources of Funding and Lobbying for Policy Change

CSOs receive funds from different donors, depending on their area of focus and the type of activities they undertake. But also, donors are usually interested in one sector more than another. Respondents to our survey have identified the different patterns between the source of funding and the area of focus and we found that international donors (embassies and foreign governments) mostly support the following sectors: a- Social development and services, b- Human Rights, c- Environment and d- Health; and international organizations mostly support: a- Education, b- Human Rights, c- Local and rural development and, d- Environment.

The types of activities undertaken differ and support from donors is diverse. From the survey results we found that international organizations mostly fund activities that are related to advocacy and lobbying, implementation of development projects, capacity building and the dissemination of good practice. International donors (governments and embassies) however, mostly fund activities that include advocacy and lobbying, research, the implementation of development projects, and providing legal support for marginalized groups.

CSOS MORE ENGAGED IN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES THAN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

In spite of considerable funding being available from the international community to build CSOs' capacity in advocacy and policy development, most CSOs do not link their activities in socio-economic development to the policy development processes. Most CSOs in Lebanon are more prone to work on service delivery and development work as a substitute to government work.

INDICATED TYPES OF ACTIVITY

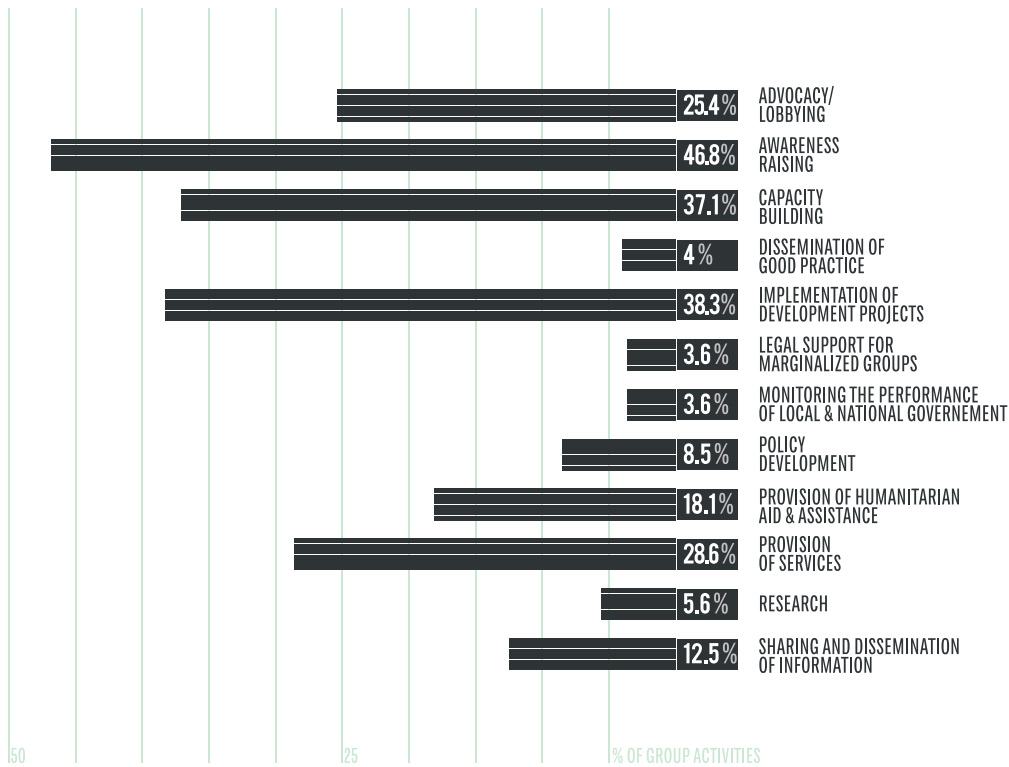


Figure 46  
Indicated Type of Activity

CSOS' DISILLUSIONMENT DUE TO REPETITIVE CHALLENGES IN INFLUENCING POLICY

Since the end of Lebanon's civil war and after the withdrawal of the Syrian troops in 2005, successive governments and parliaments have evaded major reforms that can influence social, economic and political conditions in the country.

Many of the CSOs' campaigns to influence policy have therefore been unsuccessful, leading to a feeling of disengagement and disillusion regarding the possibility of reform in the country.

With the increase in security threats, the Syrian refugee crisis and political polarization and deadlock, most focus group respondents seem to have lost hope and are more interested on focusing on social impact rather than policy change, which explains the focus on social development in the work of CSOs in the country.

Most CSOs therefore focus on supplementing government services instead of contributing to, or overseeing, policy development. Focus group participants claim that have developed creative solutions for social development and have established quality service delivery, but they are still not able to document, design and develop policy solutions resulting from these practices.



## ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Lebanese civil society has a long relationship with the donor community and with international organizations. The geo-political position that Lebanon occupies has meant a continual interest by the international community in the country's political, social and economic development.<sup>81</sup> CSOs have been the recipients of much of this interest and attention, which is translated into the existence of tens of international donors that are working to promote and nurture CSOs within the country.

Lebanon's government and civil society have therefore developed strong ties to the international community when working on various policy issues.<sup>82</sup> Figure 4 above portrays how funding has been increasing since Lebanon's civil war and shows how budget allocations for supporting Lebanon within the international community are correlated with the multiple crises the country went through.

The donor community plays an important role in shaping the agenda of what CSOs focus on in Lebanon, mainly through availability of funding for particular issues and types of CSOs. Interviews with representatives of five major donors converged on the following issues when it comes to donor funding and strategies:

### × **Duplication of effort**

Several CSO initiatives, particularly around advocacy, have been repeated in the past decade with little attention to lessons learnt and resources spent to achieve the same demands, using similar strategies.

### × **Weak coordination mechanisms**

International donors send their representatives to occasional coordination meetings but there is little coordination at the field level. As such mistakes in selecting NGOs, training topics, and even activities are often made.

### × **Reliance on a handful of CSOs**

Most donors tend to favour a handful of well-known and credible NGOs that fit their standards of reporting and project management. This leaves behind potential nascent, or informal groups that are not supported by any donor.

### × **One-sided consultations**

International organizations and specialized donor agencies tend to consult with government representatives CSOs independently. There are not enough opportunities for donors, governments and CSOs to come together around policy deliberation.

### × **Short-sightedness in programming**

International donors have limited grants to offer and over limited timeframes, these grants do not allow for real policy change to take place. Very often this means that campaigns are launched and capacity is built, only to have them come to an end once international programs shift focus or shut down.

<sup>81</sup> "Toward a Citizen's State: Lebanon's National Human Development Report," Beirut: United Nations Development Program, 2009.

<sup>82</sup> For instance on issues of gender, health, disabled, and electoral reform, international donors have allied with local CSOs to support reforms and raising awareness. See most recently Paul Kingston, *Reproducing Sectarianism: Advocacy Networks and the Politics of Civil Society in Post-War Lebanon* (New York, Albany: SUNY Press 2013).

## MAIN OBSERVATIONS

### PERCEPTION OF DONORS

While many civil society actors appreciate and need the intervention of international actors in Lebanon, several CSOs are critical towards those international actors. The following were the most cited reasons for this critical perception as noted during all focus groups:

- × Lack of transparency of certain international organizations and donors related to their strategies, funds and mechanisms for disbursement of grants.
- × Weak follow up by international organizations and questions regarding their intent to sustain support until results are achieved.
- × Growing resentment due to the fact that many international organizations do not make use of local human resources and supplies to benefit the community.



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# 6

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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Building on the data and analysis this report, this section presents actionable recommendations at five levels pertaining to CSOs in Lebanon

#### × GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Focusing on how to make the political, legal and socio-economic system more enabling for CSOs and more conducive for meaningful civic activism.

#### × PRIORITY ISSUES

Proposing key thematic issues that emerge when studying the political and socio-economic dimensions as well as the capabilities and needs of CSOs.

#### × REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Focusing on developing the capacities of CSOs to be able to respond to and contribute to social, economic and political development.

#### × STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY'S ROLE IN POLICY DIALOGUE

Specifically addressing measures to improve the role of CSOs in policy dialogue and policy development.

#### × LEVERAGING THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Suggesting ways to improve coordination and collaboration between international donor organizations and local CSOs.

The recommendations that follow make use of the empirical research highlighted in this study as well as the literature reviewed for the case of Lebanon.

**They are of relevance to the following actors wishing to engage and foster CSOs in Lebanon**

#### × International specialized organizations

The recommendations help international organizations that work in various technical assistance programs with the Lebanese government by highlighting priority issues that CSOs can be more involved in.

#### × International donors

The recommendations enable donors to better relate to the needs of CSOs and customize their funding as well as capacity building programs to fit the Lebanese context at this time.

#### × Public institutions

Although the government is not the direct audience for this report, these recommendations will help public agencies better understand the strengths and weaknesses of CSOs should they wish to involve them in policy development and implementation.

## 6.1

## GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on interview responses pertaining to how the broader political, legal and socio-economic environment can be made more conducive for NGOs. The power to address these recommendations is not necessarily in the hands of CSOs, however awareness of the need to address these recommendations can help create a roadmap for governmental reforms that nurture and foster a more influential role for CSOs in Lebanon. The following are key reforms to policies and institutions that can enhance the work of CSOs:

- × Advocating for parliament's adoption of anti-corruption laws, such as access to information, whistle-blower protection and illicit wealth.
- × Enacting an administrative decentralization law driven by social cohesion and local development, to increase local engagement, efficiency and accountability.
- × Reforming the electoral law to increase voter engagement based on issue-based agendas, decrease the voting age, and control campaign spending.
- × Build the capacity of the justice sector, the public audit, the civil service commission and all courts to promote rule of law.
- × Encourage Ministries to mainstream a youth component in their projects and support the Youth Forum and the Ministry of Youth to adopt and implement the youth policies endorsed by the cabinet on April 3rd, 2012.
- × Encourage Ministries to mainstream a gender component in their projects and support CSOs working on women's issues and the National Commission for Lebanese Women to advocate for the social, economic and political laws they are proposing and their implementation.
- × Support the Ministry of Interior in digitizing the CSOs registry and make it available to the public.
- × Support the Ministry of Social Affairs in reforming its selection process and funding for CSOs.

**GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES RELY A GREAT DEAL ON CSOS' OPINIONS, INFORMATION, AND ALTERNATIVES FOR POLICIES. AT THE SAME TIME, CSOS REGARD THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AS WEAK OR NON-EXISTENT. THIS MIGHT MEAN THAT IN THE EVENT THAT RELATIONSHIPS ARE FORGED, THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE OPEN TO INPUT ON POLICY DEVELOPMENT FROM CSOS.**

## PRIORITY ISSUES

This section is taken mainly from data collected during the focus groups, which took place in 15 locations across Lebanon. The focus groups allowed for the documentation and analysis of qualitative data where participants delved into the challenges they face at the local level, as well as offering recommendations towards priority issues that require support. This section therefore helps actors identify thematic issues which can:

- ✗ Improve the legal environment for CSOs,
- ✗ Enhance the socio-economic context,
- ✗ Respond more effectively to the Syrian refugee crisis.

### LEGAL ISSUES

The general legal recommendation is to enable CSOs to be better informed of, and actively engaged in, monitoring and reforming the Law of Associations. This would serve the objectives of improving the application of the law and ensuring that its application provides largest margin of freedom of assembly and civic activism.

RECOMMENDATIONS	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
<b>ENFORCEMENT OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE LAW OF ASSOCIATIONS</b>	<i>Map existing loopholes in implementations of the law.</i>	<i>Raise awareness of CSOs and relevant Ministries on application of the law.</i>	<i>Develop a "freedom of association" monitoring body to ensure respect for the freedoms ensured by law and avoid misinterpretation by public authorities.</i>
<b>REFORMS TO THE LAW OF ASSOCIATIONS</b>	<i>Identify needs for legal reforms through consultations with registered and unregistered CSOs.</i>	<i>Draft legal reforms required to the Law of Associations and present to Parliament through coalition of CSOs.</i>	<i>Establish a civic oversight mechanism to monitor the transparency and credibility of CSOs.</i>
<b>ENABLING YOUTH UNDER 20 TO BE MEMBERS OF CSOs</b>	<i>Develop a national program for volunteerism.</i>	<i>Register new youth as volunteers with CSOs.</i>	<i>Lobby policy-makers to reform legal provision pertaining to membership in CSOs.</i>

Though most challenges faced by csos are common to both the regions and the capital, the study reveals some specific needs and priorities of csos in the regions, as described below.

The following are priorities that were identified as need attention by government and donors at the local level:

### Bekaa

- ✗ Water, electricity and infrastructure
- ✗ Violence and security threats
- ✗ Education and increase in dropouts
- ✗ Access to public health
- ✗ Weak performance of municipalities
- ✗ Youth unemployment
- ✗ Agricultural sector deterioration
- ✗ Syrian refugee influx
- ✗ Coordination with other CSOs and international actors

### South

- ✗ Urban planning and public spaces
- ✗ Support for the elderly
- ✗ Spread of drugs among the youth
- ✗ Youth unemployment
- ✗ Deterioration of the agriculture sector
- ✗ Environment and solid waste
- ✗ Syrian refugee influx
- ✗ Youth radicalization
- ✗ Youth civic disengagement
- ✗ Politicization of CSOs
- ✗ Coordination with other CSOs and international organizations

### North

- ✗ Education and increase in drop-outs from schools
- ✗ Deterioration of the tourism sector
- ✗ Politicization and radicalization of youth
- ✗ Syrian refugee influx
- ✗ Negative image promoted by the media
- ✗ Economic crisis and youth unemployment
- ✗ Deterioration of the agriculture sector

### Mount Lebanon

- ✗ Weak performance of municipalities
- ✗ Spread of drugs among youth
- ✗ Youth civic disengagement
- ✗ Deterioration of quality of education
- ✗ Increase in sectarian discourse
- ✗ Lack of interest of international donors

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Since health and education needs were the most repeated concerns at the local level, this section addresses recommendations that aim at enhancing these services and enabling CSOs to play a more active role in public health and education. The general recommendation for both sectors is to help CSOs develop more technical skills pertaining to advocating for better health and education as well as providing these basic services where needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
<b>EXPANSION OF QUALITY HEALTH COVERAGE</b>	<i>Enable CSOs to address health sector by providing information, trainings and knowledge briefs on the health sector.</i>	<i>Support CSOs to advocate for comprehensive health coverage for citizens that are not covered in the existing funds.</i>	<i>Support CSOs ability to fill the gap in primary health care services.</i>
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN MANAGEMENT OF THE HEALTH SECTOR</b>	<i>Assess the challenges to public authorities working on health and share information with CSOs.</i>	<i>Launch a campaign to combat corruption and unify the standards and prices of health services.</i>	<i>Launch a watchdog for Ministry of Health and National Social Security Fund by CSOs.</i>
<b>COMBATTING OF DRUG USE AND YOUTH NEGATIVE HEALTH HABITS</b>	<i>Launch coordination body between medical industry, CSOs and Ministry of Social Affairs for drug prevention.</i>	<i>Help CSOs build the technical capacity of health inspectors who can work on drugs, smoking and other negative practices.</i>	<i>Establish and build the capacity of local governmental centres in partnership with CSOs to address health issues at the local level.</i>
<b>ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION</b>	<i>Identify students at the Lebanese University to set up a university students' network.</i>	<i>Support CSOs to advocate for a new law to regulate higher education and make it more autonomous.</i>	<i>Help CSOs working with students to develop a five-year national education strategy.</i>

## IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS BETWEEN CSOS AND EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

*Develop and diffuse database of contacts of universities, research centres and major schools.*

*Help CSOs develop a coalition to deliberate educational priorities and shared needs among students.*

*Support CSOs in advocating for the transparency and higher performance of the Ministry of Education.*

## ENCOURAGEMENT OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR YOUTH

*Help CSOs lobby for a unified history book and a modern civic education curriculum.*

*Enforce community service for students in partnership with local CSOs.*

*Develop programs to engage parents and other stakeholders to help students in civic activism and career orientation.*

## 6.3

## REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF CSOs IN LEBANON

The general recommendation pertaining to enhancing the capacity of CSOs in Lebanon is to develop tailored capacity building programs that provide learning opportunities for CSOs at the levels of internal organizational capacity, outreach for policy dialogue, and financial sustainability.

RECOMMENDATIONS	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
<b>IMPROVEMENT OF QUALITY OF EXISTING CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS.</b>	<i>Map and assess existing capacity building providers and study challenges to existing programs.</i>	<i>Work with a sample of capacity building providers to improve training methodologies.</i>	<i>Design quality control mechanism to ensure that trainings are experiential, impactful and contributing to CSOs' performance.</i>
<b>PROVISION OF CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS THAT SUIT CONTEXT AND NEEDS OF CSOS.</b>	<i>Conduct a national needs assessment of CSOs per region, size, function and sector.</i>	<i>Develop training outlines and curricula for each need assessed.</i>	<i>Train trainers and coaches to deliver and report on capacity building programs.</i>
<b>SUPPORT OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY.</b>	<i>Document cases of newly established social enterprises in different regions</i>	<i>Launch program to help CSOs migrate into some</i>	<i>Link socially innovative solutions to policy dialogue and</i>



	<i>and sectors.</i>	<i>profit-generating activities to ensure sustainability.</i>	<i>policy development initiatives to help government adopt creative solutions.</i>
<b>PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO CSOS.</b>	<i>Diversity training availability by tailoring a learning program for CSOs on priority issues such as education, health, urban planning, and employment.</i>	<i>Support CSOs in launching projects to work on sectors that are currently not covered and that require technical competencies.</i>	<i>Develop a mechanism for CSOs to create consensus around priority issues and work jointly to advocate for sectorial policy issues.</i>

## 6.4 STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY’S ROLE IN POLICY DIALOGUE

The general recommendation is to create greater interface opportunities for CSOs with policy makers as well as to educate CSOs on how to take an active part in consultation meetings. This will require working with CSOs as well as policy makers so that both can build on each other’s knowledge and policy expertise.

RECOMMENDATIONS	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
<b>OPENNESS OF THE POLICY MAKING PROCESS TO CSOS</b>	<i>Identify existing or upcoming policy decisions that need to be made by public authorities.</i>	<i>Educate CSOs on policy development process and how to influence and support the process.</i>	<i>Link specialized CSOs to policy makers at specific key junctures of the policy development process.</i>
<b>IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND INTERFACE BETWEEN CSOS AND POLICY MAKERS</b>	<i>Identify qualified and willing CSOs to represent citizens on specific policy issues.</i>	<i>Lead consultation meetings between CSOs and citizen groups to relay public interest on policy issues.</i>	<i>Develop formal mechanisms for interface and collaboration between CSOs and policy-makers.</i>
<b>OVERSEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS</b>	<i>Revamp and improve websites of public institutions to ensure information and timely dissemination of news.</i>	<i>Support CSOs to be invited by government agencies to oversee policy meetings and report on decisions to the public.</i>	<i>Educate parliamentarians and decision-makers on need and implications of adopting a Freedom of Information Law.</i>
<b>LEVERAGING CSO POLICY ENGAGEMENT AT THE LOCAL LEVEL</b>	<i>Assess types of policy decisions taken by local authorities and place in an accessible timeline for CSOs.</i>	<i>Link CSO trainers to municipal officials to deliver trainings on participatory policy making.</i>	<i>Establish formal mechanisms for CSOs to take part in municipal meetings and policy decisions.</i>

LEVERAGING THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The general recommendation is for international organizations and donors to develop their programs based on a needs assessment that is conducted in a participatory manner with CSOs. Also, as funding sustainability is a major issue, international organizations should help local CSOs find alternative sources of financing their activities from Lebanon's private sector.

RECOMMENDATIONS	SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
IMPROVEMENT OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN CSOS AND INTERNATIONAL DONORS	Ensure a consultative process when designing programs and capacity building interventions by engaging CSOs early on.	Establish periodical review meetings that study the impact of programming by international organizations with CSOs' presence.	Bring together priorities of government and CSOs into the programming and strategies of international donors.
PROMOTION OF TRANSPARENCY IN AID AND FUNDING PROCEDURES	Publish donor strategies, funding requirements, and project objectives in both English and Arabic.	Conduct meetings at the local level to introduce smaller size CSOs to the work and mission of international organizations.	Enable CSOs to negotiate with international organizations priorities and programming strategies.
PROLONGATION OF PROGRAMMING WHERE POSSIBLE	Work with funders and donors to ensure long term commitment to supporting CSOs.	Coordinate to ensure follow-up on successful programs or initiatives that require long timeframes to achieve results.	Seek the buy-in of Lebanon's private sector to support important CSO initiatives after donor programs end.

For these recommendations to begin to take shape in terms of programming and concrete initiatives they require the support and efforts of local CSOs and Lebanese public institutions, as well as senior officials within international organizations.

A RESULTS-BASED STRATEGY

For CSOs to play the role expected from them in the near future, they need to face the internal challenges facing them at the level of internal management, financial sustainability and policy development strategies. Also, CSOs should be prepared to face the increasing security and political tensions occurring in Lebanon, as well as the socio-economic pressures. This can be achieved through a results-based strategy that focuses on outputs, outcomes and the desired impact of CSOs as identified in this report. It shifts the focus from inputs and activities, thereby changing the strategy from project-driven to results-oriented. The intended results proposed below also help overcome the issue of duplication of effort by CSOs, as well as international organizations. By increasing the percentages captured here as a baseline in this report, CSOs can begin to move closer to the addressing the six goals that can enhance the CSOs' role in development and the empowerment of citizens.

A RESULTS-BASED APPROACH WILL HELP CSOS ENHANCE THEIR ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNANCE AS WELL AS EMPOWER CITIZENS TO BE ENGAGED IN THESE PROCESSES.

As a final recommendation the data has pointed out four goals that should be the core of any program supporting CSOs in Lebanon:

- × Improving internal systems and structures of CSOs.
- × Enhancing strategic orientations (issues and functions) of CSOs.
- × Improving the organizational and financial sustainability of CSOs.
- × Enhancing the involvement of CSOs in policy development.

While civil society is improving its performance, we suggest that organizations focus on three main issues that seem to be most critical for Lebanon's stability in the coming phase:

- × Citizens in communities must be more cohesive and capable of managing tensions
- × Citizens in communities must be economically active and entrepreneurial
- × Citizens in communities must have access to basic rights and services



The following Results Framework suggests the results that are needed include the following:

RESULTS	BASELINE
<b>Goal 1- CSOs must have effective and high performing system</b>	
R 1.1 % of CSOs have a mission statement and strategy aligned	Only <b>38.7%</b> of the groups said they have total alignment
R 1.2 % CSOs adopt and implement an adequate governance model	Only <b>17.3%</b> have a governance policy in place
R 1.3 % of CSOs reaching out to new communities outside their region	Quantitative data says that <b>44.4%</b> work on a national level, yet this number refers to groups who identify their issues as national, while they actually have weak national outreach and operate in two or three communities
<b>Goal 2- CSOs must be organizationally and financially sustainable to scale their impact</b>	
R 2.1 % of CSOs have a volunteer constituency	<b>40.3%</b> have volunteer bodies
R 2.2 % of CSOs have alternative revenue streams	<b>30.7%</b> expressed having <b>regular</b> income generating activities outside donors and private donations
R 2.3 % of CSOs collaborating through formal and informal platforms and networks on common issues	<b>54.7%</b> are members of networks
<b>Goal 3- CSOs must have a leverage to influence policy development processes</b>	
R 3.1 % of CSOs are participating with a national entity in a policy development process	<b>46.0%</b> have participated in policy dialogue and <b>38.3%</b> of those cases were with a national entity
R 3.2 % of CSOs are participating with a local municipality in a policy development process	<b>46.0%</b> have participated in policy dialogue and <b>25.8%</b> of those cases were with local municipality
R 3.3 % of campaigns, formal or informal, succeed in changing a policy	So far very few groups have managed to change policy

**Goal 4- Citizens in communities must be more cohesive and capable of managing tensions**

R 4.1 % of citizens engaged in conflict management mechanisms (committees, initiatives, dialogues...)	Baseline assessment is needed
R 4.2 % of citizens from diverse communities (sectarian or host vs. refugees) are working together on common initiatives	Baseline assessment is needed
R 4.3 % of citizens from diverse communities are organizing together to claim a common right	Baseline assessment is needed

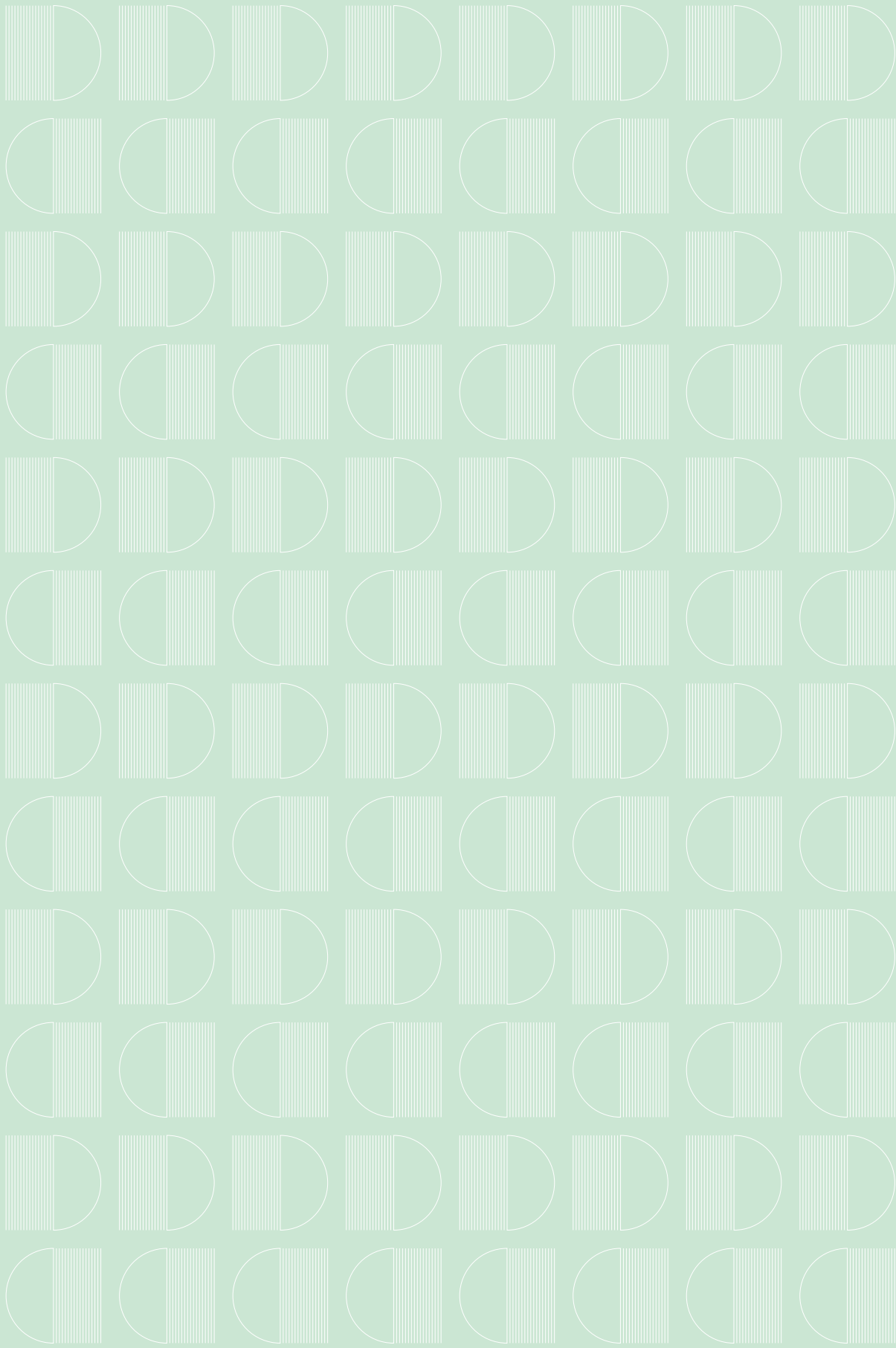
**Goal 5- Citizens in communities must be economically active and entrepreneurial**

R 5.1 % of young people employed within their regions	Baseline assessment is needed
R 5.2 % of citizens starting their own (social) entrepreneurial initiative	Baseline assessment is needed
R 5.3 % of citizens' local small businesses becoming sustainable	Baseline assessment is needed

**Goal 6- Citizens in communities must have access to basic rights and services**

R 6.1 % of CSOs working within the education sector to improve its quality	<b>15.7%</b> are working in education sector
R 6.2 % of CSOs working within the health sector to improve its quality	<b>14.5%</b> are working in health sector
R 6.3 % of CSOs, formal and informal, specialized on issues of basic rights: education, health and utilities become active in policy development	<b>6.5%</b> were involved in health and education related policy work and less than <b>2%</b> in other basic rights.

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