

T.C.
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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
SİYASET BİLİMİ VE ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZCE TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

THE IMPACT OF SYRIAN NGOs ON CIVIL SOCIETY IN SYRIA
&
INTEGRATION WITH INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

HAZIRLAYAN
MOHAMAD RAMI RAJJOUR

GAZİANTEP – 2020

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TEZ ETİK VE BİLDİRİM SAYFASI

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “**THE IMPACT OF SYRIAN NGOs ON CIVIL SOCIETY IN SYRIA & INTEGRATION WITH INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM**” başlıklı çalışmanın tarafımca, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu ve bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanmış olduğumu belirtir ve onurumla doğrularım. 29/09/2020

Mohamad Rami RAJJOUB

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ABSTRACT

After the outbreak of peaceful protests in Syria in March 2011, the humanitarian needs began to rapidly increase, especially in the provinces that witnessed widespread popular mobility and significant military operations that led to the displacement of thousands of families like Homs and Daraa. Within the end of 2011 and the beginning of 2012, thousands of civilians need an urgent humanitarian response.

As a response, local civilian activists with support from local communities have created initiatives to bridge the gap in response and meet civilians' possible needs. These initiatives started to turn into professional organizations entered the Syrian civil society and worked from within it. They significantly grew their experience where most of them have started from scratches and have zero experience in civil society organizations as the Syrian regimes, through their governing Syria, allowed no space for civil society to grow over 60 years and prevented CSOs from work to raise their communities.

In this study, we aim to unroll a history and typology of Syrian NGOs and their impact on the Syrian civil society after 2011.

The importance of this research comes from the importance of humanitarian organizations playing in the Syrian response on the one hand, and their roles as part of civil society, on the other hand. Through the study, we have looked at these organizations' reality in terms of governance, structures, strategic planning, and many parts related to the institution as a body and level of implementation. Additionally, we have discussed the internal and external factors that affected Syrian NGOs like the loyalty to political parties or army groups and the countries' interests, which played a significant role in shaping the donations and responses to Syria. And the relevant influences of these factors on Syrian NGOs and civil society. Therefore, we come out with observations and recommendations to help readers and stakeholders consider them in proportion to the development of these organizations' work to preserve their role and improve it. Also, closing the research with in-depth recommendations will help readers/stakeholders build their capabilities according to study's the possible outtudy.

This study relied on qualitative methodologies such as academic research, articles, official humanitarian reports, personal interviews with humanitarian workers (decision-makers), and other stakeholders. Also, we developed a questionnaire that aims to expand the data of the sample.

According to the findings of this study, Syrian NGOs have been able to cover a significant gap in humanitarian response resulting in the failure of responding by the international humanitarian community for Syria since 2011. The majority of Syrian NGOs have a high capacity to meet international requirements for partnerships and an increased ability to implement long-term and specialized projects. They are technically eligible to work in the next phase of the Syrian response, the reconstruction phase. For these organizations to be a real part of the Syrian civil society organizations and play an essential role in building civil society, they must review their governance systems, policies, loyalties and turn into purely neutral organizations. It is also necessary for the international community to retain the neutral tone and perspective towards these organizations and provide them with real required support that will enable them to play a critical role in Syria's future.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NPOs	: Non-Profit Organizations
NSAs	: Non-State Actors
IGOs	: intergovernmental Organizations
CSOs	: Civil Society Organizations
CBOs	: Community-Based Organizations
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organizations
LNGOs	: Local Non-Governmental Organizations
SNGOs	: Syrian Non-Governmental Organizations
SLNGOs	: Syrian Local Non-Governmental Organizations
INGOs	: International Non-Governmental Organizations
RCRC	: International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
IFRC	: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ICRC	: International Committee of the Red Cross
SRAC	: Syrian Arab Red Crescent
TRC	: Turkish Red Crescent
AFAD	: Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı)
IHH	: Humanitarian Relief Foundation (İnsani Yardım Vakfı)
UN	: United Nations
OCHA	: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
NGO Forum	Non-Governmental Organization Forum (Coordination Platform)
NES	: North East
NW	: North West
BOD	: Board of Directors
BOT	: Board of Trustees
IDPs	: Internally Displaced Persons

- JCI : Junior Chamber International
- WOSM : World Organization of the Scout Movement
- SFPA : Syrian Family Planning Association
- SOS : SOS Children's Villages International
- ACU : Assistance Coordination Unit
- SDF : Syrian Democratic Forces
- KRI : Kurdistan Region of Iraq
- ISIS : Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
- HTS : Hayat Tahrir al-Sham
- WWI : World War I
- WWII : World War II

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Humanitarian work has noticeably evolved along with history, through the practical translation of the human instinct for charity and help into pragmatic solutions and actions enabling the humans to frame their emotions and humanitarian sense of solidarity among peoples over all the world into a measurable and structured framework with tangible results and impact. Factors like the rise of European Renaissance, industrial revolution and its political and commercial ramification, development emerging approach; developing constitutions, laws, documentation and research mechanisms around the world, conflicts among kingdom states and world powers in the latest three centuries has a sound reflection on the field of humanitarian action.

In the past, humanitarian work was limited to individuals or groups initiatives related to assisting physically accessible groups. Such initiatives were prompted by humanitarian sense, but other factors like social, religious, or ethnic relations fueled them well.

Last eras, the concept of humanitarian action had no longer been financial or in-kind based assistance provided to those in need. Instead, it was professionally crystalized in the mid of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century through movements like the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement RCRC, which widely spread humanitarian responses worldwide, helping those affected by natural disasters and victims of war. Humanitarian agencies of the United Nations played a significant role in linking humanitarian intervention to an international political and legal framework. Local or international organizations that crossed the regions and continents and intervened in other countries or areas provided humanitarian assistance. These general examples of the development occurred in humanitarian work in the last two centuries, where these bodies were found to work together in an integrated manner.

‘The development of the international humanitarian system as we know it today can be located both geographically and temporally. Its origins are in the Western and especially European experience of war and natural disasters. Yet, it is now active across the world in a range of operations: responding to needs in situations of conflict or natural disasters, supporting displaced

populations in acute and protracted crises, risk reduction and preparedness, early recovery, livelihoods support, conflict resolution, and peace-building. Over time, the efforts of the most prominent international actors – states, non-governmental organizations(NGOs), international agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement – have coalesced into a loosely connected ‘system,’ with links on the level of finances, operations, personnel, and values’ (Davey, Borton, & Foley, 2013)

‘If we try to suggest a slightly different characters action of modern humanitarian history. Four main periods have been identified: from the mid-nineteenth century until the end of the First World War in 1918 when nineteenth-century conceptions drove humanitarian action; the ‘Wilsonian’ period of the interwar years and the Second World War, when the international government was born, and then reasserted; the Cold War period, when humanitarian actors turned more concertedly towards the non-Western world and the development paradigm emerged; and the post-Cold War period, when geopolitical changes again reshaped the terrain within which humanitarians worked.’ (Davey, Borton, & Foley, 2013)

During the second half of the twentieth century, with the increasing size and complexity of natural disasters and conflicts, international humanitarian organizations began to spread more around the world, especially organizations working for rapid and long-term responses, human rights and development, and organizations of traditional character, such as the religious ones or politically affiliated organizations. Institutions and organizations started to face the need to enhance their work quality and to have accountability towards the large numbers of stakeholders like beneficiaries, donors, governments, and other relevant bodies. The concept of neu-organizations, as a result, emerged during that period with major development on the organization body, which includes organizational structures, governance, finance and administration, monitoring and evaluation, accountability and learning, legal framework, strategic planning, annual plans, priority setting, the volume of funding, work and much other planning and organizational frameworks that aim to develop practical responses. Simultaneously “Lessons learned” and transparency approaches emerged to help organizations increase their institutional capacity and improve work quality. In order to serve the operational and organizational change processes and the development of new standards. By highlighting the factors that encouraged or prevented changes in practice, standard frameworks, and conditions that make practice possible.

During the first two decades of the 21st century, humanitarian organizations faced new challenges in the regions that witnessed political unrest and armed conflicts, partial/total civil wars, persecution of rights. Countries like Sri Lanka, Syria, Myanmar (Burma) and Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Afghanistan. In such contexts, the global humanitarian system and its institutions faced four main challenges threatening its efficiency, which are: 1- Lack of international interest in supporting humanitarian organizations work as a result of the absence of exact political permanent/semi-permanent solutions of preventing delivery of aid by army powers 2 - lack of formal criminalization against ruling regimes or informal militias operations on the ground, or the use of the veto in favor of some states and governments regardless their criminal actions, which weakened the trust and sometimes eliminated it between the affected population and international humanitarian actors. 3- The presence of local groups and civil activists in some contexts, such as the Syrian context, can develop themselves quickly, based on a sense of popular responsibility, scientific and practical competence. 4- The most important and influential factor helped to build these institutions, which is for social incubator.

1.2. Research background

Humanitarian NGOs play a prominent and highly important role in the early stages of disaster (conflict or natural disaster) or later stages of livelihoods, early recovery, and reconstruction. They have a vision, unique and distinct mission worldwide, especially NGOs that are supposed to be purely humanitarian, impartial, and independent from political systems and governments. Also, the critical factor and a new concept that started to appear in the last quarter of the twentieth century related to the social incubator or the local community and the host community (if any) and involve them in all stages of the humanitarian process as an active party not only a beneficiary party. And how to coordinate between them and with all the working bodies are called stakeholders.

After the outbreak of peaceful demonstrations in Syrian on March 2011, the humanitarian needs spread and increased very quickly, especially in the provinces that witnessed widespread popular mobility and major military operations that led to the displacement of thousands of families, as happened in the governorates of Homs and Daraa, within the end of 2011 and beginning of 2012 there are thousands of civilians were needed an urgent humanitarian response. Several contextual obstacles made the situation far beyond the ideal case for organizations that have experience in

responding to the disasters, conflicts, and displacements (in a technical expression) such as the International Committee of Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross, and the Syrian Red Crescent despite their work and presence in Syria for many years prior to the unrest (responding to the refugees from Lebanon in 2006 and Iraq in 2007). It was evident that they were late in response. Their impact was weak or almost invisible or sometimes absent due to the restrictions imposed by the Syrian regime on the one hand and the strong link between their response and international determination to support peaceful protests in Syria another hand. In addition, unexpected accelerated changes in Syria and military control created further complications for NGOs to respond rapidly. To complicate the situation more, Syrian organizations like the Syrian concept "charitable societies" suffered from the lack of mechanisms and systems to face such humanitarian unique cases of crisis in Syria.

Such circumstances mentioned above facilitated the emergence of popular initiatives led by local civilian activists aiming to bridge the gap in the civilians' humanitarian responses and get the fund from Syrian immigrants and diasporas. Such Initiatives turned later into local NGOs with a limited capacity of their founders, which was reflected in the overall institutional capacity and knowledge in the humanitarian field and imposed a need to support these NGOs' capacity building programs.

1.3. Problem Statement

‘The conflict (in Syria) has brought to the fore the role of local organizations, diaspora groups, local councils, and others. These groups have almost inadvertently filled the gap left by the limited international presence, providing both assistance and protection’ (Svoboda & Pantuliano, 2015). ‘Humanitarian organizations have been struggling to respond to needs in Syria from the very beginning of the conflict. The reasons for this are manifold and certainly cannot be attributed solely to internal factors specific to the functioning of the various humanitarian organizations involved, or to the formal system more generally. That said, the conflict in Syria has brought out more visibly than other crises the shortcomings of the formal humanitarian system as currently in place. The policies and practices developed over decades in emergencies in Africa are ill-suited to ‘middle-income contexts that are dominated by strong States, sophisticated weapons, urban populations and intense geopolitical interests’ (Slim & Trombetta, 2014)

The emergency presence of the Syrian humanitarian organizations established after 2011 or the development of systems and mechanisms for some other organizations previously established significantly contributed to filling the large gaps for humanitarian needs in various sectors. Such institutions later became an essential part of the newly established Syrian civil society. They grew with growing demands and improved their capacity with several tools, but the first and most important one is its social and popular incubator. Furthermore, these organizations' significant impact and their prominent role in establishing a primary base for real civil society institutions did not exist before.

They need to continue to work and rehabilitate themselves to make them a regular part of the Syrian civil society later. These organizations' continued work and their actual presence depend on many international factors, including the military and politically. These two broad factors will often be outside the framework or intervention of these institutions as they are supposed to be technically and operationally neutral bodies (we do not mean idiomatic neutrality here that makes some organizations out of the umbrella of civil society to be under the umbrella of the donor). Sustainability of these institutions work is determined firstly by the strategic framework drawn and planned with tools which guarantee sustainability and development and build long term capacity of these institutions, making them a solid entity through setting organizational structures, governance, financial and administrative policies and, and systems of the legal framework as well.

With these tools, those organizations that have been grown after 2011 can be a distinctive, not marginalized part of the response under the national level of Syria, working with civil society organizations that cover other areas in a coordinated manner seeking to shape the future phase of an integrated civil society growth.

1.4. Research Questions

Our research questions were developed upon observing the current situation of Syrian NGOs, which started working in the Syrian response from 2011. For that, we have focused our questions to serve the path of the research and writing process to avoid the “all-about” paper and work toward supporting a specific, arguable piece.

- Main Question:

Can Syrian organizations implement a response at the national level in the future, and are they a part of the Syrian civil society institutions?

- Sub Questions:

- 1- Why and how are the new Syrian NGOs established?
- 2- How can we evaluate the governance systems of Syrian NGOs?
- 3- What is the role of regular NGOs which already exist?
- 4- What is the influence of INGOs and big donors?
- 5- How the partnership created INGOs and local NGOs?
- 6- Do the Syrian NGOs are taking the primary role in response and implementation after nine years of working?
- 7- Did the international resolutions influence positively or negatively the role of Syrian NGOs?
- 8- Could the Syrian NGOs have enough capacity to lead the response at the national level?
- 9- Did the Syrian NGOs comply with IHL and humanitarian principles?
- 10- How did the Syrian NGOs get support from local communities?
- 11- Can we say that Syrian NGOs could be an essential part of civil society in the future, or they may disappear at the end of response?

1.5. Research Objectives

- To conduct an analytical field study about the Syrian NGOs working in the Syrian context in order to identify the nature of governance, Structure, and operation functions applied by these organizations.

- Determine the challenges for Syrian NGOs and how they are aligned with the formal humanitarian system?

- To Evaluate the size and internal impact of SNGOs development after nine years of responses

Assess the present capacity of Syrian NGOs in leading responses on the national level in Syria's future.

- Evaluate the influence of Syrian NGOs on establishing a civil society in Syria and the impact of their work in the long term.

1.6. Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were proposed based on the long reading of the researches that were conducted on the same issue despite the lack of useful amount of references available about the Syrian NGOs and Syrian humanitarian response, I have tried to employ my own professional experience in the humanitarian field since 2007 until 2011 and my working for the Syrian context after 2011, I matched my field experience with the theoretical analyzes presented in other researches and extracted that in four hypotheses which devoted in a purely scientific research framework to be analytical and inferential value. To make the hypothesis a sound in our research, we will first define the concept, independent and dependent variables.

Our paper talks about NGOs' role in the crisis, and the literature review focused mainly on humanitarian response and civil society. And, as the discussion is about the role of Syrian NGOs in crisis, the dependent variable is the humanitarian response of Syrian NGOs in the Syria crisis and civil society in Syria. In contrast, multi independent variables are Integration with the international humanitarian system, level of the capacity of Syrian NGOs, Legal status of Syrian response, Access to the needed areas, Relation with local communities, Response on the national level, Influence, and Impact of Syrian NGOs in civil society, etc.

Reading the elements mentioned above and re-reviewing the research questions, sub-questions, and literature review, we can extract Four hypotheses to our research:

- H1: Local NGOs in Syria response can implement response on a national level if they receive serious support in the legal frame from the humanitarian world.
- H2: Syria response connect to the role, capacity, and the size of fund of Syrian humanitarian players which is related to political changes and interests by the International donors, especially the governmental funds. In another world, the direction of the fund is what lead decision making and strategies of Syrian NGO
- H3: local Syrian NGOs can be stable if they accept the changing to better and have active governance systems

- H4: local Syrian NGOs have the ability to be a fundamental part of civil society if they eliminated the causes of dependency and loyalty and are removed in the future.

1.7. Significance of the Study

The importance of the research is inferred by the significance of Syrian humanitarian organizations responding to the Syrian crisis and working as part of Syrian civil society. Through the study, we will deeply be looking into the reality of these organizations in terms of infrastructure, structures, planning, and any other parts related to the institution as a body and its implementation quality to come out with observations and recommendations which help the stakeholders to look at them in proportion to the development of the work of these organizations to preserve their role and improve it.

By stakeholders, we mean the technical term referring to entities and individuals who have a direct or partial role in a case. In the Syrian case, we can classify stakeholders as follows: direct beneficiaries of the response, indirect beneficiaries, local organizations, international organizations, governments of countries working in the Syrian humanitarian file, International donors such as the governments of countries (Europe, the Gulf, and America), United Nations and other donors. Local authorities, formal and informal armed groups in control of Syria, civil councils, community initiatives. Religious, national, and tribes' groups. In addition to researchers and academics interested in Syrian humanitarian affairs.

We need to end up with in-depth recommendations that help Syrian NGOs build their capacities according to the study's possible outcome, summarized in the last part.

Consequently, the organizations themselves, the local community, funders, governments, and any other entity can look at paper outputs according to their role to get work outcomes that help them working according to their vision to develop humanitarian organizations as part of civil society. The data, statistics, and focused interviews will constitute a useful reference for researchers in the same field in general and in The Syrian context in particular.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

This paper aims to illustrate the role of Syrian NGOs in Syria response during 2011-2020 to explain their dynamics, motivations, and the main actors involved. And figure out any other factors which support or prevent the growth of those NGOs. Moreover, we will seek to touch the impact of them on the civil society in the present and how we could see this impact in the future. In addition, we will shed light on the temporal and spatial background that affected these organizations' formation, which will affect their reconfiguration in the future.

This will be through an analytical study of these organizations internally and externally, which means that we will analyze institutions' reality in terms of the organizational structure, operations management, and institutional capacity. In addition to that, we will evaluate the external influence internationally, locally, politically, and militarily on the emergence and strength of these organizations, and how this impact can improve the case of civil society or make it worse.

This study's nature is very crossed, as the internal situation and the external influence on the Syrian CSOs working in the humanitarian issue are very complicated. They are affected by individuals, political parties, military factions, religious movements, local authorities, international authorities, and great countries' interests participate. For this reason, we tried through the study to analyze the facts and information by three levels 1 - the level of international organizations and donors and decision-makers or experiences in these institutions, 2 - the level of local organizations and decision-makers in them 3 - the level of operations management and programs in Syrian NGOs. We have aimed to frame all aspects of research hypotheses by studying these organizations from three scopes: internally, externally, and operationally, then gathering all information and outputs to reach the outcomes.

2.1. Scope of the Study

This research will include the humanitarian NGOs working in the Syrian response and have main offices (missions) in Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and inside Syria. Some of them work from one place, and others work from multiple places.

2.2. Research Design

This paper relies on qualitative methodologies such as academic research, articles, official humanitarian reports, personal interviews with humanitarian workers (decision-makers), and other stakeholders. In addition, we developed a questionnaire that aims to expand the data of the sample. We will analyze all the data referring to the fundamental meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and describe them in the paper's outcomes to contribute decisively describing political, structural, and social phenomena that explain the findings.

2.3. Population & Sampling

As the scope of research wide, because there are tens of bodies identified as Syrian NGOs or CSOs, some do not match the minimum criteria of humanitarian works and others are very small initiatives among five to ten persons. For that, we have chosen a convenience sample of Syrian NGOs which serve our research based on the access and simply.

The scope of the research will focus on Syrian NGOs, which:

- It was established in 2011 or before.
- Operate in more than one humanitarian sector.
- Have a legal registration in some country.
- Have an organizational structure.
- Have a fixed annual budget for a minimum level of operations.

We will choose a specific sample of these organizations. The sample has been taken with emphasis on selecting the most active actors while ensuring the diversity of areas of operations, donors, sources of financial support, and legal situation.

2.4. Research Period

From 2011 until 2020, considering the NGOs established before that period and kept working in the Syria response.

2.5. Research Limits

Temporal limits: The study period extended from the beginning of September 2019 to the end of May 2020. as the research scope is a long-term period, I have considered the significant variables since 2011 and any minor variables during the research term.

Spatial limits: The sample included NGOs based inside Syria and countries around. Most of them work just for Syria's response with the deference of hubs situation; therefore, the research results may change due to differences in areas where the study is applied in.

2.6. Data Collection

The data source will be from two main parts:

- **Primary data:** in order to test the study hypotheses, the appropriate measurement tool has been developed for this purpose, which will come from personal interviews, focus groups discussion, and questionnaires that will be distributed to seniors' level of selected samples. This questionnaire will consist of different sections, starting with the personal and organization information and then entering the details of these organizations' work and roles.
- **Secondary data:** is going to be a collection of information gathered from publications, essays, statistics, and official governmental and non-governmental reports.

2.7. Instrument

As we mentioned above, to get useful information from the sample of research, we will do personal interviews and focus group disunions with persons in the high seniors level of UN, INGOs, Syrian NGOs, and any other stakeholders who can fulfill the target of the paper.

- The scope of discussion with UN, INGO, Donors ... etc. will consider the following parts:

1st Part: An overview of the history of the relation between them and SNGOs

2nd Part: How they see the SNGOs after nine years

3rd Part: Strengths, challenges, and weakness they faced during the work with SNGOs

4th Part: Evaluation of the role and the future of those NGOs as part of Syrian civil society.

- The scope of discussion with Syrian NGOs will consider the following parts:

1st Part: Background of NGOs and reasons for establishing.

2nd Part: Mission, vision, strategy, and size of operations.

3rd Part: Strengths, challenges, and weaknesses they faced during the response.

4th Part: The vision of the role and the future of those your NGO as part of Syrian civil society.

5th Part: The NGO strategy if a change accrued of the political situation and controlled areas in the future.

- The questionnaire is a multiple-choice type with few that need explanation. it is developed to measure the organismal capacity of Syrian NGOs and consisted of the following parts:

1st Part: It contains the personal and organization information of the research sample.

2nd Part: Discusses the vision, mission, and Strategy, and its application in the sampled organization.

3rd Part: Discusses the Governance & Structure and its application in the sampled organization.

4th Part: Discusses Operation & Communication, and its application in the sampled organization.

2.8. Data Analysis

The focus group discussions and the personal interviews will be recorded as voice or written as notices by hand, will be cleaned, and analyzed as outputs.

The questionnaire will be applied by Kobo software then will be analyzed by Microsoft Office – Excel.

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since March 2011 and due to regime reactions to civil demonstrations, the civilians harmed hardly, and humanitarian needs increased quickly especially in the IDPs sites in urban places or camps.

By reviewing the materials published regarding NGOs' central role in Syria response, regardless of the lack of references, we can say that the response of regular Syrian NGOs, the international NGOs, and the other types of formal humanitarian institutions was delayed and not sufficient enough. Moreover, millions of people's needs can't cover by a usual response like another any crisis in the world.

(Howe, Planning from the Future, 2016) See that: the humanitarian system has largely failed in Syria. The scale of the conflict and humanitarian need constitutes one of our time's largest crises, and the system currently meets only a fraction of humanitarian needs. In addition, humanitarian action has been used to serve for political inaction and has been highly politicized and influenced by donor interests and political preferences, clashing with the application of first-order humanitarian principles.

3.1. Lack of International Interest, Evolution of Response, and Main Actors

The international attention of humanitarian response in Syria was fragile and intangible in the first year. Political and military factors interfered greatly with the humanitarian concern of the major countries and institutions of the formal system, and the formal system did not clearly define the humanitarian situation in Syria. Some of them defined it as crises by a human; others described it as armed conflict or civil war. Moreover, the interests of the superpower countries that intervened in the Syria case had been the main factor in the delay of humanitarian response, especially the countries that supported the regime in its control areas.

In the research effectuated by (Christian, Mansour, & Nils, 2016) They talked about the multi factors related to the response apart from the extreme severity of human suffering due to war and conflict in Syria, the way the humanitarian response has evolved since 2011 provides additional

reasons to examine issues around, Main actors, financing, funding channels, contractual arrangements, Political changes and areas of control, access, partnerships.

In the same research (Christian, Mansour, & Nils, 2016) says:

‘The formal humanitarian system has struggled with issues of access and protection in a conflict marked by widespread and deliberate disregard for civilians. Violations include unlawful killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, hostage-taking, sexual and gender-based violence and sieges. While the responsibility to protect civilians rests primarily with the warring parties, the belligerents’ only aim seems to be to win the war at any cost. Although humanitarian organisations have a responsibility to remind the parties of their obligations and address the consequences of violations, information on protection is difficult to obtain and is neither centralised nor sufficiently analysed. Protection agencies are geographically separated and dispersed in different countries, and communication and coordination between them is weak’.

Backing to the reading of (Howe, Planning from the Future, 2016) they reviewed the role of NGOs before and after the crisis, and they found that: prior to the crisis, several INGOs, UN agencies, and the ICRC—primarily concerned with Iraqi refugees and Palestinians—were present inside Syria. After the start of the crisis, operational space shrunk, particularly for INGOs, as the Syrian regime forced several to make the “choice” between operating across borders from Turkey or inside government-controlled Syria.

3.2. Importance of Local Partners in Syria Context

As the formal System faced many factors of weakness, starting from controlling the humanitarian operations by regime areas, ending with difficulties of access to opposition areas, and all other political factors. The formal system drove to find a kind of cooperation between them as INGOs, UN, or RCRC and local NGOs.

(Haddad & Svoboda, 2014) see that: The importance of partnerships between international and local organizations has long been recognized, though this often remains on a rhetorical level. Genuine partnerships rather than contractual arrangements are not yet the norm. Lack of trust is in part, to blame. Many newly established local Syrian organizations at the start of the conflict had

no proven track record when the need arose to look for local partners amid diminishing access for international agencies. There were questions about the ability of local organizations to adhere to humanitarian principles and whether they had the capacity to operate at scale. For their part, local organizations complained that training and capacity-building were being neglected, the bureaucracy around funding was cumbersome and unwieldy, staffing requirements were impossible to meet, accountability arrangements were unequal, registration processes were confusing, and cultural and linguistic differences impeded mutual understanding. Lack of trust was an issue between international and local organizations, as well as among international agencies operating cross-border and crossline from Damascus.

3.3. Filling the Gaps of Response of Formal System by Locals

The lack of formal response led to appearing a new kind of response created by local communities with the support of Syrian migrants to fill the gap humanitarian needs and give some sort of power to civilians for resilience.

‘These groups have almost inadvertently filled the gap left by the limited international presence, providing both assistance and protection. International organizations with a protection focus have struggled to respond to the enormous scale of needs, and attempts to promote respect for international humanitarian and human rights law have largely failed. In their stead, Syrian and diaspora groups have engaged in a wide variety of work with a distinct protective function, even if most of these groups neither see themselves as protection actors nor use the term. It is clear that needs far outweigh the formal humanitarian system or local/diaspora groups can address individually: both need to work together, but the challenge lies in how to do this.’ (Svoboda & Pantuliano, 2015)

3.4. Humanitarian Principles, Specifically Neutrality

After increasing local response, they tried to find some bridges with the formal system; they faced some prevent from the formal system as they have concerns about local actors' neutrality.

Respondents from the ‘formal’ system explain that it is difficult to know immediately which Syrian organizations have humanitarian motivations and which do not. Most Syrian diaspora groups and NGOs were created in the first phases of the conflict and so had no previous history when the international humanitarian response began ((Svoboda & Pantuliano, 2015)

In the same context (Svoboda & Pantuliano, 2015) argue that: Determining what motivates a particular group is a valid question when determining which partner to work with, but criticizing Syrian groups for lack of neutrality and impartiality is both simplistic and unhelpful. It is simplistic because the formal humanitarian system – made up as it is of a variety of organizations (UN agencies, international NGOs, the Red Cross/ Red Crescent) with differing mandates – is itself not immune from the same criticism. Numerous examples from other contexts show that international humanitarian agencies struggle profoundly with the question of principled humanitarian action

The neutrality of the Syrian humanitarian organizations depends on the existence of a strong and effective governance system; this was what these organizations lacked in the early years of response.

‘A major gap in governance is related to the fact that several CSOs have not yet the culture and principles of civil society, which can be explained by the fact that the civil society experience is recent. The CSOs, which started with the crisis, were established without any solid foundation and grew very fast thanks to availability of funding from various donors.’ (UNDP, 2019)

On the other hand, donors and INGOs did not encourage Syrian NGOs to learn about humanitarian principles and how to apply them in practice. For example, the code of conduct and humanitarian principles of ICRC is one of the important international documents available in the Arabic language and can promote and adopt by Syrian NGOs (See Annex E)

‘The humanitarian principles are derived from the core principles, which have long guided the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies.

The principles’ centrality to the work of OCHA and other humanitarian organizations is formally enshrined in two General Assembly resolutions. The first three principles (humanity, neutrality and impartiality) are endorsed in General Assembly resolution 46/182, which was adopted in 1991. This resolution also established the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). General

Assembly resolution 58/114 (2004) added independence as a fourth key principle underlying humanitarian action. The General Assembly has repeatedly reaffirmed the importance of promoting and respecting these principles within the framework of humanitarian assistance. Commitment to the principles has also been expressed at an institutional level by many humanitarian organizations. Of particular note is the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and non - governmental organizations in disaster relief. The code provides a set of common standards for organizations involved in humanitarian activities, including a commitment to adhere to the humanitarian principles. More than 492 organizations have signed the Code of Conduct. Also, of note is the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response elaborated by the Sphere Project.’ (OCHA, 2012)

3.5. Bureaucracy and Eligibly

When the formal System started to take some steps of cooperation with the local actors (Syrian NGOs) they dropped in a cycle of un-logical requirements. the formal system did not consider that big gap of the eligibility criteria of the international system and the experience of NGOs established before a few months. It was difficult to apply the standard criteria to determine an organization’s eligibility for funding. At the beginning of the local response, for example, one criterion for receiving funding from traditional donors was that organizations had to have been three-years aged in the establishment and had undergone several audits while most SNGOs were established at the outset of the in 2012.

(Svoboda & Pantuliano, 2015) Say: long enough to meet this requirement, and groups based in Syria could not possibly have undergone an audit acceptable to Western donors. Donors and international aid agencies have recognized this problem and funding criteria have been adjusted or dropped altogether, but valuable time was lost when bolder decision-making could perhaps have seen the establishment of effective partnerships.

Syrian NGOs also felt that western donors lacked the required flexibility to adapt to new situations rapidly arising out of the conflict in Syria. For example, assistance might be provided based on a particular assessment, but by the time it reaches the NGO, the situation on the ground might have changed and needed urgency become another location within the area of control. Rather than

empowering the Syrian NGOs to decide on where and how to disburse the assistance according to the urgency of the needs, donors insist on sticking to the original plan. According to the experience Syrian NGOs, gulf donors, for example, are more flexible, allowing Syrian NGOs to provide assistance where they decide on its property regardless of the original intention of the fund.

They also argue about developing the formal system:

The formal system needs to develop creative ways of working. Donors and international aid agencies need to recognize that Syria is a messy, vicious and multi-sided conflict where rules and procedures drafted in donor capitals are not necessarily applicable. The question is not to blindly seek partnerships, but to find an approach that allows for due diligence while relaxing some requirements that may be ill-suited to the context. Donors and international agencies also must accept that other actors might not correspond entirely to the image the formal system might have of its 'ideal' partner. International aid agencies tend to prefer working with organizations that look, speak and act like them. That is unsurprising and, certainly, in a context where time is of the essence, organizations will try to work with the tried and tested, rather than spending time getting to know organizations they are unfamiliar with. This does not pose a problem where there are enough organizations that indeed have been tried and tested, but in Syria that was not the case in the early stages of the conflict.

3.6. Partnerships or Service Providing

In general, the relation between the INGO and community in need is drawn and shaped by many scenarios such as the direct or indirect implementation scenarios. When INGOs are not able to access the communities in need, INGOs tend to do sub-contracts or sub-grants agreements with local NGOs, which the common scenario for the Syria case. In such a case, after getting the fund, the formal system used to call local NGOs implementing partners. Yet local NGOs, in Fact, were treated as service providers more than implementing partners, and the most important factor which should provide to local partners "Capacity Building" did not put in the pipeline.

During the interviews (Svoboda & Pantuliano, 2015) one interviewee from a Syrian organization called the word 'partnerships' a misnomer 'because these are not real partnerships'; another complained that they were 'more words than action' (HPG interviews). Respondents complained

that training and capacity-building were being neglected, the bureaucracy around funding was cumbersome and unwieldy, staffing requirements were impossible to meet, accountability arrangements were unequal, registration processes were confusing, and cultural and linguistic differences (and, for one interviewee, snobbery and condescension) impeded mutual understanding. The UN and international NGOs were ‘working too slowly, doing too little and generally inflexible’ (HPG interviews). ‘Capacity-building’ often meant holding a workshop with little depth or usefulness for highly educated Syrians. Many respondents acknowledged that they lacked capabilities in strategic planning and the management skills to run ever-larger organizations or write complex funding proposals, but these much-needed skills were not or only inadequately taught.

3.7. Human Recourses Management

At the beginning of Syria response, Syrian NGOs faced significant weakness in human resources, as there were no qualified persons prepared previously to work in the humanitarian field. ‘ In the NGOs field which started to operate only since 2011, It is very hard to find the qualified employees, because Syrians are not familiar with this type of work as there were no freedom to work in civil and humanitarian society organizations under the control of the Syrian Regime.’ (HADLA, 2019)

Hadla, in his study, focused on a very important subject of a management system based on "one-man show" in many Syrian NGO, this has led to a high weakness in the performance and development of the human resources system in organizations that rely on this method "Stubborn Management Style" (Alhaji Style):

‘This type of management is specific to the Syrian context in the organizations. It has recently spread to express the manner in which organizations are managed by people who established these organizations and they consider them part of the family heritage, so that the full capabilities of these organizations are managed for the benefit of the director of the organization without any kind of corporate governance. The manager acts within the organization as a type of personal property, who transfers and separates employees, compensates and raises the salaries of others without any clear and correct criteria.’ (HADLA, 2019)

CHAPTER IV

SYRIAN HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

4.1. Introduction

Humanitarian needs in Syria witnessed a dramatic increase between 2011 and 2012, which led to the emergence of many social initiatives that turned into civil society organizations. These organizations had various sizes and approaches and worked in two main domains:

- 1- Relief work; responding to urgent needs to cover the gap created by the absence of national institutions and governmental actors.
- 2- Other organizations worked in the fields related to human rights and supporting civil society to have a real equal presence in a way seeking to improve the social situation in general by internally developing it using the available local sources and avoiding the misconceptions that grew over time like aid-dependency.

While all CSOs that worked in the relief has started activities then projects under emergency response level, a minor percentage of them progressively shifted to livelihood, resilience, and early recovery. No major significant transformation to sound governance and transitional justice was found among the organizations working in relief.

Syrian CSOs had often been established by activists who had limited experience and knowledge of institutional and humanitarian development at the time of the CSO inception and consequently needed a massive effort in capacity-building.

Many organizations have been created or activated as the volume of need increased. Additionally, the approach based on social development from within did not exist significantly in the past because of many reasons, foremost of them is the absence of political freedoms, which are mainly related to social freedoms, and the laws in force were limiting the existence of this type of institution, in addition to customs and traditions that which used to encourage support organizations that take a narrow religious or social style.

After introducing Syrian civil society Organizations (SCSOs) in our paper, and illustrating their history and how they have evolved over the years, we will focus on the organizations that grew

after 2011 and started working in the humanitarian responses. We will address the mechanism and conditions for the development and construction of these organizations, and how they were able to play an active role in the response through their profound presence in the field, their vast involvement in the global formal system despite the difficulties and obstacles they achieved an effective international presence reflected by their local presence in the field. In our paper, we will study the structure, governance, and volume of work of these organizations, specifically the new ones which rapidly grew. To reach the outcome of the study, an evaluation is done of the most important two questions in the research: 1- the ability of these organizations to continue to work and achieve presence at the national level or international level 2- The future of these organizations as a fundamental part of the civil society they are established for it and will be a part of a Syria future, or as an emergency phenomenon and a based-on-need tool which will disappear as a matter of time in light of regional and political changes.

4.2. Definitions

4.2.1. Civil Society, CSOs, and NGOs

The idea of civil society in terms of the definition is the one which expresses the efficiency of the society in the state, and how the citizens can be involved in the details of state life in and decision-making process, and how the society can jointly determine their fate through effective and social participation among all citizens. This concept is not new, and its first theories root back to the Greek era and developed through time. The Rousseau argument, or the so-called Russo standard, is the classic, modern leftist interpretation of this concept.

This concept witnessed an outstanding development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe, as it accompanied the popular revolutions and industrial renaissance and the successive social conflict between traditional authorities and modern concepts of the monarchy, The concept of civil society was linked in that period to the concept of civil non-religious in Europe which sought to undermine feudal concepts of authority related to family inheritance to a bigger social concept which entitle participation by another groups and components of society.

Burhan Ghalioun argues:

‘It is clear that the concept of civil society does not mean here anything other than the concept of the ordinary social bond as a basis for meeting versus the religious or aristocratic link that can be linked to custom and tradition and considered natural. For that and since that time, the concept of civil society will connect with the concept of law and social contract as an expression of this law, which differs from custom, and with popular sovereignty, it embodies the concept of modern politics as a policy emanating from human society itself, and it is not projected by another world. This means both the state and civil society are completely identical here, and there is no separation between them. This argument can be summarized in one sentence: Modern politics is a civil policy. Unlike religious and customary, all other modern concepts such as citizenship, democracy, and the legal state will evolve from this civil policy. Here, the contributions of the great classical writers of the two centuries mentioned above flow like Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau.’)Ghalioun(2001 ‘

In the beginnings of the twentieth century, civil society institutions began to have the official impression and a real presence, as Marxist thinkers, in particular, recognized that social civil society institutions are tools that work under the control of the state, in the theories and arguments of Gramsci, we can see the prominent role for civil society to restore the strategy of the communist and liberal revolution.

The concept of civil society dramatically changed in the second half of the twentieth century to get out of the absolute power of the state and continue its role as a supporter of it. Scholars saw that civil society institutions are fundamental and healthy components in the state, but these institutions should work alongside the state independently and not under absolute state power.

Ghalioun says:

‘What is meant by civil society as it is used today is this vast network of organizations that modern societies have developed in its long history and supply the work of the state. If we compare the state with the backbone, then civil society is all those cells that make up the parts, and without them, the social body has no life. There is no form of hostility between them, and there is no difference in the nature of jobs, although there is a difference in roles.)Ghalioun(2001 ‘

The acceptance of the concept of civil society, its proper application framework, and the maximum benefit from it was in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Although it has become more

sophisticated at the same time, its role has become more apparent. We see in the definition of (WALZER, 1990) a clear view: He defined civil society as ‘the space of uncoerced human association and also the set of relational networks—for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology— that fill this space’. This definition marks the field of voluntary collective action organized around a common interest or ideology. Similarly, (Malena & Heinrich, 2007) delineated civil society ‘as the space in society where collective citizen action takes place’.

Then the civil society is an entity that is directly related to the citizen, but the organization of this citizen's presence and role can't be activated at the level of people, and its impact can't be measured individually so the organization of work within institutions is the most beneficial method.

Walzer says: ‘Examining the impact of this ‘collective citizen action’ is difficult due to ‘the current lack of consensus about its nature, and the enormous diversity in how it is understood and manifested in different contexts around the world’ (WALZER, 1990) Indeed, civil society units play various roles, and their impacts depend on different contexts, policies, and localities, but obviously, it requires settings of ‘active citizenship’ referring to the development of civic and political engagement and participation (*Barrett & Brunton-Smith 2014; Bee & Chrona 2017; Bee & Kaya 2017*).

We can find more understanding of civil society and the main concepts and purposes of it from the practical side through these two definitions below:

‘Civil society is an arena of voluntary collective actions around shared interests, purposes, and values distinct from families, state, and profit-seeking institutions. The term civil society includes the full range of formal and informal organizations that are outside the state and the market – including social movements, volunteer-involving organizations, mass-based membership organizations, faith-based groups, NGOs, and community-based organizations, as well as communities and citizens acting individually and collectively.’ (UNDP, 2009)

‘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), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based

organizations, professional associations, and foundations.’ (Defining Civil Society, World Bank, web.worldbank.org).

Ghalioun believes that the contemporary use of the concept of civil society has itself passed through three main stages. The first one is the stage of opening up to civil society by parties, forces, and political systems with the aim of injecting new blood into politics and giving it a popular character. The second one is the stage of dealing with civil society as independent organizations parallel to the state and participating in achieving many of the tasks that the state has created or retracted. As for the third stage, the rise of civil society and its emergence with a leadership role under the umbrella of social authority, so that civil society institutions play a role at the global level so that non-governmental and social organizations will be a monitoring tool and address the economic and commercial hegemony to give priority to social accounts and to affirm the values of justice and equality between human groups.

He emphasizes this concept in his words:

‘This is how thinking began in the seventies in many European countries to pay attention to this important sector of social activity. The first sign in this area was to vaccinate the ministerial political staff with elements that are not political professionals or party activists, but they come directly from civil society, that is, from non-political bodies and organizations, but they were working in the field of social work, that is was contrary to the traditional rule which based on an agreement to distribute ministerial positions was upon the alliances and government structures. University professors were appointed to senior political positions and doctors activated in the field related to their professions; then, the role came to the artists and writers to occupy some government centers also.’

In this context, we must know that the historical development of civil society made it begin with the basic core, which is the institutions of civil society, this core (through reading European or American experiences or any other recent experience in the countries of the world have the least level of civil liberties) was carried out by three critical phases to create a proper institutional existence, the first phase is the formation of the civil society organization SCO, this formation is often going under challenging conditions based on official and societal rejection. The second phase is the establishment of the organization to go to society. It is the most difficult and most dangerous phase. During this phase, the programs must establish for two mixed components, to cover the

existent needs, to change society's perception about it, and to change the way the states look at the society. In other words, when you enter the community, you have to start working on the needs which already seen by them then go to another level of awareness. Here you can define the rights, duties, apply tools on the community for processing a strong ground to play an active role in the next phase. The third phase, enabling and empower the community to start their role of real implementation in the institutional framework.

The remarkable development of civil society organizations with the rise of globalization and turning our focus towards the role these organizations began to take by crossing the borders of their state and operating in various global contexts. Some scholars called this type of organization "transnational institutions" The role of these organizations is to support other societies globally, especially those that suffer from disasters, crises, and conflicts. The idea and function of this type of organization were formed in the last two centuries through RCRC and the United Nations agencies. Still, the severe needs and complicated global changes led to the emergence of these transnational institutions, or we can call them NPOs.

These institutions have worked in two broad areas, the first one is the humanitarian response where hundreds of institutions are specialized in this sector around the world, and the second field is civilian development. The formation of civil society cannot be started before getting the needs covered; in other words, before the first type of NGOs is completed. Such type of response may last for decades, especially in war and conflict zones.

In our paper and through the following paragraphs, we will focus on the first type of organization. We will allocate research tools, analysis, extrapolations, and scientific approaches to highlight their role and nature in the Syrian response, to be more specific in the definition and the field of research.

As we mentioned above, the domains and terms of 'civil society' are broad, and they include all the non-state actors (NSAs) ranging from small society charities, which are the community-based organizations (CBOs), to immigrant associations, international NGOs (INGOs), and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). We should keep in mind that our scope of civil society organizations will be Syrian Local Non-Governmental Organizations (Syrian Local NGOs). That is why we will frequently notice that the term Syrian NGOs is mentioned to study the Syrian

humanitarian organizations as a part of Syrian civil society organizations. In our paper, we will refer to both terms together Syrian NGOs and Syrian CSOs according to need and context.

4.2.2. Activists and Syrian Activist

The activist, according to the used definitions, is the person who supports civil society through activities that he performs for the benefit of society. There is a political, human rights activist, humanitarian activist, and many other roles that activists play around the world. In the ideal case, activists are involved in institutions and initiatives that organize their work, especially that the word activist closely associated with civil works and support of civil society.

In Syria, the term activist was not circulating under Al-Baath regime. Activists were seen as opposed to the totalitarian regime, where they are suppressed, and their activities are attacked whatever it is. The nature of the ruling regime does not accept this type of work that could result in a healthy civil society that would constitute a burden on the mechanism of managing by Al-Baath regime for the state and society.

After 2011, and with the increase in peaceful civil demonstrations against the Al-Baath regime in most of Syria areas, the Syrian society began to emerge civil activists who had great support in the civil movement, and there was a high sympathy between the activists inside Syrian and the activists in diaspora. So, civil society starts hearing and seeing the actions of political, media, human rights, and humanitarian activists. These activists worked to organize themselves into initiatives, and one of the initiatives is to support the IDPs and other affected people by humanitarian aids like food baskets and shelter needs. Dozens of initiatives were established during 2011 and 2012 to meet humanitarian needs, which increased at a high rate. These humanitarian activists began working without tools and later organized themselves in organizations.

4.3. Syrian NGOs

4.3.1. History of Syrian NGOs

The Syrian civil society organizations in general and the humanitarian institutions thereof, in particular, are not a new case related to social changes and civil transformations that occurred in the twentieth century. It is part of the tribal, cultural, and social heritage. This heritage's essential principles are the love of good and giving a hand to the needy regardless of whether they are

enemies or friends. This is also part of the Islamic religious inheritance, especially in the era of the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Ottoman rule of the Levant until our present time. Financial, in-kind, or even physical assistance is considered, by Muslims, an obligation imposed by Islam that was organized through many mechanisms such as Zakat in Eid al-Fitr and sacrifice of Al-Adha Eid, in addition to the continuous charity imposed on the rich Muslims and different types of charity like Zakat. This support had the same purposes and principles imposed by other religions and sects in Syria, and all efforts and beliefs were poured into one same action during the years, which is organized assistance through charitable institutions.

The establishment of intellectual, literary, and societies, cultural and political forums in the nineteenth century is one of the most important reasons that led to the designation of the features of the Syrian civil society later. The significant role that the intellectuals and pioneers of these forums and clubs worked on constituted an immediate societal impact that created the primary status of civil awareness. The first literary, scientific association was established in Beirut known (The Syrian Society) by many intellectuals and cultural owners at that time, such as Yazigi, Boutros Al-Bustani, and Youssef Mashaqa. Damascus knew the societies for the first time in 1874 through the Association of "Rabat al-Mahaba," a scientific association. Then the societies began to increase, including:

The Historical Society 1875 - The Charitable Society for Establishing Schools and Promoting Knowledge 1878 - The Orphanage of Quraish Association 1880 - The Arab Club 1918 - The Literary Women's Club 1920 - The Literary Association 1921.

France, after its occupation of Syria, closed many associations on the pretext that they were opposed to the occupation. After Syria's independence, the activity of the associations returned officially. Although these associations did not stop their operations during the occupation period, their work was not stable because most associations were established and closed after a period by the French authorities with the exception of some associations which took a charitable nature and did not play any political or social role against colonialism and its policies. Examples of the associations that revived operations and that were established after independence are:

The Women's Cultural Association, founded in 1936 in secret and appeared in public in 1942.

Based on the foregoing,)Al-DAGhim(2017 ‘ see: ‘The researchers agree - almost - that the emergence of Syrian civil society in its modern forms began in the late Ottoman period, and its organizational rules developed during the French mandate period and reached its climax in the middle of the twentieth century ”the liberal liberalism era in Syria”. Where the 50-year liberalization process led to the revitalization of the role of popular civil society, "the third sector of the state" so it took the role of mediation between the state and the private sector and contributed to strengthening the channels of participation in the social development process’.

Although the last definition gives a general picture about the development of charitable institutions as part of the modern civil society in the last two centuries, the mechanism of application and work in these institutions have often continued with its traditional status and had weaknesses in the twentieth century, specifically after the civil state development and the societal impact of French occupation in Syria during the French occupation and after independence. One of the first organized societal initiatives was the Syrian Arab Red Crescent SRAC, which was founded in 1947 and became a member of the IFRC.

The rest of the institutions in general which were established in Syria in the first half of the twentieth century were mainly charitable institutions established/led by wealthy people or people who had considered social personalities (public figures) like women initiatives that appeared in Syria early as one of the fruits of civil transformations. Although these institutions were associated with the names of their founders and their individual considerations, we cannot deny that ways of donations and their management were an extension of the same method with the old religious and social endowments. Funds and aids are often collected in mosques and churches or through merchants who donate for religious or cultural social purposes, then financial and in-kind assistance provides to the poor people according to the closest religious and social bond. These institutions used to have the same work method; we can name them as “Primitive Charities.”

The legal framework for civil society institutions in Syria was set with the decree issued in 1958, "Syrian Associations and Private Institutions Law No. 93". The registration of new Syrian charities in the period between the sixties and nineties was rare and challenging despite the fact that many people continued to serve the community informally; the government intervened and made strict supervision on the work registered charities, with some rare exception to some charities whose

managers or founders were politically-affiliated or related to the government and whose work is not political or pertaining to political issues.

The registration and licensing mechanisms for work were very complicated, and it was a pure security mechanism. After submitting the request to the Ministry of Social Affairs, the request and organization founders was a topic for security check by security departments. Approval normally took from six months to several years to be acquired. Charities founders often used their “personal relationships” (Wasta in Arabic) to expedite their request procedures that are often lost between the Ministry’s bureaucracy and security check.

After licensing, the organization should send all their meeting minutes, accounting data, and reports to the Ministry of Social Affairs. Officials from the Ministry and the security authorities have on “arbitrary basis” the right to attend the organization’s meetings. Organizations should adhere to the activities outlined in their objectives paper, and any expansion in the scope of their activities must be approved first. The law did not provide a clear mechanism for establishing branches of organizations, and this prompted some organizations to register their branches in the governorates as independent and new organizations, which increased the complexities of establishing and managing these organizations.

Local organizations are not allowed to communicate directly with international NGOs not present in Syria or to request or receive funding from these organizations; all of this should be done through the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor that coordinates all of this with the State Planning Commission and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Security Authorities.

This complete subordination includes controlling decision making of Syrian organizations by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Security Authorities stripped them entirely of their essence and basic principles and transformed them from an independent body to a dependent one. This scenario is literally a re-establishment of the Gramsci theory of empowering the state through civil society organizations, and according to it, institutions lost their most important value, which is societal change. They stayed working in a charity theme to guarantee a safe place for them in Syria.

One of the few organizations that were able to have a space of independence is SARC. As it was established in 1947 and due to the independency condition that Red Crescent has in order to join them as an international movement. But such special status was broken, as several new ministries

were established in Syria after 2000, one of them was the Ministry of State for Red Crescent Affairs, in addition to assigning the head of the state (president) as the honorary president of the organization. This is what stripped the organization, like other organizations, of its absolute independence.

Syria- Homs / 2005 -2007

During studying at the university, the Researcher volunteered with SARC. It was a unique, small, and closed community by volunteers, most of them youth between 18 and 30. We named it a closed community as the local Syrians were not previously aware of such kind of activity because of the bad experiences for long years with the regime as a result of the persecution of civil society activities under the same guilt "Muslims brotherhood member" which could lead to the execution.

The added value of SARC at that time is that the international movement (ICRC & IFRC) found a way to transfer the high level of their experience to the Syrian youths by SARC but under the regime's eye. One of the researcher's personal experiences tested such oppression of the regime when he worked in response for Lebanese refugees in Homs city and rural around where Syrian security forces from various departments were checking every step of response with multi-levels.

Another experience is when the researcher worked with SARC and one of the red cross societies to assess areas in need in specific areas inside Syria, which were approved by the regime when they were commanded to send all documents to an unknown place in Damascus and then the project had shut down.

‘From the statistical point of view, the Syrian civil association's body, registered from 1959 to late 2010 AD, is formed from 1074 association, and it is a number that is not a lot by all standards, compared to the situation of Arab regimes - which are relatively authoritarian - at that time (it was in Tunisia / 9600 / civil societies, and in Egypt about 21,000 / societies). In Syria, 52 associations were equivalent to every million citizens, and all were distinguished by the lack of their members, as their number ranged between 15 and 100 members at the highest estimate,

When comparing between the period 1959- 1999, which was dominated by a “cruel” authoritarian model, and the period between 2000-2010, which was transformed into a flexible authoritarian

model, we see that the civil activity in 2nd term witnessed organizations which worked in empowerment and development with a wide range of interests, such as women, the environment, anti-corruption, human rights, etc.’)Barut(2012 ‘

4.3.2. Types of Syrian NGOs

The Syrian organizations were perfectly classified through the study that INTRAC Center carried out in 2010, and this study was republished in 2012. through the following, we will mention the classifications that the study contained, and then we will mention any class else that does not exist or needs some comments.

Classifying Syrian NGOs is very difficult; it is perhaps best to say that there is no such thing as a typical Syrian NGO, given the lack of a clear definition and the wide range of organizations, many of whom may not meet the typical definition of a developmental NGO. There are, however, many people in Syria who do much work in their communities through various formal and informal mechanisms. The classification below is the one the author finds useful in describing the situation of charitable and developmental organizations in Syria, and ranges from formal and informal organizations that are long-established, and do more ‘traditional charity’ work, to newer, more developmental and professional organizations and groups. However, many are a mix of these various elements.

a) Religious Organizations

These are usually set up by or in close conjunction with religious establishments (mosques, churches) or religious personnel (nuns, priests). They tend to be strong organizations, rarely interfered with by the government (as long as they do not engage in politics); with a relatively secure income. They are usually managed by religious leaders and community elders and have good access to volunteers. They may also have some paid staff. They tend to get all or most of their funding from the religious establishment, individuals, or religious organizations abroad.

Activities tend to follow a ‘calendar’ of relief work or run institutional service providing facilities. Examples include the Islamic Orphanage in Hama: set up with funding from wealthy Muslims, it runs an institutional school and boarding house for orphans, with strict rules and regulations; another example is a small Christian organization in the old city of Damascus which runs a small

school for mentally disabled children; and an individual nun's collections of money and in-kind donations for poor families, supported by Syrian individuals and resident expats.

b) Traditional Charitable Associations

These organizations resemble religious organizations in nature. They are either secular or may have a strong religious bias but are not related to a religious establishment. They are often set up by well-intentioned elderly society ladies or wealthy individuals and run services similar to the religious organizations. They obtain their funds from the community and from charitable events, often of a traditional nature (Ramadan meals, charity bazaars, etc.).

Examples include the organization of Mrs. Khani, which provides financial, food and educational support to poor families, and traditional vocational training and literacy classes for women, and is supported by a group of conservative, older women. Dar al-Hanan runs a home for the elderly in rural Damascus. In Aleppo there is an association that (unusually) acts as a shelter for female 'young offenders', providing housing, training, and health care.

c) Community Organizations

There are a number of people who run relatively small and low-key initiatives in the community that focus on a specific need. They may be registered, or they may work unofficially within their own community. Often, they have a rich patron who provides connections, protection and some income, or they set themselves up as a company and rely on income as well as donations. Their work can range from very traditional to more developmental, and they are often open to capacity building and learning from others. They tend to rely on volunteers and some paid staff. Examples include a small organization in Homs which educated a group of blind children in the home of one of the parents, with a wealthy local mother with a blind son as the 'patron'; and a German woman in Damascus who, through her company, teaches rural and refugee women traditional embroidery and sells their (high quality) products in Syria and abroad, and pays the women partially in cash and partially in a one-off group annual community payment or projects. There are also various publishing houses which run educational activities for children.

d) Developmental NGOs

In recent years a small number of more professional, developmental NGOs have been established. They usually involve more professional people, technical experts, stakeholders and enthusiastic volunteers (often university students or recent graduates). These newer NGOs attempt to work along more professional lines, with some paid staff, regular capacity building, enthusiastic middle- and working-class volunteers, and interesting ideas and projects. They often manage to raise funds from embassies, the UN and through Corporate Social Responsibility. One example is the Syrian Environmental Organization, set up by a group of professional women, which runs a number of projects to raise environmental awareness and to tackle environmental issues directly (clean up campaigns, setting up an environmental/educational garden near the old city). There are various similar organizations in the provinces, including one for the protection of birds and one that aims to educate children on the environment. Another is the Little Roses Association, set up by a doctor of physiotherapy together with parents of disabled children and other professionals. The organization sets up small treatment clinics in community facilities in remote rural areas, and trains local physiotherapists and midwives on prevention and treatment of physical disabilities. It is funded by individuals, charity events, and increasingly by foreign organizations and local and international companies. There is also a new organization for and by disabled women. The Syrian Young Entrepreneurs Association is run by enthusiastic young and well-educated Syrians and provides mentoring and business support to, and job fairs for, young people, largely funded by companies and embassy grants.

e) Syria Trust Organizations

Syria Trust organizations are set up by Asmaa Al- Assad or her organizations and are generally well funded (although she aimed for them to become financially self-sustaining). They tend to take a developmental approach and are able to pay for staff who are young, well-educated, and fluent in English, generally from the Syrian upper middle and upper classes (but with few links to the constituencies served). These organizations are still relatively young and have yet to prove their mettle. They have done a great deal of work and some interesting projects, which are highly praised in some quarters, but are also regularly criticized for being ineffective, out of touch with life in poor communities, spending too much money, and being too image focused.

Examples of Syria Trust organizations include “Firdus”, an organization for rural development, and a number of other organizations working on youth issues, young entrepreneurship, rural development, micro-credit, child libraries and museums, etc. Trust partially used as an ‘incubator’, developing new organizations that were then made independent.

Out of INTRAC Center study (Collins, 2019) added to the same category, “Farcically” ‘these organizations are known as GONGOs – Governmental Non-Governmental Organizations. Behind this double-speak was a double-edged reality. On the one hand, these organizations were able to complete useful projects free from the usual restrictions on NGOs. On the other, they created a facade for the international community and presented Syria as having an active and open civil society. In reality, it was an oppressive state that disallowed the use of terms such as ‘freedom,’ and that found expressions such as ‘women’s rights’ objectionable.’

- There are another two classes did not study in INTRAC Center paper; we will illustrate them in the following:

f) Ruling Baath Party Organizations:

The title is strange, as it is contrary to the definitions of civil society totally, but this type of organization was present in Syria. During the first period of Al- Assad’s father rule in the 1970s, Syria witnessed widespread community and union activity, but they were all confined under this title. NGOs turned to organizations, parties, and civil institutions to be arms and tools of the ruling party. Those bodies had many social activities and were metaphorically called “Reservists or supporters wings” to the ruling party.

Among the organizations that were established during the Al-Baath mandate are the Pioneers of the Al- Baath, Youth of the revolution, The women's union, and the labor union. Al-Baath party dominated all of them and used them to achieve its goals, and they are the only ones allowed to work on issues of women, youth, and laborers. In addition to the national student’s union that organizes the social and political life of students of universities, its internal system has been modified to make its activity limited under the rule of Al- Baath party.

Al- Baath Party made the organizations, bodies, and civil societies as wings to it; this dependency has been included in the internal regulations of these organizations.

Thus, the Baath Party has been absolute control over all organizations and societies that work among labor, children, youth, university students, and women. It has become prohibited for any political party, including the parties allied with it in the National Front, to work in civil concepts. The exercise of any activity in these circles, and the activity of the associations affiliated with other or independent parties were limited to some events doing by main members only, and the numbers of the member in those weak bodies over the years began to decrease gradually until they were numbered in hundreds and thousands at best.

g) Syrian International Organizations:

They are organizations affiliated with international institutions, and they are part of larger global systems, despite their rare in Syria they were operating. Although the independence of these organizations, they were always surrounded by official or non-official dependence on the regime by their members, with close oversight over them through security authorities. This type of organization was more advanced in terms of structure, policies, and quality of community activities, as its experiences were an application or development of the experiences of international organizations affiliated with it.

Among these organizations, SARC, which we talked about it and the nature of the movement in the previous paragraph, and Junior Chamber International JCI, which is part of a global movement, established in Syria in 2004 under the auspices of the International Chamber of Commerce as a young economic committee emanating and established by businessmen close to the regime, It spread widely among youth, but it was a club dedicated to a specific class of society. One more very famous organization in Syria is “Scouts of Syria.” Scouting started in Syria in 1912 when the country was part of the Ottoman Empire. In 1924, a federation of Christian and Muslim associations from Lebanon and Syria became a member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM). In the 1930s and 1940s, this federation was affected by the political situation in the region, and especially by the separation of Syria and Lebanon, which led to the registration of the “Boy Scouts de Syria” as a separate member of WOSM in August 1949. Al-Baath regime minimized the activities of Scouts of Syria for years and controlled it by the Youth of revolution union, the members of it kept its activities in low profile in some cities like Damascus and Homs. The Scouts of Syria removed from WOSM-membership in November 1999 due to non-compliance

with the constitutional obligations of WOSM. Other examples of Syrian international organizations: Syrian Family Planning Association - SFPA and SOS.

4.4. Transformation of NGO after 2011

As was reviewed in the previous section, prior to mid-2011, Syrian civil society was generally composed of organizations controlled by the regime in whole or in part. The powers to use the Organizations Law (93 of 1959) were curtailed after the issuance of the emergency law that had been applied since Al- Baath Party came to power in 1963. Between the 1960s and the late 1990s, there was little activity from independent civil society in Syria. Most charities during this period consisted of community-based organizations (charities).

When Homs and Daraa witnessed widespread popular mobility and significant military operations early in 2011, that led to the displacement of thousands of families at the end of 2011 beginning of 2012. There were thousands of civilians who need an urgent humanitarian response; the situation was uncontrolled and suffered from huge obstacles because of the lack of response from the formal system.

This drastic need emerged suddenly as a result of military operations. As a result, it facilitated the role of popular initiatives led by local civilian activists in the same boat trying to fill in the gap in responses and meet the possible needs of civilians, with individual financial and in-kind support from Syrian immigrants in the diaspora. These Initiatives started turning into organizations but the founder of them are often had limited experience and knowledge in institutional and humanitarian work at the time of the creation.

The previous emergency conditions led to the emergence of hundreds of civil society organizations not subject to regime approval overall the country. Some sources indicate that 1,000 organizations are registered only in Syrian-regime controlled areas.

These civil organizations and movements started as civil revolutionary initiatives in many governorates, especially the ones who witnessed hot events, battles, and conflict during 2011, such as Homs, Daraa, and the rural of Damascus. The fundamental wave of most initiatives was to organize the civilians and support their peaceful action. Still, the humanitarian needs, mostly

medical and relief, forced these the initiatives to prioritize their work to meet humanitarian relief needs such as food security and health care.

This rapid transition from work supporting civil action to humanitarian action posed a huge challenge to these popular movements. In theory, it is impossible to achieve. It is born in an environment that has not practiced civil action freely for decades, and the transition to work in the humanitarian response so quickly may be seen as a sure failure. At the field level, there is no other solution. The Syrian response must begin with Syria's hands after the international community delays meeting the needs of the displaced and the affected. That made these initiatives grow in a suitable internal incubator and less interest from the external incubator. Those initiatives began to grow rapidly and create themselves based on self-experience and learning by doing and not through official assistance from the international community. That these initiatives later turn to organizations able to manage an integrated humanitarian response. In the next readings, we will explain more how those Syrian initiatives created and grew to be organizations with a close capacity of INGOs in the implementation perspective, considering INGOs have built during decades, not in a few months like Syrian NGOs.

4.4.1. The Chronological Sequence of Rising Syrian NGOs

These civil organizations and movements started as civil revolutionary initiatives in many governorates, especially the ones who witnessed hot events, battles, and conflict during 2011, such as Homs, Daraa, and the rural of Damascus. The fundamental wave of most initiatives was to organize the civilians and support their peaceful action. But the humanitarian needs placed those movements in a critical situation. As a result, most of them prioritized their work to support relief work. They redesigned their framework to meet humanitarian relief needs such as food security, primary and secondary health care.

By the beginning of 2012, the features and role of these movements or initiatives began to become clearer, as most of them devoted to relief work in the areas of food security, health, and non-food items. These initiatives began to implement rapid response activities for the internally displaced within cities and rural.

At the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, the needs increased significantly and concentrated in most of inside Syria and the neighboring countries. This has coincided with the entry of INGOs

to respond, so the Syrian initiatives sought to increase their response size more to meet the needs, so they began working to find a local or international legal framework for them that could help to open channels with some INGOs and international donors. During this period, these initiatives shifted from working at the level of rapid unorganized activities to working with the mechanism of a long project with field assessment mechanisms. At that period, we can say those initiatives started to transform to be organizations. Some Syrian NGOs worked in Turkey, and Jordan benefited from coordination mechanisms that were worked out between INGOs, host governments, and donors.

The most significant change in the work of Syrian NGOs was during 2014 and 2015 with Security Council Resolution No. 2165/ 2014 and working from cross borders, facilitating the resolution of entering UN agencies and operating according to international coordination mechanisms and the humanitarian clusters system. This helped the Syrian NGOs to engage in international coordination mechanisms at the highest levels, and it became possible for Syrian NGOs to obtain direct funding from the UN agencies through strategic partnerships with them. This required Syrian NGOs to increase their organizational capabilities to meet the requirements of partnerships.

From the beginning of 2016 until now, the results of program establishment, external coordination, and international representation have started to appear clearly on the performance and presence of Syrian NGOs. This institutional development became evident in the following years, and Syrian organizations began to achieve essential successes in the level of implementation and coordination so that some of them became responsible for co-coordinating some clusters of the humanitarian response work.

All the above does not apply to all Syrian NGOs at the same level, as it differs from one country to another or from one region to another and it is always affected by international and field changes. For this, we will detail this mentioned time frame and divide it into divisions by region, legal framework, and field pressures and their impact on all these organizations.

4.4.2. Establishment of New CBOs

The movements started as a civil revolutionary movement in many provinces during 2011. These initiatives worked to support and organize the civil movement in all civil ways, but the humanitarian needs were placed in a critical situation. As a result, they prioritized their work to

support relief work and redesigned their framework to meet humanitarian relief needs such as food security, primary and secondary health care.

In such a scale of mess resultant by the conflict and its aftermath by damaging the infrastructure and causing massive displacement movements, it is normal to measure the first action of those organizations as quick and disorganized perfectly. At initial glance, accordingly, Syrian civil society appears to be mostly disorganized, intertwined, and uncoordinated. Yet the surface picture is not much reflective for the details because going more profound in the details and history; we can see the rapid reaction to those changes by CSOs turning them into flexible and quickly-adaptive entities strengthening themselves through their entities physical existence structure, principles, and enhancing the own tools and ability to respond to the humanitarian crisis through different mechanisms.

During this period, it is preferable to call these organizations as Community Based Organizations, CBOs. Should we classify these organizations, we can list them as organizations are more significant than small initiatives and smaller than NGOs. At that time, they still work for the local community where they were exist based on the centers of the provinces or in the rural.

Syria- Homs / 2011

The researcher was in charge of the disaster management team at SARC. The volunteers of SARC tried to do their role but without tools. SARC as a civil society organization that is neutral, and its role were unknown in the Syrian communities where the regime considered the efforts of SARC volunteers as support to the rebels, and the revolutionaries thought that this group is a governmental body and support the regime. Literally, SARC teams attacked by both sides for ten times, a lot of volunteers died or were arrested. We needed at that time to do two important things in parallel: 1- to persuade the two sides that those volunteers are working for civilians, and they are giving the aids to those harmed. Somehow it was easy to do that with revolutionaries because of the community factor as the civilian workers belong to the same society, and they are not strange by local people. On the other side, It was impossible to convince the regime about neutrality and civilian work. 2- we needed to find a way to reach the vulnerable groups. Between 12/2011 and 3/2012, the movement of displaced people's situation was miserable in Homs city. Sometimes the people changed their places two times per day. Then most of them oriented to the far rural. It was so hard to reach them with the high forbidding of the regime

forces. Some local charities, SARC, ICRC, and UN agencies, started carefully to make some efforts, although it was highly prevented by the regime. That led to think about an alternative solution and create relief initiatives and working through them.

4.4.3. Switching from Initiative to Organization

The vast majority of organizations were established by civilians or humanitarian activists in the diaspora, despite the lack of institutional experience related to civil society and the humanitarian response, and with the mess that has accelerated the needs in Syria. With such limitedness, these organizations were able to achieve a good presence as a first step and undertake a response that can't be obtained better by them under the current circumstances. These organizations or sub-organizations depended on individual funds more than official funds, from Zakat funds of immigrants. Some opposition political groups and secular movements that have a good base in Europe, and the tribal and religious association. In short, the most decisive factor to support these organizations was political, social, or religious (sometimes the religious themselves play a role in providing support upon dependency, such as support for Salafi or Sufi groups, etc.). Those broad groups above had a low interest in the pure civil link. Also, a small part of the response (few compared to the size of the institutions based on it) was through channels that follow the regime or working under the regime control, and some of them reached areas out of regime control, such as the cross-line operations by SARC or WFP assistance.

From 2011 to mid-2012, attention was not focused on the nature of the funding itself or the sources coming from or how and for whom it distributed. The need was huge and was the main driver for the work even when it comes to professionalism. The need was a tolerating factor for the lack of professionalism. No efforts were saved when the issue was related to responding to the needs.

The donors, especially individual donors, did not care about the institutional structure, efficiency of the organization, the governance systems, and their internal systems of policies and procedures. The needs assessment was weak or nonexistent, except for some few international donors who provide aid through official channels.

In general, the speech in that period was an emotional discourse based on the love of goodness and belonging to a specific group. We cannot deny that it was carried out with unspoken political and

religious backgrounds and, thus, lacked the absolute professional aspect of work and civil professionalism alike.

In the last quarter of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, a massive shift occurred in the nature of the humanitarian response. On the one hand, individual funding has exhausted its maximum potential and has been used or politicized to serve other non-civilian efforts. On the other hand, opposition groups have taken control of larger areas, and the regime has recaptured other areas. Syria becomes divided into parts, but there is a limited geographical link in the areas controlled by oppositions, especially the border areas that have become outside of specific authority, except for the official crossing borders with Lebanon.

These elements made international organizations and UN agencies in addition to the donors affiliated with the global formal system, find an opportunity for humanitarian intervention, presence, and began to define the features of operations through four main hubs, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, and Jordan in addition to the official hub of the regime's authority in Damascus. Organizations working in areas outside the regime control, as a result, found an opportunity for official humanitarian funding through international bodies, specifically with most international organizations had a lack of access to Syria and no ability to work directly. As a result, it was necessary to work through local civil society organizations, yet working according to international mechanisms with big international organizations and funders require a minimum level of efficiency that was not present and was not very well known in the environment of local organizations. Structures, policies, codes of conduct, program policy, compliance, governance systems, and other approaches, for most organizations, it was new and needed to establish from zero. On top of the needs were legal existence (licensing) and financial and banking transactions.

‘They have, in fact, little experience in operating within the framework of a civil society organization. Their fast growth since 2011 to respond to the urgent and emergency needs of the Syrian people prevented them to consolidate their operations in a more structured way and build a culture of organizational behavior. Most CSOs require therefore support in enhancing the organizational capacity that would allow them to adapt to changing context in Syria, diversify their operations to include early recovery and livelihood activities, and become sustainable by lessening their reliance on donors funding’ (UNDP, 2019)

(Collins, 2019) mentioned that the Syrian organizations have had two big burdens, they should provide the response and need to develop the institutional structure, and another burden is fearing of international donors of support terrorism and the penetration of the regime's security to these institutions.

‘The vast majority of Syrians who went on to set up and work in CSOs and NGOs operating in Syria came to this work without prior experience, in an environment with no culture or history of these organizations. One interviewee was involved at a diplomatic level in reaching out to potential NGO partners in the opposition areas in the early days of the crisis. They reported that mistrust was a significant issue on two levels.

These organizations were new and their experience unknown. More importantly, there were fears that the organizations were not who they purported to be and were instead ‘Ba’ath party clones that would divert funds back to the government; a concern they felt was legitimate based on the history of state infiltration of anti-government movements. This fear of diversion later expanded to a fear of diversion to terrorist groups, placing local organizations under greater pressure. As the same former diplomat put it, the CSOs ‘became caught both ways – it’s a tragedy.’

It is fair to say that conflict offered a valuable opportunity for Syrian organizations to turn into real civil society organizations by building their own capacity and using recommendations and limited support from the formal system, which had two goals, to protect the donors and INGOs themselves and increase the capacity of Syrian NGOs to implement.

4.4.4. Legal Situation

The two most significant challenges standing in the way of the Syrian organizations to deal with the official system are the legal licensing and movement of funds. That is why the organizations started looking to have an official existence that would enable them to work within the framework of formal law in Syria or a host country and to create bank accounts to facilitate the movement of funds in a formal manner consistent with international standards for the movement of funds in the humanitarian sector. Some organizations have been formally registered as non-profit organizations in European countries or the USA, and another registered in Turkey and the neighboring countries of Syria. Some of them have had multiple registrations because of many reasons, such as the location of the organization’s board of directors BODs, or to have higher flexibility to work, or

related to the law of the host country. For example, Syrian organizations that have most of its BOD members are in France register in France where BODs well know the law. It is essential to highlight that such organizations all turned into local organizations in their host countries or registered as branches of international organizations/missions in other countries. These organizations, except a very limited number of them, have worked only for the Syrian case, which will create a future problem about the legal presence of these organizations. So, are they Syrian civil society organizations locally operating for Syria? Or are they international humanitarian civil society organizations working from several countries for the Syrian response only? Or is it another model mix between local and international in an unidentified manner?

For more details, our focus will be on describing and analyzing the official licensing of organizations in the four main hubs of the Syria neighboring countries, Damascus, and Northeastern Syria hubs, to comparing their influence on developing or limiting the entity work.

1- Damascus Hub:

In light of tight security control of the ruling Baath party in Syria since the emergency law of 1963 was in place and the accompanying tight control over the work of civil society organizations that pose a potential threat to partisan inclusiveness, there was no place for real CSOs. 2011 witnessed unexpected flexibility by the regime on registering organizations for unexplained reasons by then. Some opposition activists see that the regime flooded the popular movement with relief work, and others see that the regime sought to place the core of its institutions within the governorates under its control to extend them later and control humanitarian work and penetrate institutions in other governorates. There are no official or accurate statistics for organizations registered in Syria, but some reports indicated that about 1,000 organizations were registered in Syria after 2011, which is a vast number compared to previous years. These organizations, despite taking legal framework that protects them but is not authorized to communicate with international donors or partners officially, and any partnership between them and an organization operating in Damascus must be through prior security clearances. Moreover, some of them directly follow the political and military agenda of the regime. They are controlled in one direction and lost their independence.

These elements did not affect the organizations as a neutral body only but also affected its organizational governance, structure, and capabilities as well. The BOD, BOT, and staff members must be among the people who do not have any security problems with the regime and always

prefer people who have absolute loyalty and good relations with regime security authority. On programming and pragmatic level, the supervision of the programs offered, either according to the vision of the regime or according to the vision of the donors themselves, has made these organizations operational tools at the level of activities only. They do not join planning or assessment efforts. All of that kept them in the level of the small COBs. This applies to bigger organizations that have international links and expertise over many years.

The only flexibility these smaller organizations had by working through informal funding by relatives and members of society in the diaspora. This is evident in organizations working in Latakia, Tartus, and As-Suwayda. In those governorates, many community-based initiatives have emerged that work effectively, although they have no registration and have not been formally authorized. When we asked about how these organizations managed their work without security harassment, the answer was that the security departments are aware of everything that these initiatives do, but they do not interfere with them for two reasons: 1- It did not constitute a real security threat to the regime, 2- Dealing with them in the current period may lead to societal anger in those areas and this will be a real security risk, so they are left to time. The only situation that raises the alarm of the regime is these individuals or initiatives who work in data collection of information, evaluation, and documentation.

The situation is completely different in the larger governorates, specifically in areas where instability was the overwhelming aspect during the previous years. In Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, and Deir Ez-Zor, popular initiatives are not permitted to operate despite the fact of increasing humanitarian needs. In addition to the pending security approvals for registering these organizations, which normally end up in rejection after a long time of sending the application (more than one year) except for some exceptional cases linked to loyalty to the regime or relations with influential people in the institutions of the regime.

Furthermore, the regime established its own civil society organizations since 2011 where the Syrian Trust for Development, headed by Asma al-Assad, increased the number of its organizations, and the General Women's Union, a previous wing Al- Baath Party, was dissolved and replaced with a number of civil society organizations that work in gender and women.

2- The Areas controlled by the SDF in NES Syria and Al-Yarubiya Hub:

The Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (NES), also known as Rojava, is an autonomous region in northeastern Syria. The region was controlled by autonomous administration since 2012, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), its official military force of Autonomous Administration. The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) has taken control of several areas in Syria from 2011 until today. Their control over the regions has varied after several changes in the balance of power over the years. Autonomous Administration NES Syria is currently managing major cities under the control of SDF in Al-Qamishli, Raqqa, Manbij, and the number of districts and villages in rural around.

Autonomous Administration has created a particular body to follow up on the humanitarian organization's affairs requested to work in these areas. The name of it is the Labor and Social Affairs Authority - Office of Organization Affairs. No organization can operate without taking prior permission from the Office of Organization Affairs. The approvals taken are not recognized internationally, but it can be classified as approvals by a de facto authority.

Unlike Damascus hub or other hubs, approvals were easily provided for INGOs to work directly in SDF controlled areas, as it is permissible for international staff to enter the area and work in there. In contrast, the approvals and licenses for local organizations are more difficult, especially local organizations led by Arabs, as Autonomous Administration and SDF seek to form a Kurdish federal in the region. However, the Arab component in the area is civilly the largest proportion of the population in addition to the presence of other minorities such as Assyrians, Circassians, Chechens, Armenians, and another small group of Jews. Based on the foregoing, Autonomous Administration has endeavored to give licenses to more INGOs and lesser approvals to local NGOs, which impose in an informal manner that the Kurdish component is prominent, and very limited approvals to other organizations that have Arab roots.

After 2018, licensing became more difficult where the application process got more complicated as the following: the initial application is submitted to the Civil Region Council, then sent to the central organization's affairs office, after checking the organization gets a license for one month, renewed over a period of six months on a monthly basis and then get a new one for one year.

The law of licensing applies to all local and international organizations alike, but final approvals reduced the presence of some organizations and prevented them from working as mentioned above. The most critical control that Autonomous Administration undertakes is during

implementation. Local and international organizations always need many approvals and many procedures for any activity. For example, approving a training course in the humanitarian field for eight hours required two months of approvals and was eventually rejected. This set of laws and procedures affected the efficiency of civil society organizations in the areas of controlled by SDF. The facilities provided to INGOs eliminated the need for the local organizations as the INGOs worked directly without seeking to work through local partners and raise their capabilities. The employees with seniors positions that need qualifications in international organizations are often expats, while field positions with the lowest responsibility were for the locals of the region. Therefore there is no need to think about building capacities of staff of international organizations, as the seniors usually are hired with excellent capacity. That's caused a big gap between qualified international organizations and new local organizations that need an institutional building that made international organizations take care of their interests in obtaining international fund and careless about local NGOs and leaving local organizations as community initiatives that do not have the tools of real institutional capacity building for themselves at least. In the best of circumstances, local NGOs work as executing parties for some activities, nothing more. The local licenses provided by Autonomous Administration do not serve local NGOs except just in their region. It is a security permit that is not accepted officially by countries or donors. Instead, it can be said that these licenses pose a threat to some local NGOs that operate in countries like Turkey, unlike international organizations that have an internationally established legal framework, especially with regard to the fund movement and compliance laws.

Some Syrian organizations have established branches in Iraq and licensing as a branch of an international organization at KRI in order to take advantage of Security Council Resolution 2165 to deliver aid across the border with Iraq from the Yarubiya cross border.

3- Lebanon Hub:

'Lebanese authorities have not been heavily involved in the management of the humanitarian crisis affecting the Syrians on Lebanese territory. Unlike Turkey and Jordan, they refused to set up official refugee camps. We observed a phenomenon of "transfer" from the State to international and local NGOs. Hence, the humanitarian field grew substantially. In addition to pre-existing NGOs, young Syrians have been part of this development by founding new associations specializing in support to Syrian "refugees." These associations have been established by Syrians

in Syria, in Lebanon, or abroad and they foster the employment of Syrian staff. There is frequent cooperation between them for various projects, for example, in education or emergency relief. Hence, they constitute, through the shared national belonging of most of their members, the density of their relationships and their shared goals, a “Syrian” subfield in the humanitarian work in Lebanon. The dense social network they form helped facilitate our fieldwork’ (Fourn, 2014)

The response status of local and international organizations from Lebanon changed rapidly during 2014 and 2015 after the organizations were working for refugees in Lebanon and IDPs in Al-Ghouta and other cities in rural of Damascus with difficulty in reaching that areas, where the operations and delivering aid were carried out across the border from informal cross points when the regime re-controlled these regions the work of organizations became impossible there. A large number of local organizations and initiatives collapsed.

Some organizations sought to register in Lebanon and work formally. Still, it was challenging and dangerous at the same time, because of the good relationship between the regime the government in Lebanon in addition, supporting the regime by Hezbollah and its security entities. The civil work from Lebanon, which supported the popular movement inside Syrian that it started individuals and groups since 2011, has always been under surveillance and poses a real threat to those who lead or organize it. The same has been reflected in civilian humanitarian initiatives that have always been under monitoring. As a result, institutions and initiatives have sought to operate in secret or with minimal visibility.

Unlike the restrictions above, there was an essential factor that gave a helping hand to organizations in Lebanon, as a lot of Lebanese believing in civil society and its work. The concept of civil society and CSOs is very advanced in Lebanon more than most countries in the Middle East. Seminars, community initiatives, advocacy campaigns, media use, and refugee issues are socially and officially accepted concepts in Lebanon, and this is an indirect tool that helped Syrian organizations to work; despite the unspoken official restrictions, informal facilities were very present.

Regarding licensing, it is very easy for international organizations, where there is a clear law for them. Although they can operate officially for Syrian refugees, Syrian organizations can't be licensed according to the law. Licensing is only for local Lebanese organizations, and as a result, most of the board of directors must be Lebanese citizens. This is very difficult for Syrian initiatives

to comply with those criteria, especially for bank transactions; it is very complicated in Lebanon and requires an actual presence of those authorized to sign.

The challenges increased further when Lebanese Security authorities forced organizations to get work permits of employees. Despite that work permit law was already there, it was not taken into consideration before. In addition, Syrians are considered refugees in Lebanon, so they are forbidden to work that made the staff of Syrian NGOs work in secret and Syrian staff of INGOs losing jobs chances and are replaced by Lebanese citizens.

A minor number of Syrian organizations have been able to register in Lebanon upon the law we mentioned above, but it is not allowed either for local or international organizations to work for non-refugees (IDPs). It is forbidden to send money to Syria because Lebanese banks are prohibited from processing any fund transaction to Syria as part of the sanctions imposed by the American treasury on the Syrian regime.

The Syrian organizations operating in Lebanon had a better opportunity to build their institutional and programmatic capabilities than those licensed in Damascus or the areas of Autonomous Administration. They get training provided to them by international partners, and their presence close with direct contact with international partners helped to get coaching, which raised the staff efficiency as well.

4- Jordan Hub:

Unlike the neighboring countries, in particular, and the countries of the region in general, Jordan has clear laws regarding the framework of civil society organizations for international, local, or UN agencies. The Syrian humanitarian file was not the first file that they have working for. They have long experience for decades of working with the Palestinian and Iraqi humanitarian files; for that, the law of organizations works clear and unchanged even though strict.

A large number of international organizations have regional offices in Jordan for many years before the displacement movement in Daraa and Quneitra and asylum to Jordan.

The first consideration that determines the acceptance or rejection of organizations to work in Jordan is the security consideration related to Jordanian national security. Through long experiences, they are aware of how political and military movements can infiltrate through civil

society organizations. In the Syrian file, political Islam movements had early, complex, and interrelated activities in neighboring countries. Where they were given space to work in Lebanon and Turkey because of the lack of experience sometimes or due to turning a blind eye to their status for political reasons, this matter is not acceptable under any circumstance in Jordan. On the other hand, the Jordanian regime believed that the winds might change in Syria, and the unlimited support for the opposition would be reversed negatively in the future.

There are two types of licensing in Jordan, a branch of an international organization or a non-profit company. Almost all Syrian organizations have licensed as the second type, which is done through the Ministry of Industry and Trade than to the Ministry of Interior, and in the Ministry of Interior, the security check is carried out, which without it can't do anything, even it is not possible to travel to Jordan.

Cross-border operations are carried out by "Al- Ramtha" point in coordination with the UN agencies or through another non-civilian point which directly affiliated to the Jordanian regime. Coordination of operations and the facilitating of cross-border aid is done through the "Watad " organization, which is the only authorized NGO to enter the aid, " Watad" organization was part of the ACU of the Syrian opposition coalition then was later licensed as a non-profit company and has been working on to coordinate delivering aids in cross borders since the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013. it is the most trusted NGO by the Jordanian government to manage transit aid convoys.

There are some restrictions which affected the NGOs in Jordan, one of them was the large presence of embassies in the humanitarian response, and international funders always preferred to work through humanitarian departments of embassies and through international organizations due to expertise and smooth work dealing with them.

Another restriction that should not be skipped is that working in camps is exclusively done through UN agencies, and most organizations take a permit to work only with one of two fields, either for refugees in Jordan or for the displaced in Daraa and Quneitra.

The transfer of funds takes place through informal transfer agencies and is known by the Jordanian government, while international financial transactions are doing by banks in accordance with the official laws.

When we asked about the challenges faced by the Syrian NGOs and how it negatively affected them, most opinions believed that the laws and monitoring them in Jordan are a challenge to the Syrian NGOs. In Jordan, internal and external financial and governmental audit systems and institutional compliance systems and their laws gave Syrian NGOs a great opportunity to learn and develop themselves at the level of structure and policies. What was a burden for Syrian NGOs previously is turned out to be a distant vision to protect these organizations by directing them to the best practices. Despite the small number of Syrian and international organizations in Jordan in comparison with other hubs, evaluation of work was good, according to the experts who worked there and worked in other hubs.

During June 2018, Syrian regime forces completely controlled Daraa and Quneitra. The official crossing border between Syria and Jordan lately opened during the same year. When we asked about the fate of the organizations that were operating from Jordan for the IDPs and had representative offices in Syria, the answer was that the role of these organizations totally stopped, even INGOs suspended their role as well. Some organizations have retained only the legal license without any physical presence.

5- Turkey Hub:

By the beginning of the asylum movement in northwestern Syria, the government of Turkey announced the implementation of the "open gate" policy for humanitarian purposes for Syrian refugees. Between 2011 and mid-2013, the Syrian-Turkish borders were easy to cross, and rapid increase, as a result, in the number of refugees seeking protection in Turkey took place. When the conflict spread to Northern Syria and the advance of the SDF and ISIS in the north and northeast of Syria, as well the bombings that occurred in Rayhaniya (March 2013) and witnesses kidnapping and assassination events, Turkey started to consider partial pause for the policy of the open gate and regained micro-control over the Syrian border. Since 2014 cross-border crossings became strict and for purposes that must be determined in advance for trade or humanitarian action. All crossing borders were suspended except for Bab Al-Salama and Bab Al-Hawa crossings, which were the official crossing points in accordance with the Security Council resolution 2165 in 2014 (the resolution will be explained in detail later). Subsequently, the Jarablus Tel Abyad crossings were reactivated after these areas became under Turkish control after Euphrates Shield operations in 2016 and Spring of Peace in 2019. Turkey became an important partner in implementing the

Security Council resolution in establishing camps for Syrians on the Syrian side of the border and delivering humanitarian aid to Syria. The policy of "open gate" that the Turkish government worked in helped not only included border crossings, but also the government provided many facilities for traders, industrialists, and civil society institutions.

Turkey has a clear system and law for licensing civil society organizations. This system is easy to apply. Therefore, Syrian organizations are encouraged to register. Their primary operational offices were established early in Turkey in 2012 from cities in south Turkey like Antakya and Gaziantep, then in Şanlıurfa. Later their work expanded to cover responses for the refugees in cities like Istanbul, Izmir, and Mersin. They managed their operation mainly in cities that close to the border with an undeclared government tendency to transfer the weight of humanitarian operations to Gaziantep.

The organizations are licensing as a society (association) (Dernik in Turkish) in Turkish law. This requires official papers with valid residency for the co-founders who will be the BOD after the initial registration. It is not compulsory to include Turkish citizens in the BODs, which encouraged Syrian organizations to be officially licensed in Turkey. Unlike the legal challenges experienced by most international organizations in registering their branches, Syrian organizations did not have any difficulties in registering themselves as a local Turkish Society (Association) working for Syrians, whether refugees or IDPs. Furthermore, several purely Turkish civil society organizations began response for Syrian IDPs/refugees in the Syrian context, some of them registered after 2011.

In their study of civil society and Syrian refugees, Macrith and Sağnıç presented detailed statistics on increasing of civil society organizations in Turkey between 2011 and 2017:

‘The numbers of registered CSOs has increased in the five years since the Syrian influx. This increase has been noted both anecdotally, in interviews with academics, CSO workers and government officials, and empirically in the official government records which show the numbers of registered CSOs. These official figure, available from the Ministry of Interior Department of Associations (Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı) indicate that, while the number of registered CSOs have increased in all of the five major cities of Turkey – Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa – the increase is most pronounced in the south-eastern border regions of the country - Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa. In the other cities the increase has been in line with the general trend of rising CSO numbers since 2000, when data is publically available from. This data shows that,

across the whole of Turkey there are 109,482 associations active in 2016, in contrast to 88,646 in 2011 (a 19 percent increase).³⁹ The years 2013-2014 witnessed the biggest upsurge in association numbers. In Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa the change is most pronounced. The number of associations in Gaziantep increased from 1,148 in 2011 to 1,870 in 2016 (a 38.6 percent increase). In Şanlıurfa the increase is from 679 in 2011 to 1,100 in 2016 (a 38.3 percent increase). In Istanbul and Ankara the increase has been slighter, although not insubstantial – increasing from 17,990 in 2011 to 21,981 in 2016 (an 18.2 percent increase) in Istanbul; in Ankara from 8,371 in 2011 to 10,342 in 2016 (a 19.1 percent increase). In Izmir, which has a concentration of Syrians seeking to travel to Greece via boat, there has been a slightly higher increase - from 4,824 in 2011 to 6,203 in 2016 (a 22.2 percent increase)'. (Mackreath & Sağnıç, 2017)

A large number of Turkish origin organizations that worked for the Syrian response, and their number increased significantly after 2013 as mentioned, we did not notice significant successes for serious work between Turkish origin organizations and newly registered organizations by Syrians, although this matter is very important, vital, and would have led to more facilities to work as the old organizations are more aware of Turkish laws and work procedures, and Turkish government agencies encouraged this type of partnership on more than one occasion, especially in Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch control areas , but no long partnerships observed between the organizations due to several challenges which are: 1- Turkish organizations worked more closely to refugees inside Turkey and did not work across the border (excepted some big organizations such as TRC and IHH) while the Syrian NGOs worked more for the IDPs, 2- The Type of the projects delivered by the Turkish organizations in the first years focused more for a rapid response such food security and shelter for the IDPs in the camps while Syrian NGOs worked more for urban areas in cities and rurales in multi clusters, 3- The language barrier between the Turkish organizations and the beneficiaries.

Upon registering the organization, BODs can open a bank account under the NGO name and conduct domestic and international bank transactions. There are some legal and financial issues managed by a legal accountant and more specialized cases managed by lawyers.

With the establishment of UNOCHA in Gaziantep as “North Syria Hub” in 2014, the establishment of the Humanitarian Pool Fund, and the lack of access by INGOs in most areas inside Syria, Syrian NGOs had a potential opportunity to work directly and manage humanitarian response operations

through long-term projects. These facilities provided by Turkey to the Syrian NGOs enabled them to stand steadfastly in front of international donors and partners of INGOs and implement a humanitarian response across the borders or for refugees in Turkey in official and highly efficient ways. Being Syrian NGOs working close and have direct engagement with UN agencies and INGOs put Syrian NGOs in a better place to build their own capabilities build on a strong basis.

In fact, it is fair to admit that the unlimited legal support that Turkey provided between 2011 and 2017 to Syrian NGOs licensed in its land had drawn the features of these institutions and shaped its current image, those Syrian NGOs have had hundreds of opportunities for funding, capacity building, and institutional development, some of these organizations have invested in maximum, and impacted positively on the organization over the years.

After the coup attempt of July 2016 in Turkey and the accompanying internal turmoil and the expansion of SDF near the Turkish border and starting the military operations against it and ISIS, Turkey began to look with more caution to its internal security. Consequently, Turkey began to reconsider its policy towards Syrian and international organizations. It started to impose more restrictions on renewing licensing to INGOs, as the renewal is annual.

Moreover, accurate monitoring and coordination mechanism has been established for the work of the organizations in the regions under Turkish control in north Aleppo by taking approvals and signing protocols in advance with governors offices, directorates of education, health, TRC, AFAD, and other government bodies, or bodies operating under the umbrella of the government.

Work has become more complicated, especially approvals for crossing the border to/from Syria, and INGOs have been forced to reduce the number of their international staff because their work permits come with denying. They have been replaced by employees with Turkish citizenship. The same thing happened with the employees of the Syrian organizations, as hundreds of work permits became rejected without a legally apparent reason, and the Syrian NGOs became operating in minimum capacity due to the lack of staff, or they have been forced to continue their work in an informal way from home. Even the security clearances for conducting the training have become more complicated, and with prevent traveling between the Turkish provinces to the temporary protection cardholders without advance written permission, many Syrian employees were not unable to travel to attend coordination meetings.

Financial transactions with the Syrian interior have become more difficult despite the fact that the transfer of funds has been made officially through the offices of the Turkish Postal Corporation PTT in Azaz, Syria, and this makes the process more secure on the movement of funds in front of donors, but the fees that are taken by PTT when transferring is high because sending and receiving money is not stable, as NGOs mostly send USD currency and the receiver get most times TL because of low capacity of PTT office, and Syrian NGOs lose a lot in exchange fees. That caused a burden on the financial management of organizations and made it more difficult with donor regulations.

One more event which was a gap of knowledge for NGOs was, fines were imposed on the funds that were transferred to Syria during the years 2013 to 2017 by hand or hawala offices before activating the PTT service, as they were transferred in an unofficial way, knowing during that period there was no formal or known method officially accepted and announced. In other words, the punishment was enforced on the law before this law was enforced.

The new restrictions have started to become less harmful since the beginning of 2019 as the implementation procedures have become more precise and have been developed in several stages to be more appropriate. The challenge of work permits is still major but less harmful as they started to increase the number of accepted work permit applications according to advance protocols between Syrian NGOs organization with Turkish humanitarian entities.

On the whole, Turkey hub is the most active and vital among all hubs, the response that took place from Turkey is the largest and the most professional, specifically by local Syrian organizations that lacked the knowledge about the principles of the humanitarian response in the past, but at present, these NGOs plan and implement highly professional projects and reach the biggest international funders, mainly due to the Turkish legal framework that provided protection and incubation for eight years which helped Syrian NGOs to develop themselves internally and structurally.

4.5. Syrian NGOs and Formal System

What meant by the formal system the mechanism internationally accredited to create a common framework and codes governing humanitarian institutions in all types, such as the UN agencies,

ICRC, IFRC, Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies, and other international humanitarian organizations to cooperate with each other to develop the systems of governance, compliance, accountability, international coordination, resource mobilization, donation campaign, and responses approaches worldwide in addition to mapping relations among donors and donated countries. And many other frames that differ in detail and implementing mechanisms but work with the same general approaches under international laws.

The involvement of newly formed Syrian organizations in institutional work in 2012 was theoretically impossible. They are vast and complex systems that differ from state to state or from donor to donor and from organization to another. It is a real challenge to rebuild small organizations that have always been operating with the mentality of fundraising, rapid distribution, and documentation with photography and video, to turning them into institutions that participate in assessments, setting annual work plans for whole Syria, and participate in the most accurate coordination details starting from the local or sector level and ending at the international level.

The Syrian organizations began opening channels to communicate more with the INGOs present in Turkey and Jordan during 2012 and 2013 (with high cautious tone out of security concerns) as coordination operations were run through the NGO Forum. The chance of the organizations working in Damascus, Lebanon, and Northeast Syria was less, and their involvement in the formal system was almost non-existent for the reasons we mentioned in the legal status clause (the only organization that is allowed to participate in international coordination from Damascus is the Red Crescent).

At the beginning of 2014, a platform for Syrian civil society organizations was established by the Office for the Coordination and Humanitarian Affairs UN-OCHA in Turkey. This platform encouraged Syrian CSOs to engage in international coordination mechanisms and deal with various agencies, communicate with international organizations/bodies, and benefit from calls for capacity building. The requirements for joining the platform are divided between the legal and governmental framework and commitment to the various humanitarian principles and standards. This is what made the Syrian organizations work to know these requirements and apply them. (Annex. A). Later in 2020, the platform management was handed over to UNDP.

Unlike other international contexts, the involvement of the Syrian organizations in the formal system was quickly significant. The Staff of most NGOs are from an educated background and

have the ability and competence to develop rapidly and to reflect this development on their institution. One of the challenges that most Syrian organizations faced at that time is the official language of dialogue, as it was always the English language; interpretation started late at the end of 2015. Although Arabic is one of the official languages of the United Nations, it is not officially recognized in Humanitarian work in the Syrian context until now, except for some events. Indeed, the Syrian organizations have developed themselves and employed staff communicating fluently in the English language for smoother work as lack of English competencies negatively affected Syrian NGOs between 2012 and 2015. A large number of active organizations in the field which could not communicate in the English language lost the opportunity to present and develop their work, simultaneously it was an opportunity for Syrian NGOs who have less work efficiency but Fluently English-speaking staff members.

Turkey- Hatay / Mid of 2013

Local Syrian NGOs, most of them in initiatives level, came from the Syrian side in the North because they invented to attend a coordination meeting with INGO, which started to respond. The researcher was attending in the meeting, the representatives of INGO supposed that Syrian attendees should know English, and they started the meeting with those local teams to hear from them about the situation inside Syria in a language which most of them did not use it before. After a few minutes, most Syrian NGOs representatives started to leave the meeting with no value for their attendance, and the meeting continued. When the researcher attended a similar meeting with IHH in the same month, he noticed that all the Turkish team of IHH who attended talk Arabic fluently. That is led to high cooperation with IHH at that time.

4.5.1. The international Resolutions. 2165, SCHF

Security Council Resolution 2561 on cross-border humanitarian operations played a vital role in revitalizing the work of both Syrian and international organizations. The resolution states:

UN Security Council Resolution 2165/2191/2258/2332/2393/2449/2504:

Through the adoption of resolutions 2165 (2014), and its subsequent renewals 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2449 (2018), and 2504 (2020) until 10 July 2020, the UN

Security Council has authorized UN agencies and their partners to use routes across conflict lines and the border crossings at Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, Al-Ramtha, and Al Yarubiyah, to deliver humanitarian assistance, including medical and surgical supplies, to people in need in Syria. As of 10 January 2020, based on resolution 2504, Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa are the only crossings open at this point in time. The Government of Syria is notified in advance of each shipment and a UN monitoring mechanism was established to oversee loading in neighboring countries and confirm the humanitarian nature of consignments.

This resolution activated UN agencies' role to work more effectively across borders which was directly reflected on both Syrian NGOs and INGOs. Cross-borders operations covered a big gap in humanitarian needs through the implementation of effective humanitarian projects at the level of response and impact on society with a highly professional tone in terms of project setting and implementation. UN agencies, as a result, worked on direct partnerships with Syrian NGOs and organizations who are subject to the compliance standards of UN agencies and prompted the Syrian NGOs to focus more effort to rapidly promote and develop themselves more quickly to meet the requirements. In addition, the Security Council decision reduced few challenges relevant to the delivery aid through Turkish, Jordanian, and Iraq borders with Syria.

Later On, 20 December 2019, Russia and China vetoed the UN resolution proposed to renew the mechanism established in resolution 2165, allowing the UN for cross-border delivery of humanitarian assistance to Syria from Bab al-Salam, Bab al-Hawa, and Al Yarubiyah. The veto was not fully applicable as other members voted for an alternative proposal made by Belgium and Germany to renew the resolution for six months from two borders Bab Al-Salam and Bab Al-Hawa.

The same veto was used again in July 2020 against a proposal made by Belgium and Germany to renew the resolution in the same conditions as the last one. Finally, on 11/July/2020, they agreed to renew it for one year from Bab Al- Hawa only. 'After several failed attempts in recent days, the Security Council today adopted a resolution extending authorization of a mechanism that brings life-saving humanitarian aid into Syria for another year, through one Turkish border crossing. Adopting resolution 2533 (2020), the Council approved delivery of aid through the Bab al-Hawa crossing until 10 July 2021. The text received 12 votes in favour to none against, with

three abstentions (China, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation). The resolution did not approve the Bab al-Salam crossing on Syria's border with Turkey, through which aid had continued until yesterday, as well as Al Yarubiyah and Al-Ramtha on the country's borders with Iraq and Jordan, through which deliveries had moved from 2014 to early January 2020' (un.org/press/en).

Following the resolution (2165, 2014), Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) was created (previously called HPF, then SHF, and the name changed in 2019 to become SCHF).

'The Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF) is a multi-donor Country Based Pooled Fund (CBPF) established in 2014 following UN Security Resolutions 2139 and 2165 in view of the magnitude and complexity of the Syria crisis and the need for alternative ways to deliver humanitarian assistance inside Syria.

The SCHF enables humanitarian partners, particularly Syrian NGOs, to expand and support the delivery of humanitarian assistance across borders and conflict lines. The Fund supports projects and activities in line with the Syrian Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Fund's Operational Manual. Under the leadership of the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator, the main objective of the SCHF is to provide predictable, timely, and consistent resources to partners thereby expanding the delivery of humanitarian assistance to support lifesaving and life sustaining activities, focusing on most urgent needs and filling critical gaps. In doing so, the SCHF seeks to improve the relevance and coherence of humanitarian response by strategically funding underfunded priorities and underserved areas as identified under the HRP framework' (unocha.org).

The Humanitarian Fund had great support for cross-border operations from Turkey to Syria. It provided many resources to expand, delivering humanitarian aid and increase the volume of this assistance to help people in need inside Syria. There is one more important goal of establishing the fund, which is to strengthen the capacity of Syrian organizations. Although UN agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and INGOs can take funding from SCHF, but due to its regulatory framework, more than half of the funding - 60% - goes to local organizations.

The eligibility criteria (due diligence) for joining the SCHF were carefully set in a highly professional way to check the eligibility of potential partners in many areas such as governance,

administrative and financial system, procurement, human resources, and humanitarian principles, external financial audit and periodic spot-check of projects. SCHF and its requirements had a great impact on Syrian NGOs to develop their systems and structures in order to meet the eligibility criterion for the fund.

Later, many Syrian NGOs suffered difficulties in applying the mechanisms due to shortcomings in the team management of the SCHF. In addition, several unexpected measures occurred without coordination with Syrian organizations or their representatives on coordination platforms; for example, there was a sudden change in the evaluation of partners which caused exclusion to almost all SNGOs, the rejection based on the capacity assessment results (due diligence) which happened before more than three years ago and SCHF did not consider that Syrian NGOs capacity become higher through years and SCHF should make re-assessment before exclusion. Last year SCHF management has frozen of joining process. In addition to the continuous delays in conducting external auditing of the projects and the delays in issuing final reports.

Even though the Syrian NGOs gained a lot of capacity from the regulation of SCHF, but they faced a challenge related to the lack of experience of some of the staff in executive-level of SCHF, where their lack of experience was reflected in the evaluation of the performance of many partners of Syrian NGOs which transformed the fund in recent years to be as a source of a burden on a many of Syrian NGOs, and effectiveness of capacity building for local partners of SCHF decreased over time, while one of the global goals of the fund is raising the efficiency of local organizations. when Looking at implementation during the last years in the Syrian context, it seems that the fund preferred to work with organizations that possess the highest efficiency at the organizational level, which are international organizations. The opportunities for less efficient organizations were reduced, and some organizations lost their opportunities due to the negative impact of the inefficiency of the SCHF committee staff, which pushed Syrian NGOs to search for alternative partnerships. It is worth mentioning that the international organizations that receive funding from the SCHF carry out all their operations through the same Syrian NGOs that were excluded from the funding.

4.5.2. The Nature of Partnerships

Unlike many other contexts in the world, when international organizations came to work in Syria, especially from Turkey and Jordan, they found local bodies ready to implement, and we mean by bodies here the local community-based organizations LCBOs and initiatives, which mainly were established late in 2011. These entities have had people who have a high educational level and are able to develop; they also have popular and societal acceptance. This fresh base full of vitality has been seen by some NGOs, and they found it a chance to create implementing partnerships with those bodies which lead all parties to success and rapid action to Syria's response.

Other INGOs found it an obstacle for their own interests on one hand, and obstacles in the mechanism of their work, on the other hand, especially those organizations which permanently used to draw plans their directly. With the increase of the military presence and the civil, administrative character began to decline in parts of north, north-east, and south of Syria for opposition groups and the emergence of extremist groups. Such factors challenged accessing Syria. It was unsecured and risky for INGOs to get in Syria, except the NES, where the Autonomous Administration welcomed the presence of INGOs rather than embracing and supporting local Syrian NGOs. Consequently, this weakness in access imposed on INGOs to shape partnerships with Syrian NGOs that have ready staff inside Syria able to implement the projects.

As for the UN agencies, they approached from the beginning to work through local and international partners together with a clear priority to work with INGOs and working very carefully with local organizations (if available) at the political, military, and field perspectives. Although many international calls encouraged the formal system and international organizations to strengthen the capabilities of local organizations and work through them, implementation perspectives and interests to stay in the field differ a lot. For example: In 2007, the Global Humanitarian Platform endorsed a set of “Principles of Partnership” (PoP) in order to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response and to emphasize local capacity as an integral part of the humanitarian sphere.

During questioning members of INGOs about the preferred mechanism for work, service contracts (sub-contracts), or partnerships, the largest percentage (60%) saw that working on long partnerships with Syrian organizations leads to project success, sharing responsibility, and applying compliance requirements the two partners together is the best practice, The rest INGOs

(40%) saw service contracts as their preferred method for contracts with small financial range for a contractor as they do not want to suffer from compliance issues later with donors if they make a partnership with non-qualified parties who are not able to meet implementing compliance requirements or creating a partnership with parties have an unspoken political background. Even though they have not assessed the real capabilities or vetting for these organizations before reaching such a conclusion.

We may see at first sight that all INGOs seeking to limit the role of Syrian NGOs, this image is incomplete, regardless of the fact that the presence of Syrian NGOs harmed the interests of a few INGOs, as we mentioned earlier, but the most important part in the picture is that the INGOs themselves have not developed a clear framework for partnerships within their internal systems previously to work with local parties, because they previously did not need them, most of the contexts where they worked around the world for decades were managed through direct implementation and service contracts with suppliers from the private sector. This made them struggle when some of them conducted partnerships with local organizations, and often a major imbalance occurred in meeting compliance requirements. In principle, they are seeking a partnership, however, upon implementation, they are dominated by the nature of service contracts, and at later stages of implementation, some requirements are not agreed in advance, especially regarding procurement, financial reports, contracts, human resources, etc.

It is not an exaggeration mentioning that some INGOs in Turkey and Jordan have benefited during the last three years from the policies and procedures of Syrian organizations since the Syrian organizations have worked with a vast number of partners, and their policies have been developed based on experience more rapidly than INGOs.

Turkey-Gaziantep / 2020

An interviewee who is working for an international coordination body told the researcher that it happened that five international organizations took a project from one donor and this project was implemented by one Syrian NGOs as an executive partner, this organization was submitting to each international organization the reports and papers of the project according to the policy of the international organization and thus arrived donor has five different reports in terms of structuring for one project from one executive side, This is one of the major reasons that caused the Syrian NGOs to take more time for paperwork and financial reviews and less

time for implementation, and this affected the progress of project negatively. Although it can be simply solved, the five parties must comply with the donor policies or the Syrian organization's policies.

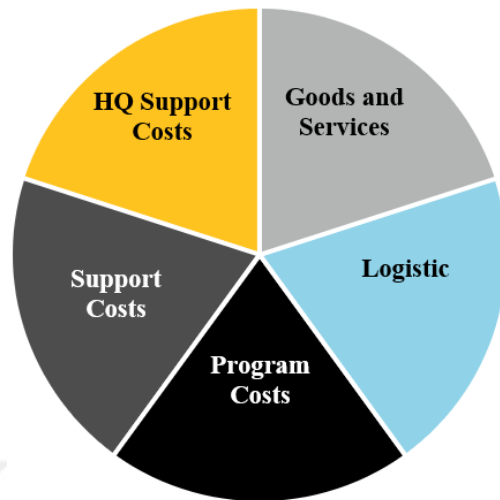
Another important factor affecting the formation of early partnerships between Syrian and international NGOs is lack of confidence, the Syrian organizations were very cautious in sharing information, and international organizations feared the possible extremist tendencies of Syrian organizations, which created a working vacuum among them on the longer term. As a result of this tense security situation, there was a lack of information exchange, caused a duplication of work by Syrian and international NGOs working in the same areas. Later, some INGOs have focused on supporting IDPs in areas closest to easily accessible borders. In contrast, Syrian NGOs or INGOs that have established partnerships with Syrian NGOs have tried to work in hard to reach or under siege areas inside Syria such as Aleppo, Idlib, Homs, Eastern Ghouta, and rural of Damascus.

When OCHA first established a presence in Turkey in 2013, they faced a good deal of skepticism, if not outright distrust, by both Syrian NGOs and several of the INGOs for the same reasons, then the coordination mechanism of OCHA established and operated.

Another factor that charts the nature of the partnership which identified by (Christian, Mansour, & Nils, 2016) under the title “Good deals and bad deals - partnerships and subcontracting”:

‘A crucial difference between being a first and second level recipient of donor funding is the ability of the recipient agency to cover its various and total costs. Costs for a humanitarian project can be divided into five categories: goods and services, logistics, HQ support costs, and program and support costs. Donors usually accept that first level recipients (almost exclusively UN agencies and INGOs) include all of these costs, including indirect support costs (usually ranging between 5 – 7%. Also known as HQ or overhead costs. In contrast, for the second level recipient (often a national or local NGO), it is usually a matter of negotiation to determine if they will be allowed to charge overheads and support costs – and if so – at what percentage. In many cases, local NGOs are only allowed to charge documented costs associated with implementing the specific project. They will then have to recover support or overhead costs from other funding or through voluntary work where possible.

Such fundamentally different “entitlements” between first (direct) level recipients (mostly UN and INGOs) and second level (indirect) recipients of funding (mostly local actors) manifest themselves in the contractual agreements between UN agencies/INGOs and local and national actors. More than any other factor, these differences define and determine the actual power relationship between large donors, large UN agencies and INGOs on the one hand – and on the other, national and local NGOs, CBOs as well as some smaller INGOs



Given the discrepancies in accessing the fund, including overheads and support costs, and the fact that local and national actors do the vast majority of the work, it is hardly surprising how terms like “overhead”, “support costs”, “trust”, “capacity”, “partnerships” and “subcontracting” continue to ignite a heated debate between international and national aid workers’. You can find more information about Methodology - Breaking down humanitarian spending in (Annex B)

Reviewing the previous inputs, we see that the Syrian NGOs do everything in partnership with INGOs, they write project proposals, set the implementation plan, and meet the requirements for compliance in the smallest detail, yet today INGOs are almost the only bridge between the Syrian NGOs and the donors.

Turkey – Gaziantep / 2020

The researcher had an interview with a representative of INGO who worked for Syria's response for long years in the partnership department and witnessed closely how SNGOs were raised and took a vital role in the response. According to the mutual experience on the Syrian humanitarian file, the researcher and the guest agreed that now we can strongly say that the Syrian NGOs do everything in partnership with INGOs, they write project proposals, set the implementation plan, and meet the requirements for compliance in the smallest detail, yet today INGOs are almost the only bridge between the Syrian NGOs and the donors. When the researcher asked, so why international organizations are till now playing the role of an imaginary bridge between donors and Syrian NGOs while the Syrian NGOs have enough capacity to manage the fund directly?

the answer was: "Because they can." That is, they possess a sufficient amount of international relations, informal relations, and legal justifications that make the donors see them as the best bridge for a good response till today. This serves their interests and maintains their financial stability through administrative expenses under the budget lines like overhead and HQ support.

4.5.3. Political Affiliation and Dependency Influence

The policies of the donor countries that play a military or political role in Syria made them impose their influence on the humanitarian file as well. This effect was reflected in the Syrian SCOs working in the field. In the period of writing this paper, and a few months ago, we witnessed the Security Council meeting on renewing the resolution NO 2165 in 2014 for humanitarian access from cross borders. As we mentioned in a previous section, The Chinese-Russian veto disabled the resolution partially for the second time in a row. Subsequently, it was agreed upon the proposal offered by Germany and Belgium to work from only one cross borders from Turkey- Bab Al-Hawa- for 12 months since July 2020.

From the operational point of view, the non-renewal of the resolution will not affect cross-border operations. The old mechanism, which is to carry out cross-border operations through the host country's authorities, can be returned, as happened in Turkey during 2012 and 2013, the delivery of aid was by TRC, AFAD, and IHH. But the most significant negative effect of the un-renewal from the Turkey hub is the possibility to suspend the work of OCHA and north Syria crossing borders UN agencies, the SCHF will be shut down, and all the work will be directly from the Damascus hub. Syrian regime allies claimed that it is possible to work across lines and delivering aid even to areas not under the authority of the regime and thus control all international roads. The application of this scenario may lead to a humanitarian crisis later if the donor countries respond to it. Civilians in the opposition areas will neglect their needs, and we will get in a new phase of increased chaos and violence.

Furthermore, the attempt to control Syrian civil society organizations is not only related to the most effective countries on the military level, but other considerations have emerged early since 2011; most of the Gulf countries have provided support in particular to organizations that are wholly or partially part of political Islam movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and scientific Salafism. European countries preferred to work with organizations of a secular nature,

regardless of their efficiency. The United States has been so far providing so-called political support and still direct more support to SDF controlled areas, especially in eastern Syria. Turkey has also facilitated channels of funding for organizations from allies, such as Qatar, where Muslim Brotherhood organizations have had the largest share of the pie. Later Turkey promoted most of the organization's work through direct agreements with Turkish official institutions (see 4.4.3 Turkey Hub).

Such lacking neutrality policies pursued by the donor countries affected the Syrian humanitarian file in general and, in particular, affected the civil society organizations, as loyalty to the donors and their policy, and linking it with the orientations of the Syrian political movements isolated the organizations from their civil status. Political movements have sought to enhance their presence through their affiliated organizations. In Damascus, the Syrian Trust for Development increased the number of its organizations, and some other associations that were a wing of the regime before 2011, such as Al-Bustan Society, increased their official presence, and more funding was directed to them. Muslim Brotherhood worked in the same mechanism where they established dozens of associations and licensed them in Europe and Turkey, which aimed to play a more prominent role on the political level through humanitarian action by increasing the number of their organizations. Also, organizations that adopted secular political orientation fell into the dilemma of confusing their civil role with their political orientation; they see civil society is heterogeneous groups and assume their movements and groups are the elite minority, which should compete with others and stay in isolation of them.

The same happened in the areas of SDF control and Autonomous Administration, as we mentioned in clause 4.3.4, Nationalism was the primary determinant of accepting or refusing to of licensing a local organization and allowing it to work. Autonomous Administration established its organizations, and they are the most present such as the Kurdish Red Crescent. This distinction led to neglecting civilian needs in areas where there is a high need, such as Manbij and Tabqa, where initiatives and organizations with an Arab majority operating there were ignored by the Autonomous Administration and donor countries as well.

4.4.5. Transparency

Transparency is a critical dimension of NGO accountability. It should allow stakeholders to use critical information and hence, defend their interests. That protects against authoritarian decisions, the misallocation of resources, and corruption. Transparency in decision-making, implementation, and easy availability of relevant information by program actors is an essential element for good governance. It helps reinforce accountability. From a human rights perspective, transparency is the beneficiary's right to know about the actions of the NGOs. In this context, transparency is essential. It is a prerequisite for successful beneficiary participation in program design and implementation. For NGOs practically, it means making readily available for public scrutiny all NGO accounts and audit reports. In other words, the organization is open and honest to all stakeholders according to the level of their relationship between them. It is related to the vision, goals, financial system used, type of programs, beneficiaries of these programs, organization's governance system, employee diversity, internal communication, contact information, grants, and other vital issues.

By the beginning of the formation of Syrian NGOs, there was no idea or specific criteria for what the genuinely transparent organization would look like. The organization or a donor may define the word "transparent" as merely publishing their address, or the names of its board of directors or the grants information is obtained. However, increased awareness and the shift towards transparency as a concept, in general, began to take a positive direction in Syrian NGOs early.

Despite this openness from the Syrian NGOs on the transparency concept, the security barrier and lack of trust from the Syrian NGOs toward partners/donors controlled this matter in the first period (mentioned in a paragraph 4.5.2), as sharing information was a permanent point of fear by the Syrian NGOs due to security prosecutions and the risk especially the organizations that worked in the opposition-control areas in 2012 and have relatives in the regime's control areas or the locations of medical facilities and warehouses.

Other factors affected the interest and ability of Syrian NGOs to meet the requirements of transparency and disclosure. The volume of the organization and amount of funds it takes may not give it the financial and administrative capacity to meet the requirements of compliance and transparency in an ideal percentage as most small organizations do not have policies fit international partnerships. They mainly rely on a private fund by people or groups who do not

interest in financial reports and external audit reports and usually prefer documenting via photo and video.

Also, the organization's policies and the internal and external monitoring procedures in place affect it positively or negatively the extent of understanding these organizations to transparency tools, and how to use them according to procedures previously prepared. For example, having a clear organizational structure and decision-making levels in the organization gives different levels of disclosure, which leads to better transparency. Additionally, as Syrian NGOs established their policies based on self-learning and field experience, they ignored many of the requirements of transparency in the first years of the response. For example, the reports of external audit companies were not considered by many organizations in the first five years except those organizations that were licensed in countries that have a formal governmental financial audit system.

Some organizations that have a political agenda and take informal funding from non-civil actors try to don't disclose the financial size of their activities in order not to become the subject of international accountability.

One of the essential factors that played an important role in developing the transparency and disclosure policies of the Syrian NGOs is international partnerships with the formal system; these partnerships impose strict restrictions on eligibility to obtain funding that made a large number of Syrian NGOs develop their policies, procedures, monitoring, and external communication systems that work in them in addition to developing financial reports, annual reports and apply external audit with the best compliance mechanisms to get partnerships with biggest donors.

4.6. Organizational Capacity of Syrian NGOs

4.6.1. Programs & Operation

During the interviews with experts in INGOs and UN agencies, in addition to the questionnaire that was applied to Syrian organizations, it became clear that most Syrian NGOs have very high efficiency in terms of projects and operations, there is a clear weakness in the organizations operating in Damascus or the areas of Autonomous Administration control whereas the operating from Turkey or Lebanon organizations have the highest capacity and are able to study and

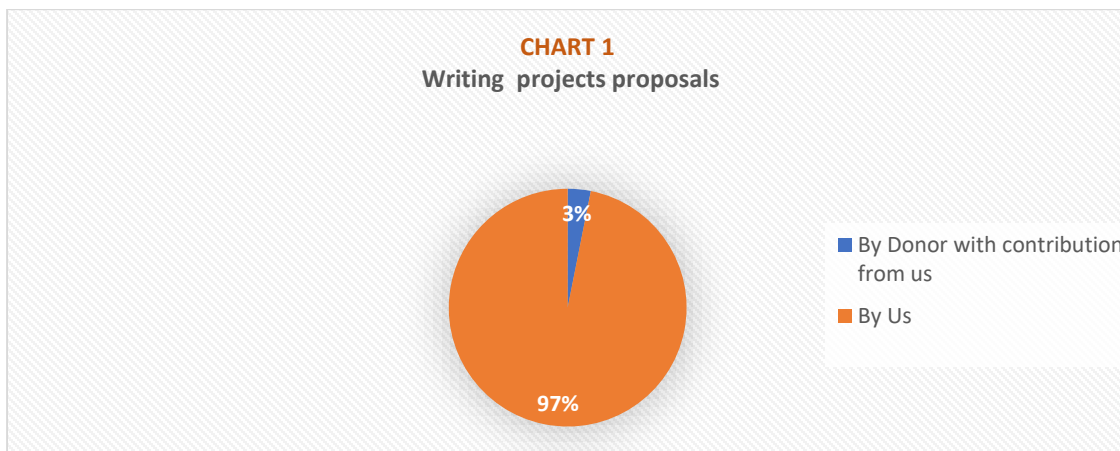
implement high-quality projects from initial assessment to implementation and closure. Compliance systems that serve these projects are applied with high quality as well.

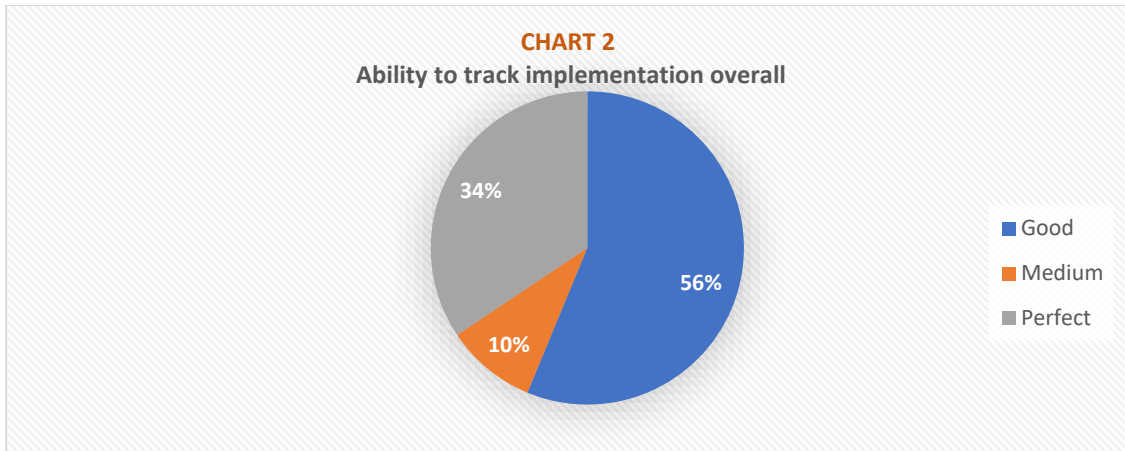
Turkey – Istanbul / 2020

During a detailed discussion with one of the international donor staff, who was worked in INGO for the Syrian response between 2013-2014 and returned to work in 2020, after summarising the graph of change of Syrian NGOs, the interviewee mentioned to the researcher that: it was a surprise to see that the how Syrian organizations transferred from negligence phase about the minimum technical aspect of the humanitarian work to the high level of professional working, nowadays they are implementing projects to the biggest donors around the world and how they internationally widened their experiences about humanitarian platforms. The procurement and financial policies that manage these projects are applied according to international compliance standards. They have also provided financial and narrative reports very efficiently.

Through the following charts carried out in the questionnaire, we can more clearly assess the capacity of the institutions in three perspectives:

1- Projects: charts 1 and 2 show that the Syrian NGOs themselves often write projects and they implement these projects mostly in an excellent manner.





2- Finance and compliance: Charts 3,4,5,6,7 show the applying percentage of:

- Administrative protect against fraud documented, comply with donor regulations and local laws, and it is understood within your organization management systems that protect against fraud.
- Financial controls in place to ensure the safeguarding of funds and applied by staff.
- Have a robust and transparent accountability system.
- The annual operating budget, which includes all expenses and revenue/income sources for all programs.
- Have a master budget.

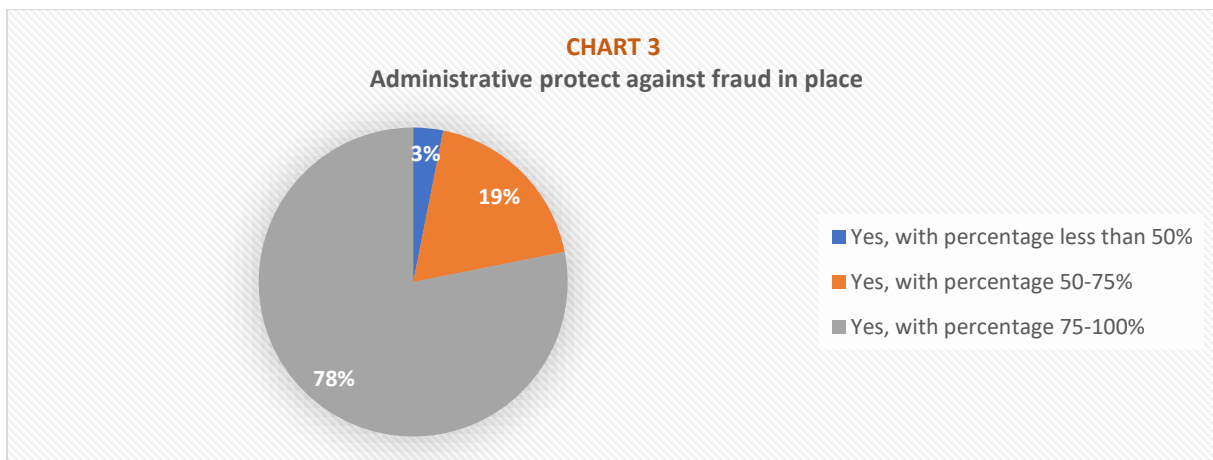


CHART 4

Financial controls ensure safeguarding of funds



CHART 5

Having a robust and clear accountability system

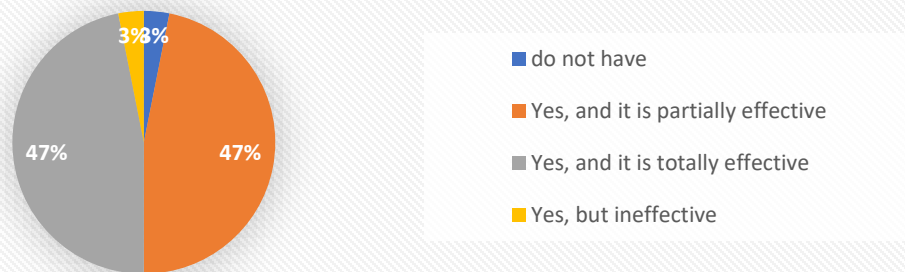
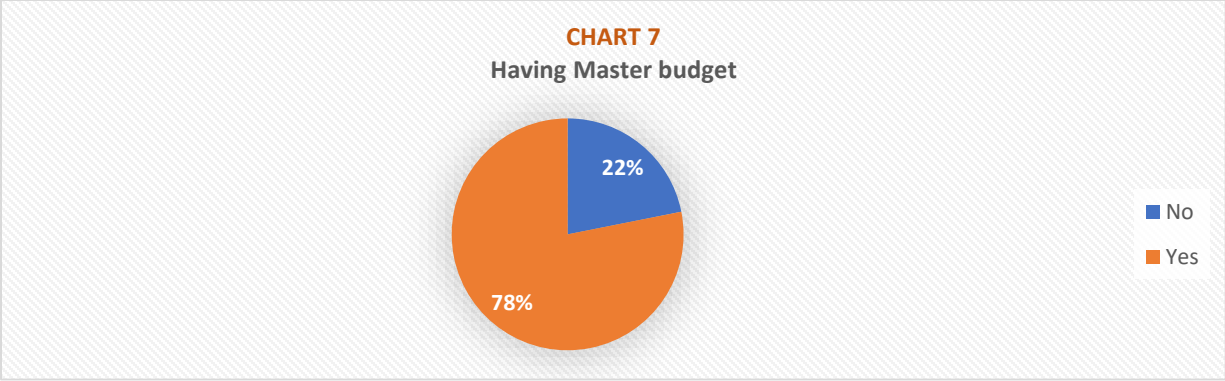


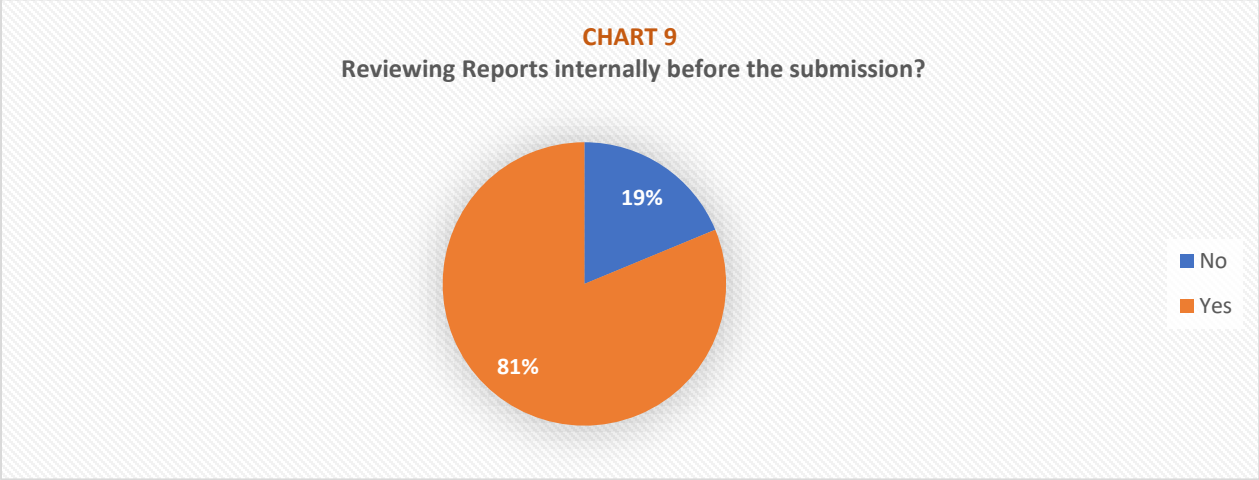
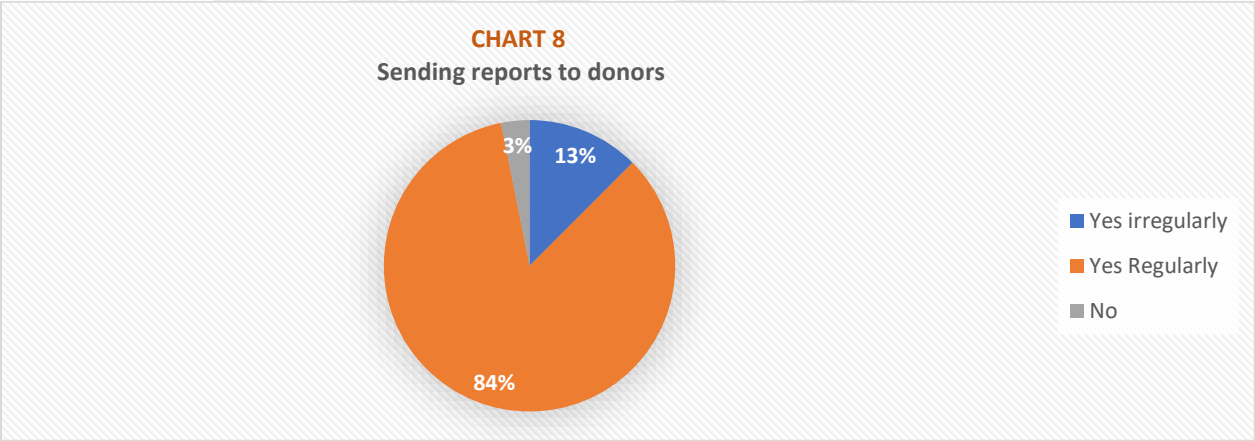
CHART 6

Annual operating budget





3- Reports: most Syrian NGOs send regularly comprehensive and transparent reports to donors, and frequently meet and communicate with donors. Those reports are reviewed internally by Senior Management before the submission. See charts 8,9:



4.6.2. Governance & Structure

A good number of Syrian NGOs have structures, policies, and governance systems, but some of these systems are just documents used to provide them to partners in partnership more than they are actually applied systems. In the next charts (10,11, 12,13,14) we notice the gaps between programs & operation mentioned above, and the governance & institutional structures. Although Syrian NGOs have high efficiency at the level of programs and operations, there is an evident weakness in governance systems and institutional structures. One of the UN staff interviewed mentioned that most seniors staff of the Syrian NGOs and their BODs did not change for six years, unlike UN agencies, which have periodically regular changes in the working and senior teams.

In the charts, we can see:

- 22% of Syrian NGOs do not have a board or external governing body to supervise the management and takes responsibility for the actions of the NGO. 44% of Syrian NGOs have them but with partial effect.
- 66 % have totally applied a clear organizational structure, 28% have but partially applied, and 6 % don't have.
- Concerning governance structures and policies & management procedures, the percentage is good considering the gap between a perfect applying for policies & management procedures in project terms and weak practicing for management structures.
- All Syrian NGOs have a clear mission and vision but are not necessarily reflected in the programming and implementation approaches.

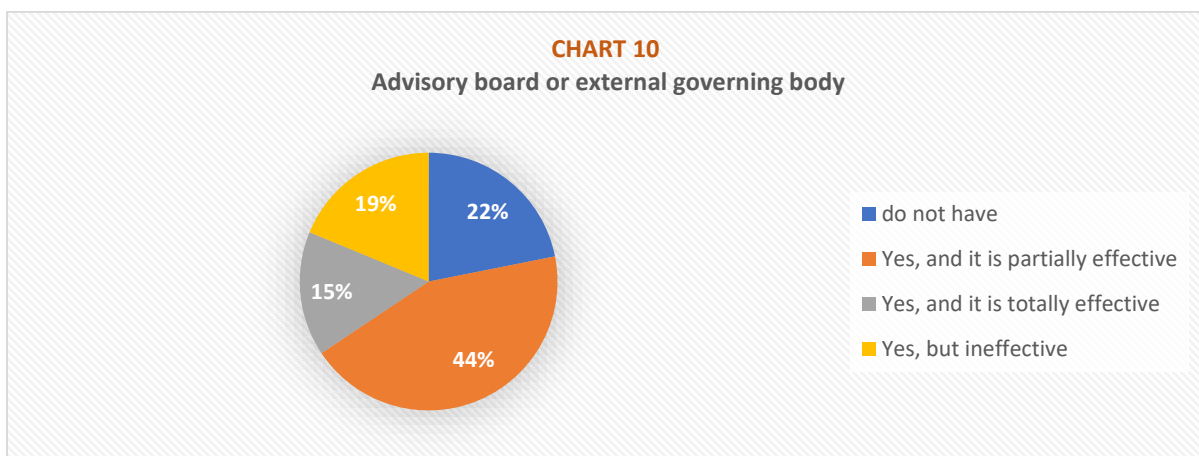
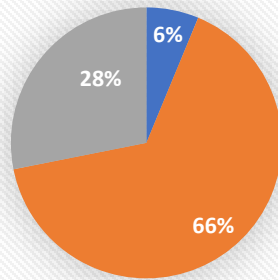


CHART 11

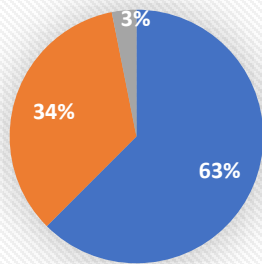
A clear organizational structure



- No
- Yes, and it is applied totally
- Yes, and It is applied partially

CHART 12

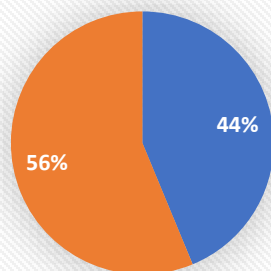
governance structures and clearly established policies and management procedures



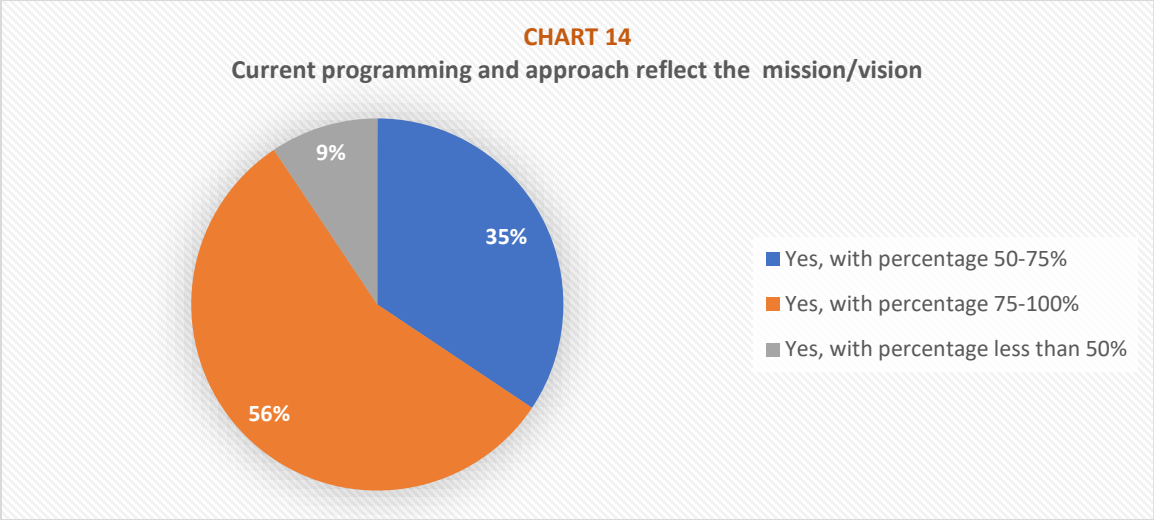
- Yes, and it is applied totally
- Yes, and It is applied partially
- No

CHART 13

Having a clear and agreed mission/vision?



- Yes, and It is applied partially
- Yes, and it is applied totally



4.6.3. Strategy

The Syrian NGOs have a weakness in the strategic planning due to several factors: preoccupation with daily implementation - rapid field changes in Syria that hinder strategic planning - lack of interest in strategic planning by senior management and BODs.

Dealing with programs and projects is going case by case, they are not linked to long-term strategic plans, which create sharp changes in the programs of these organizations that lead to non-specialized work.

In charts 15,16,17 we notice:

- High changes in programming over the last 12 months.
- Good practice in adapting programs to meet the changing situation and needs.
- A high percentage of changing plans is during implementation.

CHART 15

Organization's programs changing over the last 12 months?



CHART 16

Adapting programs to meet the changing situation and needs

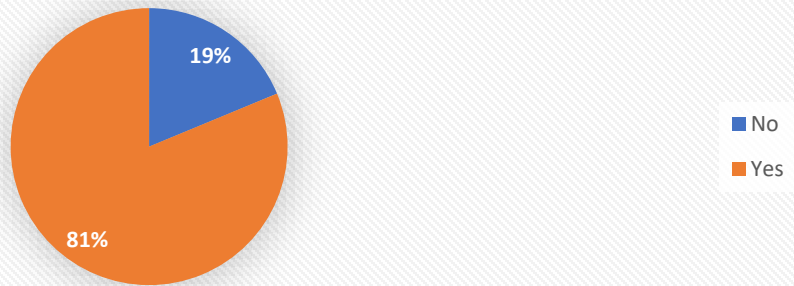


CHART 17

Implementation tracking against work plans



4.6.4. Communication

Syrian NGOs have achieved a high rate of internal and external communication over the past nine years. The internal communication between employees and management evolved a lot and followed specific policies such as the human resource policy that in most organizations contains procedures for job satisfaction and performance appraisal.

As for external communication, it developed in the organizations operating in Turkey more than the rest organizations because there is easy access to the formal system by the organizations operating there. Constant communication became the most potent part of building partnerships with INGOs and UN agencies. Many Syrian NGOs have memberships on international representative platforms, local coordination bodies, and international coordinating bodies with a high level of presence. Syrian NGOs frequently enhanced coordination and complementary responses with partner organizations and other NGOs in the same sector continuously and attended sectors meetings

In recent years, Syrian NGOs have begun paying more attention to effective communication with all stakeholders of all levels, especially beneficiaries and community leaders; they cared about sharing information with them more broadly to achieve more tremendous success and transparency in work.

You can see the percentages of results in the charts 18,19,20,21

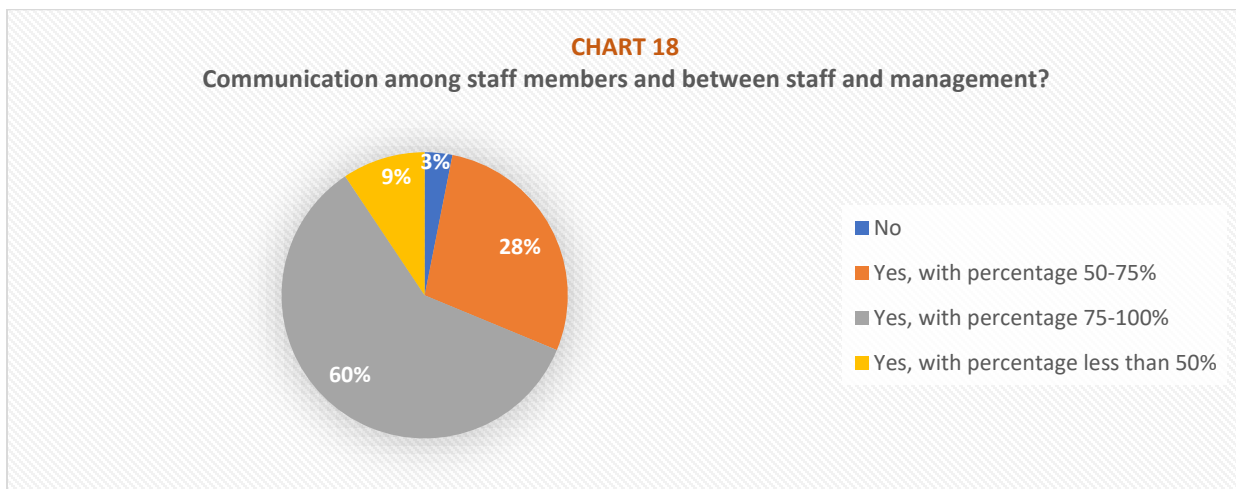


CHART 19
Membership in local coordination and organizational bodies?

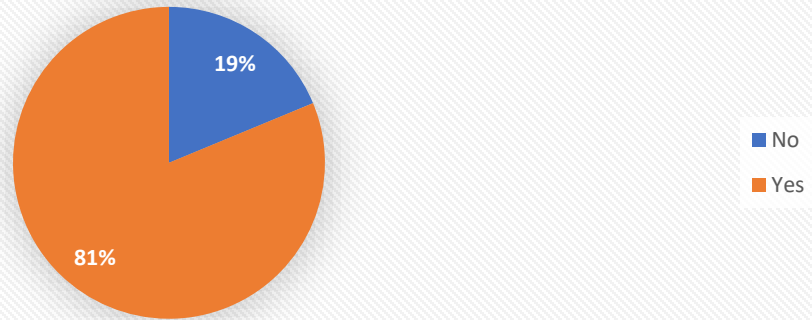


CHART 20
Sharing information and having continuous communication with beneficiaries and community leaders

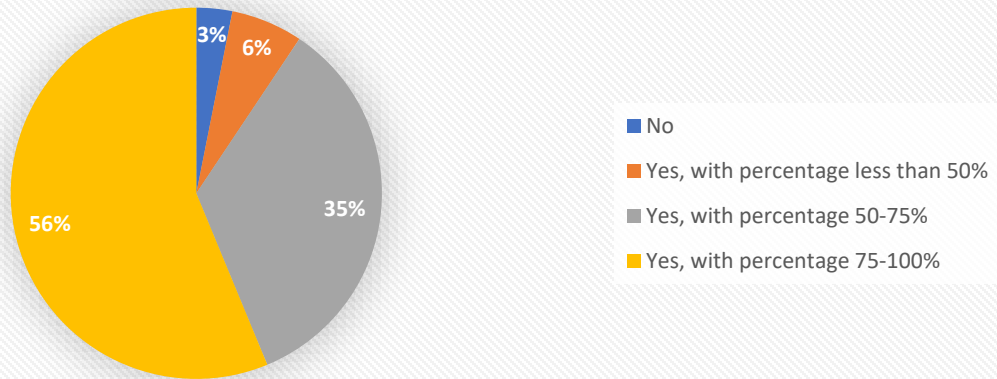


CHART 21
Coordination with partner organizations and other NGOs in the same sector, attending sector meetings



4.7. Future of Syrian CSO's

Betting on the future of Syrian CSOs is not easy. It cannot be easily predicted; the variables that affect these organizations' presence or absence are many and unconnected and have ramifications at the international level. By returning to the previous clauses of our research, we can read the exact details of internal and external factors, which are, in turn, the push and pull factors for the future of Syrian CSOs.

Internal factors, for example, are but not limited to: 1- accepting organizations the change and developing their institutional structure and working to develop an effective governance system that does not relate to a specific person or group of people who have special financial interests or political aspirations, 2- developing a real strategic vision applicable to the field. Syrian NGOs, to date have succeeded in implementing high-quality programs. Still, it has failed to develop and provide the international community with a comprehensive vision according to a strategic plan to be applied to the field. 3- adopting the idea of civil society as a comprehensive concept, not a partial concept for a specific group, 4- bringing civil society organizations out of loyalty to parties or driven movements politically or religiously, and developing its role so that these organizations are an external body to improve the work of these movements by raising societal awareness 5- diversifying the sources of funding for these organizations and working to find self-financing sources through income-generating projects.

External factors are but not limited to 1- finding a political solution in Syria on an international level that begins with conflict resolution, 2- adopting Syrian CSOs by the international community and working with them directly, 3- setting a plan to reduce the role of INGOs in stages, 4- dealing with the Syrian civil society based on the volume of need, not based on the political dimension, and urge the Syrian organizations to implement this concept internally through advocacy and fund directing. 5- finding clear local and international laws that provide protection and give legitimacy to Syrian CSO to continue practicing their work without challenges in closing, expelling, pursuit members, or freezing bank accounts without any legal reasons. 6 - supporting and guiding CSOs to get rid of the internal dependency of political parties and movements by developing their work method and using advocacy and financing as tools to help in this regard.

In the interviews, persons were asked about their vision of the presence of Syrian organizations in the future, are they emergency case that will all disappear after a while? or ongoing condition?

Everyone agreed that the Syrian CSOs are a continuing and irreplaceable case in the future, and their most important role will be in the future stage in Syria, so the reconstruction stage will not be effective without the presence of these organizations that have worked for many years with the international system and have sufficient flexibility to develop themselves and play an appropriate role, some of them may be subject to the disappearance, but the most significant role of these organizations will be after a political solution. Rehabilitation does not include only the infrastructure, service facilities, and the state sectors, but there is an important part related to the early recovery of civil society itself and to restore this society to its former basic formation by the capability of coexistence under a national umbrella.

After reading the reality and analyzing it, in addition to examining the situation of Syrian organizations internally through interviews, we came to assume four prospective scenarios about Syrian NGOs after linking them to their current reality, internal and external factors that affected or will affect them. These prospective are not necessarily applicable to all organizations, but absolutely they will apply to some, and perhaps the future of some organization's mixture of more than one scenario.

4.7.1 The Four Scenarios

1st Scenario, Terminating and shutting down the organizations:

This model has already taken place several times. When the Syrian regime took control of Daraa, Quneitra, and rural of Damascus, all organizations that were operating were closed for fear of any security pursuit, and the same happened in the areas that are under the control of SDF and later controlled by the Turkish forces. As mentioned previously, a law must be drawn up that neutralize SCOs. At the same time, CSOs must stay apart from political and military movements; in other words, they must practice better the humanitarian principles and codes of conduct which included in their governance systems. It is not only related to the security situation, but the potential political and military changes and the policy of the donors towards the Syrian file will strongly affect the organizations which have limited funding, limited representation, and fewer capabilities. Organizations with less efficiency will lack the funding, and their role will end, especially in the future in the reconstruction stage. There will be no role for organizations that are still working in the emergency response from eight years until today. Also, the nature of the organization itself

will lead to the same result. As some organization's founders considered the work of civil society organizations a commercial opportunity, and they are certain that this opportunity will end later.

One of the most important aspects to be mentioned here is that in order to ensure the survival of the major number of organizations and for the continuation of their human experience and civil experience later. Syrian organizations must exit from the framework of competition and seek long-term integration by merging. This merge will reduce operational expenses and support for experiences exchanging and unify the sources of funding that may become less. Seeking merging is the biggest challenge for Syrian organizations today.

2nd Scenario, transform organizations into INGOs working in global responses:

Since the beginning of the research, I have tried not to place the so-called diaspora organizations in a particular group because I did not find an added value to classify them in a different framework than other Syrian organizations.

Diaspora organizations are metaphorically defined as organizations that have been licensed in countries locations United Stated and Europe and work for the Syrian profile.

They are licensed in Turkey, Lebanon, or Jordan as missions to the main organization, which made me disregarding mentioning them with a particular classification that I did not find a fundamental difference between them and the rest of the Syrian organizations that were registered in Turkey or Jordan or Damascus or the areas of Autonomous Administration control, except that these organizations registered in other countries.

A few of these organizations -Not more than ten- work globally out of the Syrian response, they had a broader vision, and a more coherent strategy started from the principle of the great experience that organizations have gained in the most complicated response in modern history, which is Syria response, that made them eligible to work in other global responses, they have the institutional capacity and a good governance system have made them able to target different responses around the world and work with them very efficiently.

Some organizations that have the same capabilities seek to work in other responses around the world and expand their experience. Still, the largest number of organizations believes that they have found only to work in Syria at all stages of the response and will not think of working in the

future in any other responses, even several organizations working from Turkey and faced fund decreasing over the past years, they have preferred to close the organization and destroy the institutional experiences they have, instead of going to work in other responses around the world.

Organizations that have chosen to work globally will have a more significant impact later because multi global experiences will always lead to creativity, but perhaps they will remain affected by work-related to response and early recovery and will not have a more significant role in later stages in supporting civil society intellectually because this approach needs proximity a permanent from the community with its daily civil life and a pioneer presence at the national level.

3rd Scenario, Transformation to small charities:

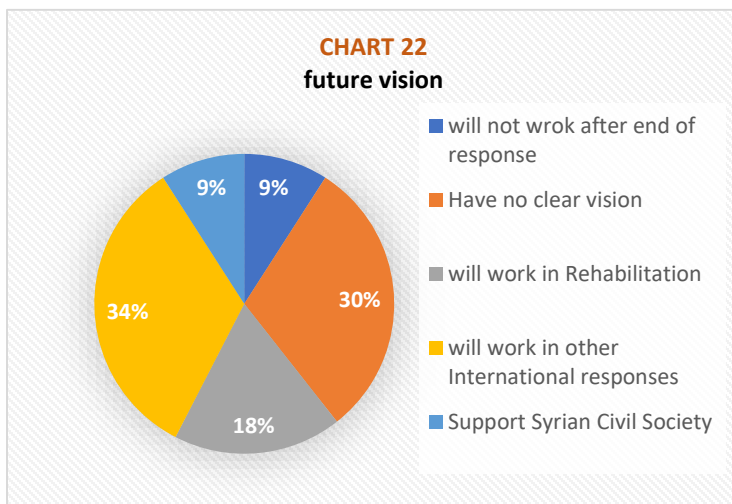
This model already exists and effective; we have been widely discussed in the clauses "the types of Syrian organizations" and "the legal situation" we see this model particularly in areas under regime control and areas controlled by SDF.

More organizations may turn to local initiatives or small charities, especially those that operate from Turkey, if the factors of lack of funding and changing foreign policies of countries meet, regardless of the political solution, this will push the donors to work in a narrow frame with the most experienced and representation Syrian organizations on the international level, and the organizations that have lost their presence will work at the small community level in the cities or rural areas dependent on individual funding based on the link of kin or tribe or different religious and ideology relations, that's mean they will work with the same simple methodology which began in 2011.

4th Scenario: Continuing their work on a national level and supporting civil society:

These organizations that accepted the most challenging bet, and pursuing to be a pioneer part in the second stage of the role of civil society organizations, the post-response stage and entering into the depth of civil society and rehabilitating this society to restore its civil recovery firstly, then to transform society into a more interactive environment at the national level, this model is most difficult one, it will not be achieved unless all the factors and challenges that were explained at the beginning of the clause are considered. Today these organizations have an opportunity and time to overcome the internal challenges mentioned. External challenges are related to international changes that take place outside the frame of these organization's capabilities. It is important to re-

mention that these organizations should develop their governance systems and policies to come out of dependency and achieve their independence that enhances their presence in civil society, in addition to developing their program policies to work more broadly on social cohesion, livelihood, and early recovery projects.



In the survey, we have asked Syrian NGOs how they see their future after ending Syria's response; the answers were a mix of the four scenarios. The NGOs which "have no clear vision" 30% did not determine the expected role by them, as answered that they will work in the same programs in the future or generally answered.

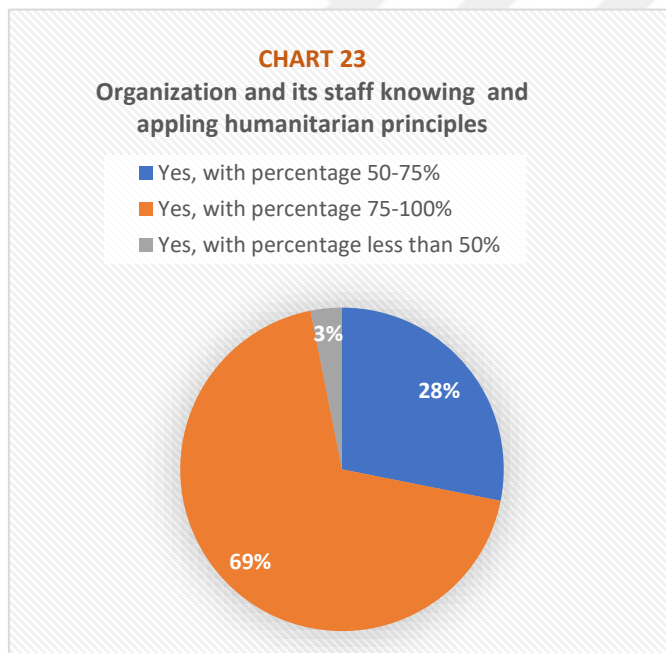
As we said earlier, these four scenarios are prospective not necessarily that one of them is fully applied to all organizations, and one of them may not be applied entirely, but the closest view to the current reality is that the organizations will be divided among all those scenarios in the future.

4.8. Between the Civil Society and Loyalty

The largest number of agencies working in the humanitarian file and the Syrian civil society are directed and lacking neutrality; although everyone claims the commitment of humanitarian principles, this case does apply not only to Syrian organizations, but also to international organizations, UN agencies, and RCRC organizations. We do not deny that some organizations are like INGOs, UN agencies, and RCRC organizations that do not have many options. For example, RCRC organizations run their operations from Damascus till today and suffer from high-security monitoring from the regime's security authorities; INGOs that have operations in NES or NW of Syria are not allowed to be in Damascus. The same pressure suffers for organizations working in the SDF control areas and has missions in Turkey. As for the UN agencies, they are linked to international resolutions and the interests of the UN member states.

This complicated conflict of interests has a negative impact on the Syrian CSOs, especially those working in the humanitarian response now. Although it is not reformable in the near future, but it is important to note that the sensitivity between the formal system itself has generated similar sensitivity among Syrian civil society organizations.

Another factor that has caused sharp harm to Syrian CSOs and has led to an increase in the social rift is the prior loyalty to movements belong to the side against another side; a significant number of CSOs in the regime areas have absolute loyalty to the regime and are benefiting from it do not see the rest of the civilians in Syria, the same vision applies many organizations working in NES Syria see that only civil society is located in the north, and here we have more subdivisions such as the Muslim Brotherhood organizations seeking their own civil society and Salafi and secular movements also see that civil society is the narrow group that belongs to their ideology. Organizations belong to SDF view civil society as the only Kurdish component.



When we asked the Syrian NGOs about how much their staff familiar with the humanitarian principles, all of them claimed good knowledge and applied them. It sounds good that all of our research samples knew the humanitarian principles and try to apply them, but when we look to the bigger image, we can see that Syrian CSOs, especially those working in humanitarian affairs, must reconsider their vision and mission. Everyone wrote wonderful words on profile, but upon the experience, we see that there are

dozens of black looks of civil society, all linked to a vision of other political or military entities. Fewer organizations maintained neutrality, neutrality here is not intended to kill the revolutionary spirit and seeking to change in those organizations and claiming that they should be separate from the popular actions and blind eye of suffering from persecution which Syrian society is exposed everywhere, but neutrality is keeping organizations to maintain their absolute independence and

be the society voice in the face of local and international parties and systems, not an executive tool for their programs for those parties.

4.9. Volunteering

Almost all Syrian organizations have relied on carrying out their work by hired employees. The higher positions have specialized staff, and field positions can be filled with persons with less experience or unspecialized. We have never noticed an interest in strengthening the culture of volunteering in organizations, especially among the youth and adolescents ages, except for some organizations that have long experience in volunteering and mobilizing the capabilities of youth and adolescents such as the SARC and the Scouts of Syria.

The field conditions which faced organizations that grew after 2011 imposed them to spend full time to implement activities and projects; that's why they did not pay attention to the important role of volunteers. The culture of volunteering leads to greater involvement of the organization in civil society by the existence of active teams from the community itself within the team of the organization; these young teams have creative ideas and will have a more fruitful role if they are contained in an institutional frame and develop their creative ideas that are always out of the box and daily routine of projects of the organization. Moreover, building civil society and institutional education is more effective in the age of youth and will achieve tangible results when these youth become active people in their societies. Also, encouraging volunteering and taking advantage of the energies of youth can protect them from engaging in extremist movements in the future through enhancing their understanding of civil society by their own experience.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

This research paper has sought to shed light on the Syrian NGOs and know the temporal and spatial background that affected these organizations' formation, which will affect their reconfiguration in the future. We interpreted and interrupted the primary inputs that were raised in the research questions, variables, and hypotheses with the outputs that were reached through research study and field study. After comparison and analysis, we concluded the results that make us see clearly the role played by the Syrian NGOs and their relationship with the Syrian civil society.

To obtain a more comprehensive view of the study, we needed to link a lot of integrated basic concepts related to the research, which are: definitions of civil society, the history of modern civil work, the role and mission of civil society organizations working in relief. Then these concepts were projected on the Syrian case according to historical, societal, and field contexts in the last two centuries by a chronology to going to the essence of the study, which is the role of Syrian civil society organizations after 2011, by linking previous contexts of Syrian case with the basic theoretical concepts mentioned above.

By reviewing the reality of the Syrian CSOs working in the humanitarian affairs (NGOs), a number of facts and recommendations have been reached that can help the stakeholders interested in developing the Syrian civil society, whether they are from the organizations themselves or external parties, so we have focused in the study on two critical factors, The internal factor related to organizations and their internal structure, and the external factor associated with the local and international influences on the role of these organizations, this was done by analyzing the reality of organizations by crossing the internal view of these organizations with the external view of international donors and partners.

Accordingly, it was concluded that: the role of the Syrian NGOs has been linked to a massive number of internal and external influences locally and internationally. Additionally, the political, historical, military, legal, and international difficulties and the accompanying poor humanitarian

situation of civilians in Syria or those displaced outside it and the classification of the humanitarian crisis in Syria as the worst in the world and the Syria response the most complicated.

These effects can be summarized into groups as follows:

- 1- Historical influences: Syria has lacked the role of CSOs for more than half a century, and this has made building these institutions within a few months after 2011 a challenging issue and a real challenge for civil society itself.
- 2- Humanitarian and field influences: The sudden acceleration and changing of humanitarian needs greatly affected the functions, patterns, and objectives of Syrian NGOs, which make them achieve a better experience in implementation and less success in an institutional building.
- 3- Conflict of interests: By the INGOs that seek to preserve their role in the Syrian response and have the ability to persuade the donors of the importance of their existence and supported by the international community them, despite the fact that the Syrian NGOs have the ability to implement an integrated response at an effective level and they are always pursuing difficulty to take their real leadership role.
- 4- Military influences: It is represented in dividing the response in Syria into changing parts according to the military control of a region. In 2020, we have areas controlled by the regime and its allies Russia and Iran, areas controlled by SDF, areas controlled by HTS, and other factions of the National Army and areas Controlled by Turkey. All of these conflicting forces place their own conditions and limitations on humanitarian action.
- 5- Political influences: They are two types: 1- Foreign policy is linked to the interests of states that play a role in the Syrian file politically and militarily and their attempt to direct the humanitarian file in accordance with their foreign policy. This direction will show its impact further in the reconstruction phase. 2- As for internal politics, they are linked to the loyalty of Syrian NGOs, their dependence on various parties, political, or ideological movements, and the transform their humanitarian actions into achievements by these movements and parties.
- 6- Societal Influences: Most organizations have worked in local communities that they are religiously, socially, or relatively linked to which organizations achieve good community acceptance in the near term.

Finally, the Syrian CSOs unique experience that was an impossible popular and community dream for decades under Syrian regime control. Peaceful protests granted legitimacy to them at the societal level is what mainly facilitated its reestablishment in Syria after 2011. Most of these organizations worked in the humanitarian response and achieved a high level of success in facing the needs of the affected Syrian society. Decision-makers of these NGOs should realize that these organizations are an important part of the Syrian CSOs and they are the only actors in Syria that have been able to remain stable and have proven their ability to succeed, unlike the political and military actors that have failed at the national level with all their affiliation.

These organizations are the result of years of work, and it is the duty of Syrians to preserve them and keep them neutral from any military or political loyalty. These organizations should work to neutralize themselves from any domination by a local or international entity and draw their vision of an integrated Syrian civil society, look to the all Syrian civil society in the same eye and same level, and keep away from working in the future for a favorite area or a favorite civil group instead of another. They should struggle to have the most significant role in the reconstruction phase in Syria in order to aspire to see an integrated Syrian civil society.

In this regard, we believe that the most important recommendations for Syrian NGOs in order to achieve the correct national vision are:

- 1- Searching for multiple funding sources and relying on income-generating projects to have financial independence in the future.
- 2- Working on strategic alliances and merging between Syrian NGOs in order to protect small organizations from collapse and reducing administrative expenses in the case of lacking funds.
- 3- Restructuring the organizations from the top (at the senior management level) and activating a significant role for the BODs and BOTs through applying and developing governance systems.
- 4- Developing strategies that are applicable at the national level for the next stage, especially if conflict resolution appeared and the early recovery started.
- 5- Coordinate at the national and international levels in order to give a consistent legal status that protects Syrian NGOs.
- 6- Being free and independent from the control of political parties and the military groups and showing loyalty only to civil society.

- 7- Activating volunteering, especially for youth and adolescents, and qualifying these young for a better civilian life by contacting them directly with their local communities.



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ANNEXES

Annex A

Syrian Humanitarian Non-Governmental Organization Platform
UNOCHA, Turkey May 2019



Syrian Humanitarian Non-Governmental Organization Platform

1. Why be a member of the platform?

Through the Syrian Humanitarian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Platform, UNOCHA Turkey supports Syrian Humanitarian NGOs to:

- engage in international coordination mechanisms (including clusters);
- participate in inter-agency exercises (such as needs assessments, response plans etc...);
- participate in advocacy activities led by the humanitarian community at the Turkey hub;
- network with INGOs, UN agencies, donors, and other international organizations/bodies;
- receive information on funding opportunities, call for proposals, training opportunities, meetings with decision makers etc...; and
- benefit from capacity development opportunities.

2. Eligibility conditions

a. Membership criteria

The platform members are a/individual organizations and b/coordination bodies.

All members (individual organizations and coordination bodies) of the Syrian Humanitarian NGO Platform are Syrian humanitarian NGOs¹ that implement activities in Syria. These organizations are by definition non-governmental, non-political and non-military.

In addition, to be classified as a coordination body, all the following criteria must be filled:

- Existence of an organizational structure (General Assembly, Board of Directors/ Steering Committee and Executive Office/ Secretariat) formalized through ToRs;
- At least one of the coordinating functions (see application form) is performed by the coordination body;
- The Board of Directors/ Steering Committee should be composed of Syrian humanitarian NGOs that are all non-governmental, non-political and non-military and at least two third of them should be members of the Syrian Humanitarian NGO Platform;

¹ **A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)** is a “private organization that pursues activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development” (World Bank). “NGOs, both national and international, are constituted separately from the government of the country in which they are founded” (IFRC and ICRC).

A humanitarian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is an NGO whose mandate is focused on humanitarian action. “Humanitarian action comprises assistance, protection and advocacy in response to humanitarian needs resulting from natural hazards, armed conflict or other causes, or emergency response preparedness. It aims to save lives and reduce suffering in the short term, and in such a way as to preserve people’s dignity and open the way to recovery and durable solutions to displacement. Humanitarian action is based on the premise that human suffering should be prevented and alleviated wherever it happens-referred to as the “humanitarian imperative”. While each humanitarian organization may subscribe to a broader set, there are four core and widely accepted humanitarian principles that guide humanitarian action: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence” (IASC).

A Syrian humanitarian Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is a humanitarian non-for-profit NGO established inside or outside Syria for the purpose of undertaking humanitarian activities exclusively in Syria and/or in support to Syrian communities within the MENA region or abroad; and whose Board of Directors is composed of at least 50% Syrian nationals and whose Chairman is a Syrian national. Place of NGO registration is not a factor in this definition (UNOCHA Turkey).

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- All the coordination body organizations members should be non-governmental, non-political and non-military and at least half of them should be members of the Syrian Humanitarian NGO Platform; and
- All together the member organizations of the coordination body should implement activities in at least 5 governorates and/or in at least 5 sectors.

b. Commitments by Members

All Syrian CSO Platform members (individual organizations and coordination bodies) are requested to demonstrate, in all relevant situations, a commitment to:

2. Humanitarian principles as prescribed in the Joint Operating Principles and the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief.
3. Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse as guided by the Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel.
4. Quality and accountability in humanitarian action, including use of the Sphere Humanitarian Charter, the Humanitarian Standards Partnerships (HSP) and the Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS).
5. Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), a Convention concerning the minimum age for admission to employment. This Convention is enforce since June 1976, and Syria ratified it in September 2001, specifying that the minimum age is 15

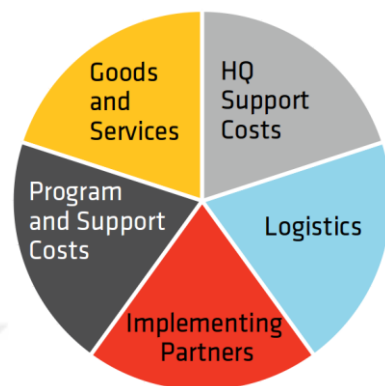
[N.B.: Should OCHA become aware of a possible breach of any one of these Commitments, OCHA reserves the right to remove the offending organization from the Syrian Humanitarian NGO Platform.]

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Annex B

Methodology - Breaking down humanitarian spending

Based on the idea of considering the full cost of a humanitarian operation of a particular organization, its total expenditure is considered and divided into non-country expenditure and country expenditure. Based on the relative size of the country program the relevant share of the non-country expenditure is considered and henceforth referred to as HQ support cost (often called overhead costs or indirect support cost). These HQ support cost include costs of regional offices, headquarters, global expenses such as fund-raising, global management, research, advocacy, media and public relation etc. all of which cannot be and/ or are not ascribed to expenses of a particular country program. Expenses of a humanitarian agency are therefore either expenditures for HQ support or country expenditures and the sum of all the country expenditures and the HQ support costs makes up the total expenditure of that particular agency's country program. This approach ensures that there are no hidden costs. Note that HQ support costs are usually a fixed percentage of a country's operational costs, however UNICEF and UNHCR also use other funds to cover additional HQ expenditures. Once the percentage of the **HQ support** cost is calculated, the country program expenditures are divided into several categories, as depicted: One category for **procurement of goods and services** that go directly to the end-user such as NFI, food and expenses for WASH projects. In addition, **logistics costs** are incurred, for the delivery and transportation of goods. Another category captures transfers to **implementing partners**, which can include cost they incur for distribution of relief items, running their offices etc and costs for partner procurement. Expenditures for salaries, IT equipment and communications, office rent, printing etc. are categorized as **program and support cost**. In some cases it is difficult to distinguish whether procurement should be ascribed to the end-user distributable procurement or to program and support cost. However, these uncertain cases are only minor and have limited impact on the final outcome of the calculations. While data on expenses presented in the annual reports of the various agencies and organizations are done rather differently and often less than- fully-transparent ways, this way of categorizing and dividing expenses ensures that the analysis can be applied to different organization.



Annex C

Questionnaire Questions

<p>Hello, my name is Rami Rajjoub.</p> <p>I am a master's student in the International Relations Department at the Kalyocu University in Turkey.</p> <p>I am working on academic research about the role of Syrian civil society organizations that have worked for the humanitarian response since 2011 and the impact of these organizations on civil society and their organizational ability to respond in the future and continue working as an important part of Syrian civil society.</p> <p>The goal of the research is purely academic, and the aim of this questionnaire is to investigate the scientific and professional accuracy of the research through the real actors in the field of work.</p> <p>Please help me in completing the following questionnaire, knowing that the institutions will not be mentioned in the research paper (unless the institution and the person want it). Just we will limit ourselves to analyzing the information and presenting it as data and results.</p> <p>The duration of the questionnaire is about 20 minutes thanks in advance for your support.</p> <p>Rami</p>	<p>مرحبا ، اسمي رامي رحوب.</p> <p>أنا طالب ماجستير قسم العلاقات الدولية في جامعة كلينجو بتركيا.</p> <p>أعمل على بحث أكاديمي عن دور منظمات المجتمع المدني السورية التي عملت للاستجابة الإنسانية منذ عام 2011 وأثر هذه المنظمات في المجتمع المدني وقدرتها التنظيمية على الاستجابة والاستمرارية مستقبلا كجزء مهم من المجتمع المدني السوري.</p> <p>هدف البحث أكاديمي بحت والهدف من هذا الاستبيان هو لتحري الدقة العلمية والمهنية في البحث من خلال الفاعلين الحقيقيين في ميدان العمل.</p> <p>أرجوا منكم مساعدتي في إتمام الاستبيان التالي علما أنه لن يتم ذكر المؤسسات في ورقة البحث (إلا في حال رغبة المؤسسة والشخص بذلك). وإنما سنكتفي بتحليل المعلومات وعرضها كبيانات ونتائج.</p> <p>مدة الاستبيان حوالي 20 دقيقة.</p> <p>شكرا مقدما لدعمكم.</p> <p>رامي</p>
General information	معلومات أساسية
Name of NGO	اسم المنظمة
Name of person fill survey	الشخص الذي يملأ الاستبيان

Position	المنصب الوظيفي
email	البريد الالكتروني
Mobile	رقم الهاتف
Would you like to add your name and info in the research paper?	هل ترغب بمشاركة اسمك معلوماتك الشخصية في ورقة البحث؟
Yes/ no	نعم \ لا
Establishing	التأسيس
Date of establishing NGO	تاريخ تأسيس المنظمة
Before 2011 (specify) / 2011/ 2012 / 2013/ 2014 /2015	قبل 2011 (حدد) \ 2011\2012\2013\2014\2015
Date of starting work of NGO	تاريخ بداية عمل المؤسسة
2015\ 2014\2013\2012\2011	2015\ 2014\2013\2012\2011
County(s) of registration	بلد أو بلدان الترخيص
Narrative	نص
Overview about reason and goal of establishing	لمحة عامة عن أسباب تأسيس المنظمة وهدف التأسيس
Narrative	نص
Mission and Vision	المهمة والرسالة
Does the organization have a clear and agreed mission/vision?	هل لدى المنظمة مهمة ورسالة واضحة متفق عليها؟
Yes, and it is applied totally	نعم وهي مطبقة كلياً
Yes, and It is applied partially	نعم وهي مطبقة جزئياً
No	لا
Does current programming and approach reflect this mission/vision?	هل البرامج الحالية تعكس المهمة والرسالة؟
Yes, with percentage 75-100%	نعم بنسبة 75-100%
Yes, with percentage 50-75%	نعم بنسبة 50-75%
Yes, with percentage less than 50%	نعم بنسبة أقل من 50%
No	لا
Structures and Governance	الهيكل والحوكمة
Does NGO has a proper governance structures and clearly established policies and management procedures in place, for example having a written code of conduct that covers the prevention of all forms of harassment, fraud and corruption, conflict of interest, and unethical business practices.	هل لدى المنظمة هيكل حوكمة مناسبة وسياسات وإجراءات إدارية محددة بوضوح، على سبيل المثال: لديها مدونة سلوك مكتوبة تغطي منع جميع أشكال المضايقة والاحتيال والفساد وتضارب المصالح والممارسات التجارية غير الأخلاقية.

Yes , and it is applied totally Yes, and It is applied partially No	نعم وهي مطبقة كلياً نعم وهي مطبقة جزئياً لا
Does the organization have a clear organizational structure?	هل لدى منظمتم هيكلية مؤسسية واضحة؟
Yes, and it is applied totally Yes, and It is applied partially No	نعم وهي مطبقة كلياً نعم وهي مطبقة جزئياً لا
How did those structures and policies developed?	كيف تم تطوير هذه الهياكل والسياسات؟
Narrative	نص
Does the organization and its staff know and apply the humanitarian principles?	الإنسانية؟ هل المنظمة والموظفون على دراية ويطبقون المبادئ
Yes, with percentage 75-100% Yes, with percentage 50-75% Yes, with percentage less than 50% No	نعم بنسبة 100-75 % نعم بنسبة 75-50 % نعم بنسبة أقل من 50% لا
Is your organization and its services are known and trusted by the communities where exist?	هل منظمتم وخدماتها معروفة وموثوق بها من قبل المجتمعات المتواجدة فيه؟
Yes, from most of communities Yes, from some of communities No	نعم من معظم المجتمعات نعم من بعض المجتمعات لا
Does the organization have an advisory board or external governing body which supervises management and takes responsibility for the actions of the NGO?	هل تملك منظمتم مجلس استشاري أو هيئة استشارية خارجية تحكم و تشرف على الإدارة وتأخذ المسؤولية عن تصرفات المنظمة؟
Yes, and it is totally effective Yes, and it is partially effective Yes, but ineffective do not have	نعم وهو فعال كلياً نعم وهو فعال جزئياً نعم ولكن غير فعال لا تملك
Does the organization have open communication among staff members and between staff and management?	هل منظمتم تتقبل وتقوم بتطبيق الاتصال المفتوح (الصريح) بين الموظفين فيما بينهم ، وبين الموظفين والإدارة؟
Yes, with percentage 75-100% Yes, with percentage 50-75% Yes, with percentage less than 50% No	نعم بنسبة 100-75 % نعم بنسبة 75-50 % نعم بنسبة أقل من 50% لا
Coordination and commination	التنسيق والتواصل

How does your organization interact with the local authorities?	كيف تتفاعل مؤسستك مع السلطة المحلية؟
Text	نص
How does the organization coordinate externally with other actors, at the national or local level?	كيف تتسق المنظمة خارجيا مع الجهات الفاعلة الأخرى، على المستوى الوطني أو المحلي؟
Text	نص
Does your organization a member in another bigger local coordination and organizational bodies? If yes please specify?	هل منظمك عضو في جهات تنسيقية وتنظيمية أكبر محلية؟ إذا كان نعم يرجى ذكرها
Text	نص
Does your NGO is committed to sharing information and having continuous communication with beneficiaries and community leaders including needs assessment results, project objectives, beneficiaries' rights, criteria for selecting target groups. etc.	هل تلتزم منظمك بمشاركة المعلومات والتواصل المستمر مع المستفيدين وقادة المجتمع، مثل نتائج تقييم الاحتياجات، وأهداف المشروع وحقوق المستفيدين، ومعايير اختيار الفئات المستهدفة...
Yes, with percentage 75-100%	نعم بنسبة 75-100%
Yes, with percentage 50-75%	نعم بنسبة 50-75%
Yes, with percentage less than 50%	نعم بنسبة أقل من 50%
No	لا
Does your NGO frequently enhance coordination and complementary responses with partner organizations and other NGOs in the same sector, constantly attends sector meetings,	هل تعمل منظمك بشكل متكرر على تحسين التنسيق والاستجابة الكاملة مع المنظمات الشريكة وغيرها من المنظمات غير الحكومية في نفس قطاع العمل، وتحضر باستمرار اجتماعات القطاع،
Yes, with percentage 75-100%	نعم بنسبة 75-100%
Yes, with percentage 50-75%	نعم بنسبة 50-75%
Yes, with percentage less than 50%	نعم بنسبة أقل من 50%
No	لا
Does your NGO has a robust and clear accountability system in place, i.e. accountability towards donors accountability towards beneficiaries and communities, accountability towards partner organizations and other NGOs, and accountability towards its staff	هل لدى منظمك نظام مساءلة قوي وواضح، أي المسائلة تجاه المانحين (يمكن أن يكون المانحون من الحكومات أو المنظمات غير الحكومية الدولية أو غيرها من المنظمات غير الحكومية) والمسائلة تجاه المستفيدين والمجتمعات المحلية والمسائلة تجاه المنظمات الشريكة وغيرها من المنظمات غير الحكومية والمسائلة تجاه
Yes, and it is totally effective	نعم وهو فعال كلياً
Yes, and it is partially effective	نعم وهو فعال جزئياً

Yes, but ineffective do not have	نعم ولكن غير فعال لا تملك
Finance and Grants	مالية ومنح
does your organization have financial controls in place to ensure the safeguarding of funds? Do the staff apply them?	هل هناك ضوابط مالية معمول بها لضمان إنفاق الأموال بشكل مناسب وبما يتفق مع اللوائح المانحة؟ هل هي مطبقة من قبل الكادر؟
Yes, and they are applied totally Yes, and they are applied partially No	نعم وهي مطبقة كلياً نعم وهي مطبقة جزئياً لا
Are administrative management systems that protect against fraud documented, comply with donor regulations and local laws, and it is understood within your organization? e.g. Logistics/Procurement, Finance, Human Resources?	هل نظم الشؤون الإدارية التي تعمل على الحماية ضد الاحتيال موثقة، وتمتلك (تطابق) للوائح المانحين والقوانين المحلية، وهي مفهومة داخل مؤسستك؟ مثلاً الخدمات اللوجستية / المشتريات، والمالية، والموارد البشرية؟
Yes, with percentage 75-100% Yes, with percentage 50-75% Yes, with percentage less than 50% No	نعم بنسبة 75-100% نعم بنسبة 50-75% نعم بنسبة أقل من 50% لا
What is the current annual budget?	ما هي الميزانية السنوية الحالية؟
One million to five million dollars Five million to twenty million dollars More than twenty million countries	مليون لخمسة ملايين دولار خمسة ملايين لعشرين مليون دولار أكثر من عشرين مليون دولار
Does the organization have an annual operating budget, which includes all expenses and revenue/income sources for all programs?	هل عند المؤسسة ميزانية تشغيل سنوية، والتي تشمل جميع المصاريف ومصادر الإيرادات / الدخل لجميع البرامج؟
Yes No	نعم لا
Are donor/partner reports reviewed internally by Senior Management prior to submission?	هل يتم مراجعة تقارير الشركاء/الممولين من قبل الإدارة العليا قبل الإرسال؟
Yes No	نعم لا
Does the organization have master budget?	هل لدى المنظمة موازنة رئيسية سنوية؟
Yes No	نعم لا
What the preferred donation Style of your NGO,	ما هو أسلوب المنح المفضل لمنظمتكم؟
service contract	عقد خدمي

Partnership	شراكات
Framework	إطار عمل
other? please explain (text)	غيرها مع التوضيح (نص) *
Strategy , Programs, Projects	الاستراتيجية ، المشاريع، البرامج
Does the organization's programming changed over the last 12 months? If yes, so how?	هل تغيرت برامج المنظمة خلال 12 شهرا الفائتة؟ لو نعم كيف تم؟
No	لا
Yes (Text)	نعم (نص)
Does the organization have a clear program strategy for the next 12 months?	هل عند المنظمة استراتيجية برامج واضحة للأشهر ال 12 القادمة؟
Yes	نعم
No	لا
Does the organization have a clear idea of how programming would be adapted to meet a changing situation and needs?	هل لدى المنظمة فكرة واضحة عن الطريقة التي سيتم بها تكيف البرامج بحيث تلي الوضع المتغير والاحتياجات؟
Yes	نعم
No	لا
Does the project write by your NGO or by donor?	هل يتم كتابة المشروع من قبلكم أم من قبل الممول؟
By Us	من قبلنا
By Donor with contribution from us	من الممول بمشاركتنا
By Donor	من الممول
Does your NGO sends comprehensive reports to donors regularly, is transparent, and frequently meets and communicates with donors?	هل ترسل منظماتكم تقارير شاملة إلى الجهات المانحة بانتظام، وتتسم بالشفافية، و تجتمع وتتواصل مع المانحين بشكل دوري؟
Yes Regularly	نعم بانتظام
Yes irregularly	نعم بشكل غير منتظم
No	لا
Is implementation tracked against workplans?	هل التنفيذ المتبع يعاكس خطط العمل؟
No	لا
It is changeable	يتغير أحيانا
Always changing	يتغير دائما
Is there a procedure to address slow implementation and low budget spending and/or overspending?	هل هناك إجراءات لمعالجة بطء التنفيذ وإنفاق الميزانية المنخفض و / أو الإسراف في الانفاق؟

Yes, and it is applied totally	نعم وهي مطبقة كلياً
Yes, and it is applied partially	نعم وهي مطبقة جزئياً
No	لا
How do you rate your organization's ability to track implementation overall?	كيف تقييم قدرة مؤسستك على تتابع التنفيذ بشكل عام؟
Perfect	ممتازة
Good	جيدة
Medium	متوسطة
Unsatisfied	غير راضي
Do you think that your organization should continue its work after ending of the Syria response in the future If yes, please explain the expected role	هل ترى أن مؤسستك يجب أن تستمر بعملها بعد انتهاء الاستجابة لسوريا مستقبلاً إذا كان نعم ، يرجى توضيح الدور المتوقع
Text	نص

Annex D

Interview questions

First: Interview questions for international organizations and United Nations agencies

- Did you work in Syria before 2011?
- Which areas did you work in? regime-controlled areas or opposition? which hub?
- How do you define Syrian civil society organizations generally in terms of attendance and efficiency?
- If I worked from several hubs, can you identify the fundamental differences between the old organizations present in Syria, such as the Red Crescent, society charities, and newly born or emerging organizations?
- How do you see the future of new humanitarian organizations that have worked since 2011?
- What are the most important strengths and weaknesses of these organizations?
- Do you think these organizations have governance systems and structures that make them an international NGO in the future? or are they still small community-based organizations?
- What is your agency's preferred working mechanism for working with Syrian organizations, partners, service providers or another approach?
- Do you prefer the participation of local organizations by writing project proposals and participation at all stages, or do you think that this burden can be shortened? and have these NGOs become able to write projects that can be classified in an excellent degree in terms of quality and achievement of standards?
- Is the largest accreditation for needs assessment done through coordination with local partners or through periodic reports 3RP, HRP?
- Do you think that international decisions will negatively affect the work of organizations?
- What are the main areas or gaps that local organizations need to improve?
- In your opinion, if we wanted to specify the types of Syrian organizations working on Syrian affairs, how do you see their classification and division? According to its legal framework, or the amount of work or integration with international mechanisms such as clusters and others? Or another classification? please explanation.
- Is it possible to dispense with local organizations in this phase?
- What are the criteria that can separate the (local organization - local society charity)?
- Can we say that Syrian NGOs could be an important part of civil society in the future or they may disappear at the end of response?

أولاً: أسئلة مقابلات المنظمات الدولية ووكالات الأمم المتحدة

- هل عملت في سوريا قبل 2011؟

- أي المناطق عملت بها؟ الخاضعة لسلطة النظام أم لسلطة المعارضة؟ وعن طريق أي منفذ؟
- كيف تعرّف منظمات المجتمع المدني عموماً في سوريا من حيث الحضور والكفاءة؟
- في حال عملت للاستجابة من عدة منافع، هل يمكن أن تحدد لي الفروق الجوهرية بين المنظمات القديمة المتواجدة في سوريا مثل الهلال الأحمر والجمعيات الأهلية والمنظمات التي ولدت أو ظهرت حديثاً؟
- كيف ترى مستقبل المنظمات الإنسانية الجديدة التي عملت منذ 2011؟
- ماهي أهم نقاط قوة هذه المنظمات ونقاط ضعفها؟
- هل براكيت تمتلك هذه المنظمات أنظمة حوكمة وهياكل تجعل منها مؤسسة دولية في المستقبل أم أنها بحجم مؤسسة مجتمعية صغيرة؟
- ماهي آلية العمل المفضلة لوكالتكم للعمل مع المنظمات السورية، شركاء، مقدمي خدمات أم نهج آخر؟
- هل تفضل مشاركة المنظمات المحلية بكتابة مقترحات المشاريع والمشاركة بكل مراحلها أم ترى أن هذا عبء يمكن اختصاره، وهل أصبحت هذه المؤسسات تمتلك القدرة على كتابة مشاريع يمكن تصنيفها بدرجة الممتازة من حيث الجودة وتحقيق المعايير؟
- هل الاعتماد الأكبر لتقييم الاحتياجات يكون عبر التنسيق مع الشركاء المحليين أم من خلال التقارير الدورية، 3RP، ... HRP؟
- هل ترى أن القرارات الدولية سوف تؤثر سلباً على عمل المنظمات؟
- ما هي المجالات الأساسية أو الثغرات التي تحتاج المنظمات المحلية لتحسينها؟
- برأيك لو أردنا تحديد أنواع للمنظمات السورية العاملة بالشأن السوري كيف ترى تصنيفها وتقسيمها؟ وفق الإطار القانوني لها أم حجم العمل أو الاندماج مع الآليات الدولية كالقطاعات وغيرها؟ أم تصنيف آخر؟ مع الشرح
- هل يمكن حالياً الاستغناء عن المنظمات المحلية
- ما هي المعايير التي يمكن أن تفصل بين (المنظمة المحلية - الجمعية المحلية الأهلية)
- هل يمكن القول إن المنظمات غير الحكومية السورية يمكن أن تكون جزءاً مهماً من المجتمع المدني في المستقبل أو قد تختفي في نهاية الاستجابة؟

Second: Local organizations interview questions

- When was the organization founded, how was it founded, and why?
- Did the organization have a clear and strategic vision in the establishment phase, or was this done over time?
- How were the organization's policies and structures developed?
- Does the NGO have an implemented strategy with precision and renewable or the type of response and the changes in the field prevent this?
- Is the organization licensed (registered)? where? and what is the goal or registration?
- Do you consider the presence (establishing) of your organization as a temporary situation that will end in the event of a political or field change?
- Does the most team of your NGO are specialists persons? and they have experience in the humanitarian field? or they came from other fields of work who will return to their fields if they have the opportunity to do so?
- Does the organization prefer to engage in the approach of the work of international organizations or develop its own field-based approach?
- Do you find it difficult to deal with the international system and its mechanisms?
- Do you think that the official system helped to support and develop Syrian organizations?

- What is the best mechanism for you in terms of work, regardless of financial size, service contracts or partnerships?
- Do you think that the organization sometimes falls under the problem of the requirements of the donor or the international partner, although it is not logical and how is it dealt with?
- Has the organization taken direct financing from governments or international donors, or it just depends on partnerships with international organizations?
- Do you have a current vision or general idea to move from responding to early recovery?
- What are the main criteria that can separate and identify the difference between (local organization - society charity) ?
- Do you have a vision to work in other contexts in other countries and different responses?
- How do you see the future of Syrian civil society organizations in general?

ثانياً: أسئلة مقابلات المنظمات المحلية

- متى تأسست المنظمة وكيف كانت ظروف تأسيسها؟
- هل امتلكت المنظمة رؤية واضحة واستراتيجية في مرحلة التأسيس أم تم ذلك عبر الوقت؟
- كيف تم تطوير سياسات و هيكل المؤسسة؟
- هل لدى المؤسسة استراتيجية مطبقة بدقة ومتجددة أم سرعة الاستجابة وتغيرها تمنع ذلك؟
- كيف وأين تم ترخيص المنظمة وما الهدف من ذلك ؟
- هل تعتبر وجود منظماتكم حالة مؤقتة سوف تنتهي في حال تغيير سياسي أو ميداني؟
- الكوادر العاملة في المؤسسة هل معظمهم من التخصصيين ام هم أشخاص قادمين من مجالات عمل أخرى سوف يعودون لمجالاتهم في حال لديهم الفرصة لذلك؟
- هل تفضل المنظمة الانخراط بنهج عمل المنظمات الدولية أو تطوير نهجها الخاص القائم على الحاجة الميدانية؟
- هل تجدون صعوبة بالتعامل مع النظام الدولي وآلياته؟
- هل ترى أن النظام الرسمي العالمي للمؤسسات الإنسانية ساعد في دعم وتطوير المنظمات السورية؟
- ما هي الآلية الأفضل لكم من حيث العمل بغض النظر عن الحجم المالي، عقود خدمية ام شراكات؟
- هل ترى أن المنظمة تقع أحيانا تحت مشكلة متطلبات المانح أو الشريك الدولي رغم انها غير منطقية وكيف يتم التعامل معها؟
- هل اخذت المؤسسة تمويل مباشر من حكومات أو ممولين دوليين أم تعتمد على الشراكات مع المنظمات الدولية؟
- هل لديكم تصور أو رؤية حالية للانتقال من الاستجابة للتعافي المبكر؟
- ما هي المعايير التي يمكن أن تفصل بين (المنظمة المحلية - الجمعية المحلية)
- هل لديكم رؤية للعمل في سياقات أخرى في دول واستجابات ثانية؟
- ما مستقبل منظمات المجتمع المدني السوري بشكل عام برأيك؟

OCHA on Message:
Humanitarian Principles

What are Humanitarian Principles?

All OCHA activities are guided by the four humanitarian principles: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. These principles provide the

foundations for humanitarian action. They are central to establishing and maintaining access to affected people, whether in a natural disaster or a complex emergency, such as armed conflict.

Promoting and ensuring compliance with the principles are essential elements of effective humanitarian coordination.

Origins and implementation

The humanitarian principles are derived from the core principles, which have long guided the work of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the national Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies.¹

The principles' centrality to the work of OCHA and other humanitarian organizations is formally enshrined in two General Assembly resolutions. The first three principles (humanity, neutrality and impartiality) are endorsed in General Assembly resolution 48/182, which was adopted in 1991. This resolution also

established the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC). General Assembly resolution 58/114 (2004) added independence as a fourth key principle underlying humanitarian action. The General Assembly has repeatedly reaffirmed the importance of promoting and respecting these principles within the framework of humanitarian assistance.

Commitment to the principles has also been expressed at an institutional level by many humanitarian organizations. Of particular note is the Code of Conduct

for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and non-governmental organizations in disaster relief. The code provides a set of common standards for organizations involved in humanitarian activities, including a commitment to adhere to the humanitarian principles. More than 492 organizations have signed the Code of Conduct.² Also of note is the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response elaborated by the Sphere Project.³

Humanity	Neutrality	Impartiality	Independence
Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.	Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.	Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.	Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

¹ These are humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. See the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, proclaimed in Vienna in 1965 by the 20th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

² The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct includes principles beyond the core four principles endorsed by the General Assembly. In addition, humanitarian organizations may find that some of these additional principles have particular meaning in certain contexts (for example, "participation" is often cited as an important humanitarian principle). Conceptually, many other principles can be linked back to the four endorsed by the General Assembly.

³ See: www.sphereproject.org/handbook/



“The moral authority of the United Nations depends on its ability to help people most in need, and it must do so with the highest ethical standards and professionalism.”

- Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, May 2006

The humanitarian principles have practical operational relevance. Humanitarian action almost always takes place in complex political and militarized environments. Adherence to the principles is therefore critical in order to distinguish humanitarian action from the activities and objectives of political, military and other actors. Promoting

humanitarian principles and, importantly, ensuring that humanitarian organizations act in accordance with them are key to gaining acceptance by all relevant actors on the ground for humanitarian action to be carried out. This acceptance is critical to ensuring humanitarian personnel have safe and sustained access to affected people.

Sustained access is, in turn, crucial for strengthening the implementation of the humanitarian principles. For example, it allows humanitarian actors to directly undertake and monitor the distribution of assistance to people, thus ensuring that aid is distributed impartially and reaches those most in need.

What is OCHA's role?

OCHA's mission is to mobilize and coordinate principled humanitarian action. OCHA promotes the humanitarian community's compliance with humanitarian principles in

every humanitarian response. It does this by promoting practical compliance measures within a Humanitarian Country Team through its engagement with State and

non-state actors at all levels, and by undertaking and contributing to policy development within the United Nations.

What does OCHA say?

1. Humanitarian principles govern humanitarian actors' conduct.

2. Humanitarian actors must engage in dialogue with all parties to conflict for strictly humanitarian purposes. This includes ongoing liaison and negotiation with non-state armed groups.

3. Our compliance with humanitarian principles affects our credibility, and therefore our ability to enter into negotiations with relevant actors and establish safe access to affected people. However, it is not enough to repeatedly recite humanitarian principles. Rhetoric must be matched by leadership and practice. In other words, humanitarian actors must "walk the talk".

4. There are multiple pressures on humanitarian actors to compromise humanitarian principles, such as providing humanitarian aid as part of efforts to achieve political ends. Maintaining principled humanitarian action in the face of these pressures is an essential task, but not an easy one.

To find out more

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- United Nations resolution 46/182: www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r182.htm
- The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct: www.ifrc.org

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OCHA on Message is a reference product that enables staff to communicate OCHA's position on key issues. For more information contact the Reporting Unit at ochareporting@un.org.