



LIBYA CIVIL SOCIETY MAPPING

Prepared by Altai Consulting for SJD | Libya – December 2015

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Marie-Cecile Darne under the supervision of Adrian Carriere (Altai Consulting). Field research was conducted by Istishari Research and Consulting, Altai's Libyan partner.

Altai Consulting is grateful to the many stakeholders and members of civil society organizations who kindly offered their opinions and informed these findings.

ALTAI CONSULTING

Altai Consulting provides strategy consulting and research services to private companies, governments and public institutions in developing countries.

Altai teams operate in more than 25 countries in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. Since its inception 10 years ago, Altai Consulting has developed a strong focus on governance and civil society related research and program evaluations.

Contact Details:

Marie-Cecile Darne (Project Manager): mcdarne@altaiconsulting.com

Adrian Carriere (Project Director): acarriere@altaiconsulting.com

Eric Davin (Altai Partner): edavin@altaiconsulting.com

www.altaiconsulting.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
1.1	Introduction and Methodology	5
1.2	Key Findings	5
1.3	Conclusion and Recommendations	7
2.	INTRODUCTION	9
3.	METHODOLOGY	10
3.1	Scope of Work	10
3.2	Research Approach	11
3.3	In-depth Interviews	12
3.4	Challenges and Limitations	15
4.	CIVIL SOCIETY LANDSCAPE	17
4.1	Background on Libyan Civil Society	17
4.2	Evolution of the Civil Society Sector and Impact of the Crisis	18
4.3	Specialization	19
4.4	Defining Civil Society and Civil Society Organizations	19
5.	PROFILE OF CSOs INTERVIEWED	21
5.1	Membership	21
5.2	Resources and Capacity	23
5.3	Funding	25
5.4	Activities	26
5.5	Scope of Activities and Acceptance	30
5.6	Impact of the Conflict	31
6.	COORDINATING CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES	34
6.1	Coordinating Bodies	34
6.2	Registration	35
6.3	Cooperation Amongst CSOs	36
6.4	Cooperation with Other Libyan Actors	37
6.5	Cooperation with the International Community	39
7.	CHALLENGES AND FACTORS FOR SUCCESS	40
7.1	Challenges	40
7.2	Factors of Success	45
8.	CONCLUSION	48
8.1	Perspectives	48
8.2	Recommendations for the International Community	48
9.	ANNEX	52

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDA	<i>Constitutional Drafting Assembly</i>
CSO	<i>Civil Society Organization</i>
DDR	<i>Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration</i>
DFID	<i>Department for International Development</i>
FCO	<i>Foreign and Commonwealth Office</i>
HMG	<i>Her Majesty's Government</i>
GBV	<i>Gender-Based Violence</i>
GNA	<i>Government of National Accord</i>
GNC	<i>General National Congress</i>
HNEC	<i>High National Electoral Commission</i>
HOR	<i>House of Representatives</i>
IDI	<i>In-Depth Interview</i>
IDP	<i>Internally Displaced Person</i>
KII	<i>Key Informant Interview</i>
LAF	<i>Libyan Armed Forces</i>
LPA	<i>Libya Political Agreement</i>
NGO	<i>Non-Governmental Organization</i>
SJD	<i>Security, Justice and Defence</i>
TOT	<i>Training of Trainers</i>
UNDP	<i>United Nations Development Programme</i>

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

This report is the result of research conducted in Libya and Tunisia in October and November 2015. Data was collected through primary and secondary research in the form of in-depth interviews with 137 Libyan CSOs (face to face in most cases and lasting approximately one hour), 11 key informant interviews with experts and Libyan authorities, as well as 20 case studies.

The objectives of the research were to provide DFID with a detailed update on the situation of civil society in Libya, to assess existing organizations and initiatives and identify ways in which the international community could offer support. The research was qualitative by design and focused on cities and sectors of work targeted by DFID.

1.2 KEY FINDINGS

1.2.1 CIVIL SOCIETY LANDSCAPE

- To date, the international community has worked largely with formal Libyan NGOs, **although a large array of CSOs such as trade unions, business councils, professional associations, faith-based groups, academia, and independent media exist in Libya.**
- Despite an inspiring emergence of CSOs immediately following the revolution, **Libyan civil society today is developing at a much slower pace as many organizations have become inactive and activists have left the country.** Countless organizations created in the post-Gadhafi period are currently dormant (although many maintain a network of volunteers) and hope to resume activities when the environment is more favorable and funding becomes available.
- This contraction is partly caused by the ongoing political crisis, **but also reveals a progressive evolution of the civil society sector**, with the least effective and least well-managed organizations disappearing.
- **Most CSOs were deeply affected by the conflict.** The minority of CSOs who were not affected said that they did not face issues securing funding (either because they rely primarily on contributions from members or because they were awarded grants this year) and ensuring safety for their staff.
- For some CSOs (for instance those working on health/relief) **the demand for services has remained unchanged or has risen.** Others, which adapted to the demand and started doing activities that they felt would be the most useful in the current context, were very successful with these new activities.
- **Libyan CSOs in general are flexible in terms of thematic areas of work**, adapting their activities to funding opportunities and to new needs. However, some topics were clearly flagged by respondents as not acceptable by Libyan society (for instance religious minorities, sexual abuse, and homosexuality) and therefore difficult for CSOs to tackle.
- **CSO members tend to have different perceptions of the nature of civil society, their role and relationship to governments than what the donor community might expect.** This confusion provides an opportunity to clarify the role of civil society in Libya, but also – and more importantly – to work with Libyans to develop a functional concept of civil society that is appropriate to Libya.
- Such an approach has the benefit of **tapping into the existing, often informal, civil society structures and networks that have developed organically**, as opposed to imposing a possibly inappropriate vision of civil society on Libyans.

1.2.2 PROFILE OF CSOs INTERVIEWED

- **A large majority of CSOs interviewed (73% of the sample) relies on a small team of active members** (less than 25 people, active members being defined as those having participated in at least one activity in 2015). Very few CSOs paid staff.
- **While they are less present in key positions within the CSOs than men, women are very involved in civil society in Libya** - representing approximately 46% of active members of CSOs interviewed.
- **Very few CSOs have equipment dedicated to the organization and most have issues securing office space.** As a result, most CSOs use personal equipment and locations (office or house of a member) to carry out their activities.
- **CSOs have a limited online presence outside of Facebook.** Few organizations have an email address for the organization or a page elsewhere than on Facebook (e.g. a website or an account on other social media networks).
- **CSOs are equally limited in terms of funding**, most organizations relying on contributions from members and many not having a specific budget for the year. This seriously hinders their ability to strategically plan activities.
- **Most CSOs have rather low levels of organizational professionalism** in terms of project management, strategic planning, budget management, communication and English language skills.
- Despite efforts to make training available to a broader array of CSOs, **it appears that training sessions organized by the international community tended to focus on the same small circle of well-organized and established CSOs.** While this is understandable given that donors need to find legitimate and effective Libyan partners to implement activities, particularly in the current context where access to the field is extremely limited, the downside is that many other CSOs are left with limited capacity.
- **Most CSOs implement activities in diverse and sometimes rather unrelated thematic areas.** The most popular activities are relief, trainings and education, and human rights – a top trio identical to results from research conducted before the crisis.
- **From the outset of the crisis, CSOs have focused less on the constitution, women's rights, media, environment, economic development and specific cultural activities**, areas that seem less of a priority to the population in the current context.

1.2.3 COORDINATING CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES

- **A variety of coordination bodies for civil society exist in Libya.** On the institutional side, the Commission for Civil Society of the Ministry of Culture is still currently active and registering CSOs. A number of small independent networks/unions exist, gathering CSOs by location or by sector of work. A few CSOs interviewed however stated to have left such networks/unions, **explaining that they were politically oriented or not active enough** to justify the amount of time dedicated to them.
- The registration process with the Commission for Civil Society is mostly described **as rather simple and efficient, but very few CSOs ever renew their registration.** Data collected through registration is unfortunately not updated, meaning that many CSOs that have closed or become inactive are still on the lists. Further, little use is made of these registries in terms of coordination and support. Most CSOs are not registered anywhere else than at the Commission.
- **Most CSOs are in contact or cooperate with other CSOs**, and a majority of members of CSOs seem to be involved in more than one organization.
- **Most CSOs do not receive any kind of support from local or national authorities** and the possibility of contacting and working with authorities (e.g. collaborating with municipal councils or ministries) depends largely on personal connections and personal reputation.

- **Difficulties working with Libyan authorities (national as well as local) is one of the main challenges identified by CSOs in implementing activities.** The multiplication of governments and administrations following the political crisis led many CSOs to experience a 'governmental dilemma', especially for securing approval for activities. Indeed, some CSOs expressed regret that they were forced to 'choose sides', even as they try to avoid engaging in politics. Many lamented that the current political climate made securing the most basic of approvals an extremely complicated task.
- **Relationships with the international community are tinted by feelings of abandonment and suspicion,** as CSOs reported that the population would often distrust CSOs working with or being funded by the international community.
- **A few CSOs were of the opinion that the current situation provides a much-needed operational space for Libyan organizations,** when in previous years INGOs used to 'take all the work', not letting Libyans do and learn by doing.

1.2.4 CHALLENGES AND FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- **The main obstacles** to the successful implementation of activities are **the security situation, the lack of funding, low levels of professionalism, low sustainability and the lack of awareness** about the nature and role of civil society.
- **The involvement of women in activities can be an issue to CSOs.** For instance, several CSOs reported that they were targeted or threatened because of the way they engage and employ women in their organizations, explaining that some Libyans disapproved of women participating in activities in the streets or working side by side with men.
- The main **keys to success** appear to be **positioning, strategic vision, organizational structure, reputation and financial sustainability.**
- CSOs interviewed mostly felt that they **needed training, funds, equipment** (e.g. office) and last but not least a **stable environment** to operate better.
- The level of perceived **security risk for CSOs varies according to location, sector of work** (CSOs working on sectors well accepted by the Libyan population, e.g. orphans care, feel safer), **and reputation.**
- **Reputation appears to be paramount** as the personal reputation of the manager and members of a CSO has a strong effect on the reputation of the organization itself, directly impacting its level of acceptance by the population, perceived security risks for members, and how easily it will be able to implement activities in the current context.

1.3 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1.3.1 CONCLUSION

As a direct result of the conflict, **many CSOs have become inactive or have stopped work altogether.** For CSOs that are still active, the main sectors of work remain the same than before the crisis – relief, training and education, human rights. However, many CSOs have switched their focus to new areas and interventions, choosing to **focus more on crisis response than on pure development**, an understandable reaction given the current context.

While Libyan civil society has been significantly impacted by the current crisis, **CSOs face many of the same challenges they did prior to July 2014 and still require similar support** regarding resources and capacity building. Thus, while the findings from this report confirm the assessment conducted by UNDP in 2013 and 2014, it also means that building and supporting civil society will require significant effort from the donor community. This presents a serious challenge given the current difficult operating environment, and donors such as DFID must therefore develop innovative and targeted ways to help Libyan CSOs.

There seems to be a **consensus among respondents that Libyan CSOs lack experience**, despite the significant efforts made and risks taken by CSO members. While enthusiasm is not lacking, many

CSO members reported that they did need help organizing and implementing activities, explaining that the concept of civil society was very new in Libya.

While women are still quite present in Libyan civil society, **many organizations face gender-based issues**, and organizations with mostly female members reported facing more security challenges. Other CSOs with mixed membership lamented being condemned for holding mixed activities. Further, organizations that previously focused on women's rights and gender issues have scaled back activities, worrying that such work could be construed as political, and focused more on direct relief and training for women, or turned into women groups working on non gender-related issues.

1.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The uncertain future of the Libyan political agreement (LPA) and the future shape of a new Libyan government present a challenge when attempting to develop targeted recommendations for donors and the international community. As such, the following recommendations have been developed to be applicable regardless of the outcome of the LPA, and target apolitical (or as apolitical as possible given the current context) Libyan counterparts and authorities.

- **Support coordination mechanisms:** Encourage networking and coordination mechanisms by promoting strategic partnerships between elite and grassroots organizations, which will benefit both types of CSOs. Support the best and most efficient coordinating institutions and bodies with the aim of making updated data on Libyan CSOs available and avoiding the multiplication of small, demanding yet little sustainable networks. Encourage registration, communicate on the need to renew registration, and promote the clarification of the Libyan legal framework on civil society.
- **Address sustainability:** Target specific important but non-profitable sub sectors that tend to be neglected in a period of crisis and transition (e.g. independent media, women's rights, culture, environment). Provide training on financial management and stability as well as on project management and strategic planning to CSOs. Connect CSOs with subnational authorities, which are only providing support to a very small minority of CSOs at the moment yet often have human resources dedicated to civil society.
- **Educate and communicate on the role and function of civil society:** Mitigate existing misperceptions and suspicion towards civil society and highlight organizations that are affecting positive change in their communities through media initiatives, to manage community expectations and perceptions. Discuss the nature and role of civil society with CSO members, to develop a functional concept of civil society that is appropriate to Libya.
- **Diversify civil society initiatives and organizations supported in Libya:** Investigate opportunities to reach out to more informal civil society actors in addition to 'traditional' NGOs. Ensure that communication (particularly on funding and training opportunities) is in Arabic, as only few CSO members are fluent English speakers. Consider communicating over the phone in addition to online, as many CSOs have little online presence and access to the internet in the current context.
- **Adapt programming to the current crisis:** Support in priority non-partisan CSOs that are careful to avoid being perceived as political and are therefore well accepted. Most Libyan CSOs are quite flexible in terms of thematic areas for their activities and not specialized on only one sector, therefore organizations that are functioning well can be supported to do things that are not their primary focus.
- **Address knowledge gaps:** Conduct research on CSOs in semi-urban and rural localities, where civil society networks remain unmapped. Assess the impact and effectiveness of CSOs from another point of view than that of the CSOs themselves to better target donor interventions. This can be done by asking communities how they perceive specific CSOs and their activities, or, for CSOs working with donors, through monitoring and evaluation of donor supported programs. Gather more knowledge about local and national authorities working on civil society and partnerships between CSOs.

2. INTRODUCTION

In July 2015, Altai Consulting was commissioned through the Cardno/WYG consortium to carry out an assessment of the Libyan civil society sector to support the UK government in implementing its Security, Justice and Defence (SJD) programme in Libya.

Current Libyan civil society initiatives have been difficult for international donors to track, largely due to the complexities involved in conducting research in the country. This report intends to contribute to the international community's efforts to develop an in-depth understanding of Libyan civil society in order to inform forward programme design and improve performance.

This report is the result of research conducted in Libya and Tunisia in October-November 2015. The research was qualitative by design and focused on major urban centres and key sectors of work defined in coordination with the Department for International Development (DFID). It builds on previous civil society research, particularly the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Libyan Civil Society Mapping and Roster* (published in 2015, research conducted between September 2013 and May 2014) and Civil Initiatives Libya's *Sebha Civil Society Organizations Assessment* (published in January 2013, research conducted in December 2012).

The report aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Providing an overview of the civil society landscape in Libya;
- Evaluating the impact of the current political and security crisis on Libyan civil society;
- Gaining a more in-depth understanding of Libyan CSOs, their capacities and needs;
- Mapping out key civil society actors in geographical/thematic areas selected by SJD and identifying local CSOs able to contribute to the development of the country that may be reliable partners for Her Majesty's Government (HMG) and other international donors;
- Suggesting practical and effective ways in which the international community can support Libyan civil society during the crisis through researched programming.

To accomplish this, Altai interviewed a select group of 137 CSOs working in areas of interest for both SJD and the broader HMG community. Interviews were complemented by a thorough literature review, key informant interviews (KIIs), and the development of case studies.

This report has four main sections:

- First, it presents an overview of the current situation for civil society in Libya and measures the extent to which the ongoing turmoil has impacted on it.
- Second, it offers a summary of data collected through in-depth interviews with CSOs working on the areas of focus, analysing their resources, capacities and current activities.
- Third, it looks at cooperation relationships among CSOs, with national actors, and with the international community. It describes support received by CSOs and details existing coordination bodies for civil society in Libya, their capacity and work.
- Fourth, it discusses common challenges and key factors that seem to drive success among the CSOs interviewed. Finally, the report concludes by identifying the implications of the report findings for civil society support programming in Libya and providing recommendations.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 SCOPE OF WORK

3.1.1 DEFINITION OF CIVIL SOCIETY USED IN THE REPORT

There is no commonly accepted or legal definition of the term 'civil society organisation'. For this research, civil society refers to the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Thus, civil society organisations interviewed for this report have the following criteria:

- 1) Not governmental and not part of the public administration,**
- 2) Not for profit,**
- 3) Serving the general interest (interest of its members or of others),**
- 4) Libyan CSOs only (not international).**

Understood as such, 'CSO' refers to an array of organizations wider than just non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including trade unions, business councils and non-governmental business unions; professional organizations (e.g. lawyers' unions and teachers' unions); religious organizations; traditional independent local councils (neighbourhood councils or elders councils); independent media; academia; sports clubs and social clubs; consumer organizations; cooperatives and social enterprises; and all cultural groups and foundations.

Best efforts were made to reach types of organizations other than traditional NGOs, in order to gain access to a variety of actors in terms of formality, professionalism and capacity, and to be open to groups that are not NGOs but may become of growing importance when considering rebuilding and reintegration.

3.1.2 GEOGRAPHICAL AND THEMATIC AREAS OF INTEREST

Geographically speaking, this research exercise focused on four major urban centres: Benghazi, Tripoli, Misrata and Sebha.

Additional research was also conducted in Tobruk and Beida, which were not included in the 2013-2014 UNDP mapping, to gain a broad understanding of the CSO landscape. In addition, in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted with CSOs in a rural area (Quatroum), in Ajdabiya, in Al Shate, in Gharyan, in Derna, in Susa, and in Ubari.

In line with SJD and HMG programmatic interests, the mapping targeted local organizations working on the following thematic areas:

- Access to justice and transitional justice process;
- Human rights, including CSOs that look at recording human rights abuses/crimes
- Women's rights and empowerment: including CSOs supporting women's participation in Libyan society and political processes, as well as those fighting gender-based violence (GBV);
- De-mining and community safety;
- Policing and local security;
- Media and watchdogs: including CSOs monitoring ceasefire progress of a Government of National Accord (GNA);
- Migration: including CSOs that support existing migrant communities or provide assistance to those in detention centres.

3.1.3 EXPANSION OF THE SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The initial research scope was very specific, and CSOs had to fulfil the following criteria:

- Be a Libyan CSO (see section 3.1.1 Definition of Civil Society Used in the Report);
- Be active: considering that to be active a CSO must have organized at least one activity since the beginning of 2015;

- Be currently working in one of the following cities: Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, Sebha, Tobruk or Beida;
- Be currently working on one of the sectors of focus (see section 3.1.2 Geographical and Thematic Areas of Interest).

Based on pre-screening interviews with CSOs listed in UNDP's roster, it became evident that 1) a majority of these organizations were no longer reachable and 2) only few of these organizations worked on initial sectors of focus.

To broaden the sample group and reach out to more CSOs, the research team employed a 'snowball' methodology in order to identify existing CSOs who were not on the UNDP list. This exercise also allowed the team to interview CSOs who had yet to be interviewed for previous research.

In addition, in order to interview a relevant and representative number of CSOs, the research team and DFID decided to expand the scope of research to include the following types of CSOs:

- CSOs that still exist and work on one of the sectors of focus but were not able to organize any activities in 2015.
- CSOs that are currently implementing activities outside of the original thematic areas of focus. The following additional areas were included: Relief, Education and training, Economic and small business development, Youth groups, Civic awareness and transparency, Child welfare and protection, Culture, Environment.
- CSOs from other cities and locations in Libya.

This helped gain a broader understanding of CSOs who a) are currently active and potentially strong partners for HMG, but may not be currently working on their areas of focus, and b) have dormant capacity and could reactivate should they receive proper and targeted support.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

To develop this study, Altai undertook six complementary research activities, detailed below.

Desk research. Extensive review of secondary literature of relevance to the mapping, including news reports and academic literature was conducted before and throughout the interview phase to complement primary data collection.

Call centre pre-screening interviews. Pre-screening interviews were conducted with the entire universe of CSOs recorded by UNDP (and in by Civil Initiatives Libya in Sebha) in 2012-2014. This included 923 CSOs in the six focus cities, of which only 281 could be contacted by phone over the course of several weeks.

Identification of CSOs not included in the UNDP list or recently created through a process of introductions and referrals ('snowball approach').

In-depth interviews with CSOs/NGOs. Altai conducted essentially qualitative in-depth interviews with 137 CSOs working on the areas of focus defined above, which were selected from the pre-screening interviews and snowball identification phase.

Case studies. Altai conducted 20 case studies with organizations of specific relevance in order to gain a more in-depth understanding of these CSOs and to identify factors of success.

Key informant interviews. Interviews were conducted with Libyan institutions working with CSOs, activists, donors, academics and UNDP Libya staff. These interviews were carried out in person where the situation allowed or by telephone.

Data collection stretched from September to November 2015, with pre-screening interviews being conducted in September 2015, followed by in-depth interviews in October and November 2015. A team of 15 Libyan interviewers contributed to fieldwork research across Libya.

3.3 IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

The team interviewed 147 CSOs for this report. Out of these, ten interviews were incomplete, not candid or duplicates (same organization under two different names) and were therefore not used in the analysis.

3.3.1 SAMPLING

CSOs were sampled from the following sources:

- Pre-screened CSOs from UNDP's roster of 923 CSOs in Tripoli, Benghazi, Sebha and Misrata.
- Introductions and referrals ('snowball approach'), which provided an opportunity to reach out to organizations that were not included in the UNDP list (e.g. organisations created after the UNDP conducted its research).

In total, the research team was able to assemble an initial list of approximately 1,300 CSOs.

While focusing on the areas mentioned above, a random panel of organizations was selected from these 1,300, based on their objectives/nature, size and location. Interviews were conducted with a wide range of CSOs with varying budgets, membership, levels of professionalism, capacity, and activities in order to reflect the heterogeneity of CSOs in Libya. Quotas were defined per location (based on population) to keep a global balance between the main cities of focus.

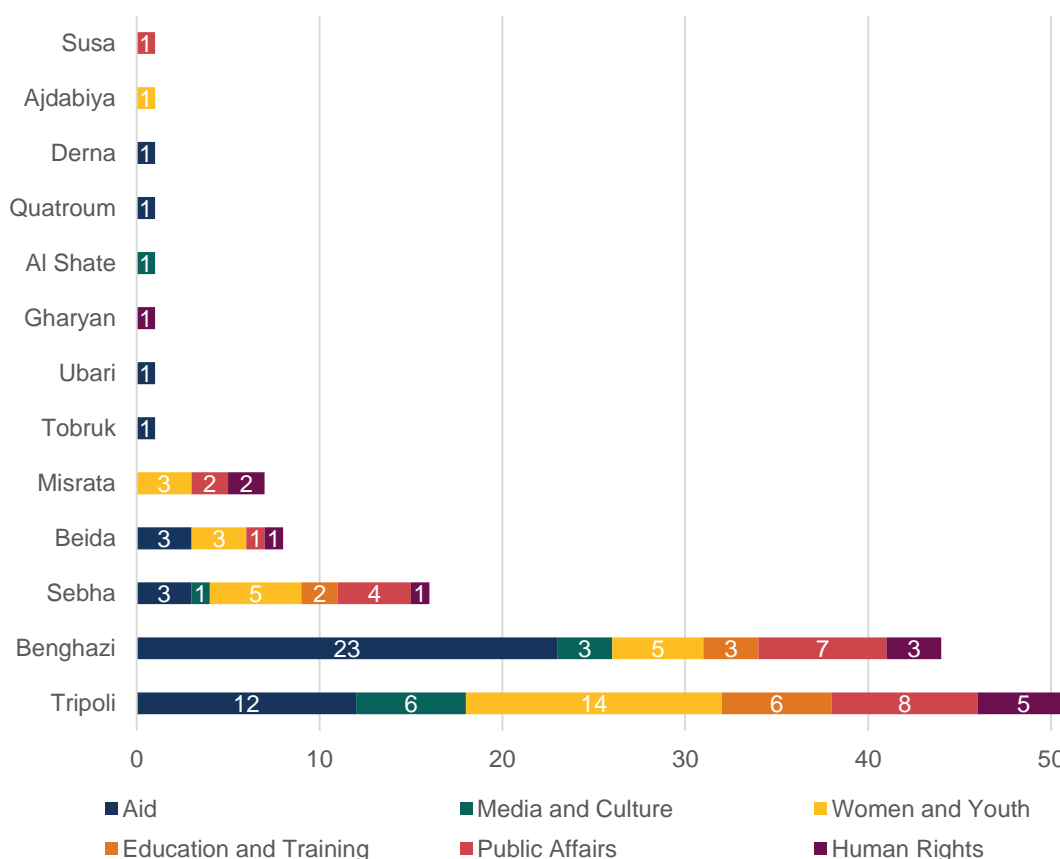


Figure 1 - In-depth-interviews conducted with CSOs per location and primary sector of work

3.3.2 TOOL DESIGN

The questionnaire was developed collaboratively with DFID and was primarily qualitative with a number of open ended questions.

The questionnaire was translated into Arabic, back translated, piloted with three respondents then revised based on feedback from the pilot test. Final revisions were made following the team training.

The questionnaire included the following sections:

- **Participant Information**
- **Profile of the Organization**
- **Size and Membership**
- **Resources and Funding**
- **Registration and Relationship with Authorities**
- **Activities**
- **Impact of the Conflict on CSOs**
- **Current Constraints and Needs**
- **Perceptions of Civil Society**

3.3.3 INTERVIEW PROCEDURE

Interviews lasted an average of one hour and were conducted in Arabic by Libyan researchers from Altai's partner Istishari Consulting, except for about 10% conducted directly by the Project Manager.

The majority of interviews were conducted face to face, including site visits where possible to gain a more accurate understanding of capacity and facilities. The rest of the interviews, when meeting in person was impossible, were conducted by phone, Skype or Viber. In total, 80 interviews were conducted face to face, and 57 over the phone.

All respondents were members of the organization's core team, generally the director or founder of the organization, or a senior core member (deputy head, vice president, head of media and PR, member of the board, etc).

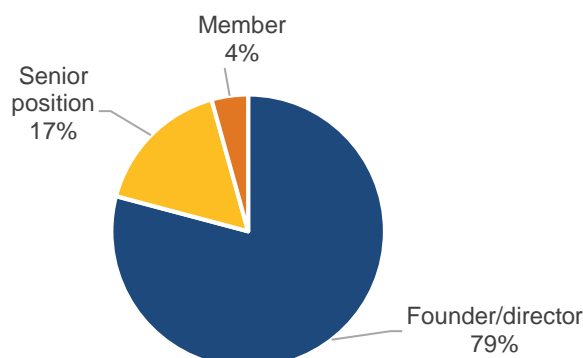


Figure 2 – Position of the respondent within the CSO

Before starting the questionnaire, the interviewer presented the project in the following terms, and asked the respondent for consent:

- The research was commissioned by the international community in order to understand what issues Libyan civil society organizations are currently facing and how the conflict that started in the summer of 2014 has impacted the activities of civil society organizations.
- The international community commissioned this research because it is keen to support civil society in Libya and wants to know how to help efficiently. This research will lead to a report that will help donors design solutions to support civil society.

3.3.4 RECODING

The research team developed the following categories to classify **thematic areas of work in 2015**, based exclusively on current activities described by CSOs (multiple choice, each CSO might be 'tagged' with several thematic areas of work):

Thematic Area of Work in 2015	Description of Activities Recoded
Civic Awareness and Participation	CSOs working on civic engagement, elections (e.g. monitoring elections), rule of law, democracy, state building and support to institutions (e.g. moral and symbolic support to the army and police), raising awareness against corruption and on community issues, or surveying on people's opinion on political issues
Constitution	CSOs working on the constitution and the Constitutional Drafting Assembly (CDA)
Culture	CSOs working on cultural activities and events, history, art, sports, social activities
DDR	CSOs working on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)
Economic Development	CSOs working on economic development, helping start-ups and new business projects
Education and Training	CSOs working on education and training (e.g. computer skills, English, vocational training, soft skills), trainings by CSOs for CSOs
Environment	CSOs working on the preservation of the environment and sustainable development of natural resources
Health	CSOs working on the health sectors, providing medical services or raising awareness on health issues (e.g. public health, breast cancer campaigns)
Human Rights	CSOs working on the defence of human rights (e.g. persons with disabilities, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), prison detainees, migrants, minority groups); monitoring human rights violations; or raising awareness on human rights
Justice	CSOs working on justice and transitional justice
Maintenance	CSOs working on maintenance actions such as cleaning streets, beaches, fixing potholes or non-functioning traffic lights
Media	CSOs working on media, information, freedom of the press, producing media content
Reconciliation and Peace Promotion	CSOs working on mediation, dialogue at the national or community levels (e.g. reconciliation between families, national reconciliation), or peace promotion (e.g. protests against violence, campaigns against weapons)
Relief	CSOs providing assistance to people in need (e.g. the poor, sick, orphans, old, disabled, homeless) by giving money, food, or other types of support
Research and Watchdogs	CSOs working on research and analysis (e.g. social research, surveys, interviews), or watchdogs (e.g. monitoring the parliament)
Security and Safety	CSOs working on community safety (e.g. demining and risk awareness)

Women	Women's groups and CSOs working on gender equality, women's rights, women empowerment, supporting women, and raising awareness on women issues (e.g. campaigns targeting specifically women's health)
Youth	Youth groups, student unions, or other CSOs supporting youth and raising awareness on issues specific to young people.

The research team also divided CSOs interviewed in the following 7 **primary sectors of work** (single choice), according to their objectives, mission statement, current activities as well as activities from previous years:

Primary Sector of Work	Description of Sectors Included
Aid	Relief, Health, Maintenance
Media and Culture	Media, Sports, Culture, Social Events
Women and Youth	Women and Youth Movements
Education and Training	Education, Trainings, Trainings by CSOs for CSOs, Research on Education
Public Affairs	Governance, Current Political and Social Issues, Civic Awareness and Participation, Constitution, Reconciliation and Peace, DDR
Human Rights	Human Rights, Justice
Other	Environment, Economic Development

3.4 CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

3.4.1 CHALLENGES

The research team faced six main challenges during the project, several of which are direct consequences of having to conduct the research at a time of crisis in Libya:

- 1) **Security and access.** Security incidents forced the team to cancel or postpone interviews on several occasions. Fieldwork was paused for 2 weeks in Tripoli and had to stop altogether in Misrata due to political sensitivity. Rescheduling interviews after having had to cancel them proved uneasy. In Benghazi, interviews had to be cancelled many times as a result of ongoing conflict in the areas of fieldwork.
- 2) **Securing interviews in the current climate of suspicion.** Convincing CSOs to be interviewed by a stranger was a challenge. Several respondents told interviewers that they 'ran a background check' on them before accepting to participate in the research. Six CSO members commented that they 'wanted to know who in the international community is commissioning this research', and some refused to be on a roster without such knowledge. Convincing the respondents to meet face to face was also a challenge, particularly for female respondents.
- 3) **Sensitivity of some components of the research,** in particular the questions related to budget and contacts with authorities. A few interviews were interrupted as the respondent grew suspicious.
- 4) **Issues with communications and electricity network.** The lack of phone network and internet connection in addition to frequent power cuts hindered communications with the research team, which complicated training, quality control, scheduling interviews, debriefing and gathering feedback. These issues prevented the research team from conducting interviews over the phone in many cases, particularly in Beida and Benghazi.
- 5) **Difficulty of tracking down and contacting CSOs.** Libyan activists and contact points for CSOs tend to frequently change their contact information and particularly phone numbers. Most

of the numbers from the lists provided by UNDP and Libyan authorities were switched off/had no network, did not exist anymore, or rang without answering. Tracking CSOs was also a challenge, as many changed their names (10% of CSOs interviewed had recently changed their name) and translation issues between English and Arabic made it difficult to match CSOs from different lists.

3.4.2 LIMITATIONS

- As this research focuses on specific sectors of work, CSOs working on target sectors were oversampled and the data cannot therefore be considered strictly speaking representative of the range of CSOs in Libya. Similarly, the research concentrated on specific urban centres, therefore a degree of caution needs to be applied when generalizing findings to the whole country. However, a wide cross-section of various civil society actors from different cities of three different regions was interviewed, enough to acquire a strong understanding of the global landscape and trends. It would be particularly interesting to conduct research on rural environments and traditional or informal forms of civil society.
- In the same way that this report is location specific and focused of particular type of CSOs, it also reflects a specific point in time in an environment that is still in flux. The situation for civil society is likely to evolve quickly because of political developments and ongoing tracking will be needed.
- As CSO members change phone numbers (see section 3.4.1 Challenges), determining whether a CSO is still active by calling the point of contact's listed number will not always produce definitive results. While this report shows – and anecdotal evidence from CSO members confirms – that many CSOs have ceased activities due to the crisis (amongst other reasons), the fact that many CSOs on the UNDP roster could not be reached does not necessarily mean that they have ceased to exist.
- Suggestions as to the impact and effectiveness of CSOs and their links with other organizations and local authorities are drawn purely from the perspective of CSOs themselves. In order to understand which CSOs are truly effective (and thus could be effective partners for HMG), a 'demand side' study would need to be conducted with local residents to better test the actual effectiveness and impact of organizations.

4. CIVIL SOCIETY LANDSCAPE

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- To date, the international community has worked largely with formal Libyan NGOs, **although a large array of CSOs such as trade unions, business councils, professional associations, faith-based groups, academia, and independent media exist in Libya.**
- Despite an inspiring emergence of CSOs immediately following the revolution, **Libyan civil society today is developing at a much slower pace as many organizations have become inactive and activists have left the country.** Countless organizations created in the post-Gadhafi period are currently dormant (although many maintain a network of volunteer) and hope to resume activities when the environment is more favorable and funding becomes available.
- This contraction is partly caused by the ongoing political crisis, **but also reveals a progressive evolution of the civil society sector**, with the least effective and least well-managed organizations disappearing.
- **Most CSOs were deeply affected by the conflict.** CSOs who were not affected said that they did not face issues securing funding (either because they rely primarily on contributions from members or because they were awarded grants this year) and ensuring safety for their staff.
- For some CSOs (for instance those working on health/relief) **the demand for services has remained unchanged or has risen.** Others which adapted to the demand and started doing activities that they felt they would be the most useful in the current context were very successful with these new activities
- **Libyan CSOs in general are flexible in terms of thematic areas of work**, adapting their activities to funding opportunities and to new needs. However, some topics were clearly flagged by respondents as not acceptable by Libyan society (religious minorities, sexual abuse, and homosexuality) and therefore difficult for CSOs to tackle.
- **CSO members tend to have different perceptions of the nature of civil society, their role and relationship to governments than what the donor community might expect.** This confusion provides an opportunity to clarify the role of civil society in Libya, but also – and more importantly – to work with Libyans to develop a functional concept of civil society that is appropriate to Libya.
- Such an approach has the benefit **of tapping into the existing, often informal, civil society structures and networks that have developed organically**, as opposed to imposing a possibly inappropriate vision of civil society on Libyans.

4.1 BACKGROUND ON LIBYAN CIVIL SOCIETY

Traditional civil society (e.g. elder councils) and informal initiatives (e.g. ad-hoc campaigns) form the bulk of civil society in Libya. These are often less visible to the international community and are difficult to contact because they are neither structured nor led by a specific organization. This is particularly true outside of major urban centres, where traditional, informal, and local bodies (e.g. elders' councils, initiatives led by local notables on an ad-hoc basis to address specific issues) are more common. This research focused on formal CSOs, leaving aside more traditional civil society groups.

The Libyan CSO sector is largely composed of small NGOs that are barely surviving, often with months between projects. However, a few 'elite organizations' have been in operation for some time and have benefited from high levels of donor assistance in the form of training, assistance with strategic planning, coordination, project budgeting and financial support.

To date, the international community has worked largely with formal Libyan NGOs, although a large array of CSOs such as trade unions, business councils, professional associations, faith-based groups, academia, and independent media exist in Libya. While it would be difficult for the international community to work directly with informal, unstructured civil society networks in the current context, collaborating with more organized entities such as business councils and unions remains a viable option.

4.2 EVOLUTION OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR AND IMPACT OF THE CRISIS

4.2.1 EVOLUTION

While the post-Gadhafi period saw a major growth in CSOs in due to the opening of the public space and increased donor and community investments, many of these groups have since become inactive, many activists have fled the country, and many organizations have disappeared altogether.

A large number of CSOs were founded to occupy a newly created space for civil society actors following the revolution. Growth in civil society appears to have then started to contract in mid-2013 and development has further slowed ever since this period, due in part to the crisis that emerged in mid-2014. This continuing decrease is caused by a number of issues, including lack of a safe operating environment, lack of state presence, the fracturing of society, the economic downturn, and the departure of foreign donors. As a Benghazi CSO working on relief stated during an in-depth interview, 'the current situation for civil society is worse than it was in the beginning 2011/2012.'

The dates of the creation of the sample of 137 CSOs interviewed for this research highlights the major increase in the number of CSOs immediately after the fall of the Gadhafi regime followed by a decline after 2013 (Figure 3).

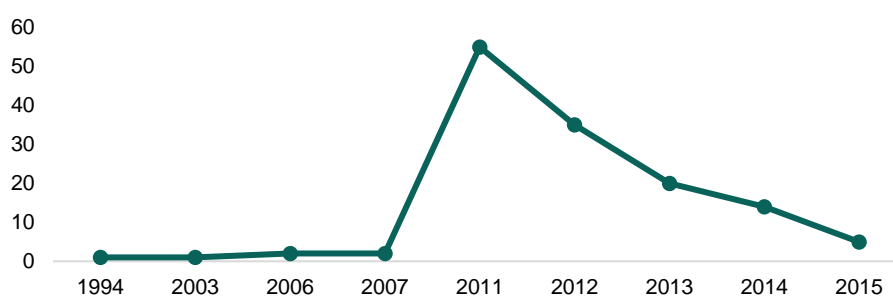


Figure 3 - Founding years for CSOs in sample group

4.2.2 IMPACT OF THE 2014 CRISIS ON THE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR

Most Libyan CSOs were deeply affected by consequences of the crisis, which included growing insecurity and political polarisation, increasingly complicated partnerships with governmental authorities, the departure of the international community, and a lack of funding (national and international). As a result most CSOs active in early 2014 have either suspended activities or shut down as a consequence of the crisis. Although this is by no means evidence that the organizations have completely closed, out of 900+ CSOs registered by UNDP before the conflict in the cities where this research was conducted, the research team was only able to contact 281 over the phone, despite repeatedly attempting contact over a 20-day period at different times of the day.

The impact of the crisis on CSOs varies greatly depending on their sector of work: while for most CSOs the crisis had a dramatic impact on activities, some organizations reported being able to carry out their activities unaffected (e.g. in the sectors of health awareness and relief). For instance, a Tripoli-based CSO supporting people living with AIDS explained that they were not affected at all by the conflict, as the need for their work remained equal.

Other organizations reported more activities and volunteers thorough the crisis, like a Tripoli-based CSO working on psychosocial issues, who explained that 'our activities increased because a lot of people lost their homes and needed help, so we shifted our attention to them. Our organization raised in numbers because of the 2014 crisis, with everyone wanting to be helped.'

4.2.3 TRANSITION PHASE

Since mid-2015, the civil society sector seems to have entered a phase of transition. A number of CSOs interviewed reported that, after a particularly difficult year between the summer of 2014 and the summer of 2015, their situation had started to improve and they were now able to resume activities. A women organization in Tripoli, for instance, explained that while they had stopped all activities for a period due to the crisis, they were now in the process of launching new activities. Some CSOs have fully restarted activities to the point that they eventually conducted more activities in the end of 2015 than they did in 2014.

However, many CSOs in Libya are still currently 'dormant', meaning that while they maintain a network of members and a core team they are not currently implementing activities. Further, 'active' CSOs generally only implement activities punctually, when funding is available and the conditions are permissible. Section 5.4.3. Level of Activity details the level of activity of CSOs interviewed.

While more CSOs are being created on a regular basis, only a few organizations survive. As a result, the sector is in constant flux. The low number of surviving CSOs is not only due to the difficult operating environment but is also symptomatic of a progressive evolution of the sector. Numerous CSOs have been created in a wave of enthusiasm for civil society, many of which might simply be too un-professional and lack the necessary structure to be viable and therefore are bound to disappear. As an organization based in Tripoli mentioned during the interview, 'many CSOs were created without the founder realizing how much work it would be to manage it afterwards.'

4.3 SPECIALIZATION

Most existing CSOs adapt their programming based on needs, or to areas where donors are willing to spend money. Some sectors are quite developed, due to donor emphasis in the past and support to CSOs carrying out activities in these areas (e.g. women's rights and the constitution). There are relatively few examples of CSOs focusing on one area and doing it well. For instance, CSOs interviewed reported working on average on three often very different thematic areas of activity in 2015, which gives an idea of how little specialization there currently is in Libyan civil society.

CSOs interviewed identified sectors and activities that are easier to implement in the current context, and sectors that are more or less acceptable in the current operating environment (e.g. relief work is never questioned, whereas there would be suspicion about any work related to political issues). There seems to be a strong consensus on sectors on which it is acceptable to work: relief (aid, humanitarian work), awareness activities, health, maintenance, sports, education, orphans and children in general, and state building. These sectors are widely accepted because they are seen as culturally relevant and/or represent important work in the current context.

Sectors that are more sensitive and less accepted include risk education, migrants, and detention. In addition, certain cultural activities that are not a good 'fit' for Libya are seen as inappropriate; CSO members stated that cultural activities related to religious and ethnic minorities, sexual abuse, and homosexuality were taboo.

4.4 DEFINING CIVIL SOCIETY AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Widespread misconceptions exist among CSO members regarding the nature of civil society, its role, and its relationship to government and authorities. In short, respondents more or less had their own distinct definition of civil society. Confusion mainly centered around the relationship of CSOs and NGOs to the government, with many blurring the line between government and civil society. The lack of a coherent state structure also pushes many CSOs to attempt to play a service delivery role that would normally be under the purview of the state.

This reflects the general confusion about civil society in Libya; which is understandable given that under Gadhafi these organizations mainly focused on apolitical charity work. Organizations focusing on public affairs, constitutional issues, minority rights, and other somewhat sensitive topics are viewed with a measure of suspicion.

Nevertheless, this confusion also provides an opportunity to clarify the role of civil society in Libya, but also – and more importantly – to work with Libyans to develop a functional concept of civil society that is appropriate to Libya. Such an approach has the benefit of tapping into the existing, often informal, civil society structures and networks that have developed organically, as opposed to imposing a possibly inappropriate vision of civil society on Libyans.

5. PROFILE OF CSOs INTERVIEWED

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **A large majority of CSOs interviewed (73% of the sample) relies on a small team of active members** (less than 25 people, active members being defined as those having participated in at least one activity in 2015). Very few CSOs paid staff.
- **Very few CSOs have equipment and most have issues securing office space.** As a result, most CSOs use personal equipment and locations (office or house of a member) to carry out their activities.
- **CSOs have a limited online presence outside of Facebook.** Few organizations have an email address for the organization or a page elsewhere than on Facebook (e.g. a website, or an account on other social media networks)
- **CSOs are equally limited in terms of funding,** most organizations relying on contributions from members and many not having a specific budget for the year. This seriously hinders their ability to strategically plan activities.
- **Most CSOs have rather low levels of organizational professionalism** in terms of project management, strategic planning, budget management, communication and English language skills. Despite efforts to make training available to a broader array of CSOs, **it appears that training sessions organized by the international community tended to focus on the same small circle of well-organized and established CSOs.** While this is understandable given that donors need to find legitimate and effective Libyan partners to implement activities, particularly in the current context where access to the field is extremely limited, the downside is that many other CSOs are left with limited capacity.
- **Most CSOs implement activities in diverse and sometimes rather unrelated thematic areas.** The most popular activities are relief, trainings and education, and human rights – a top trio identical to results from research conducted before the crisis.
- **From the outset of the crisis, CSOs have focused less on the constitution, women's rights, media, environment, economic development and specific cultural activities,** areas that seem less of a priority to the population in the current context.

5.1 MEMBERSHIP

5.1.1 TOTAL, ACTIVE, AND CORE MEMBERS

While membership conditions may vary from one CSO to another – for example, some organizations may require that members pay a subscription, others that members meet specific requirements, and for some organizations it might simply be filling in a membership form – the research team was able to identify three broad categories of CSO members:

Inactive members: members who, while they may be part of the CSO's broader network (e.g. registered with the CSO), have not participated directly in CSO activities in 2015.

Active members: members who have participated in at least one activity in 2015 (even if said 'activity' in only a meeting of members because the CSO is not currently implementing any other activities).

Core members: members who fulfil the core functions of a CSO (e.g. organizing activities, logistics, administrative tasks, strategic planning, etc.). Several organizations also mentioned that they paid their project managers on a per project basis (essentially, whenever a project was active, they were able to pay their core staff).

Figure 4 below presents the total membership of CSOs in the sample group, which includes all types of members. No significant regional distinctions in the sample group were observed, although CSOs in the West tended to be smaller while CSOs from the East and Southwest tended to have more members in total. These distinctions do not hold for active members (Figure 5), except for CSOs from the Southwest, which tended to have more active members than their counterparts in the East and West.

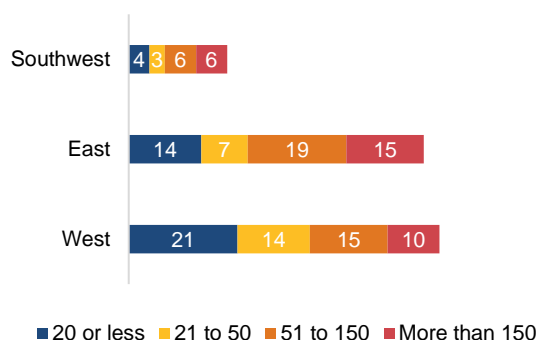


Figure 4 - Total membership

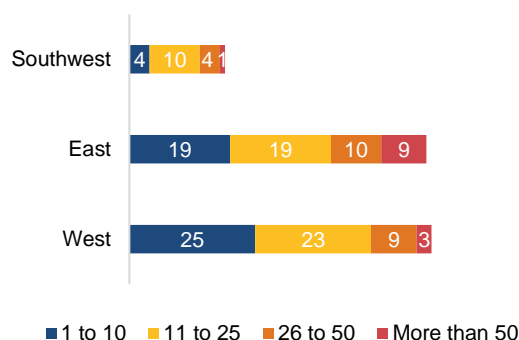


Figure 5 - Active members

While similar trends were observed regarding core members (Figure 6), a more accurate way of understanding CSO activity across the three regions of the country is to look at the percentage of total members who are active within the organization (Figure 7). In this instance, CSOs from the West tended to be more active than CSOs from the East or the Southwest.

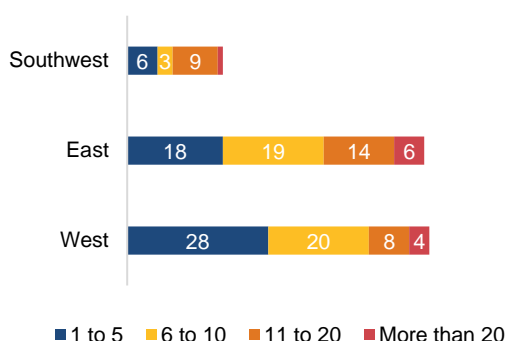


Figure 6 - Core members

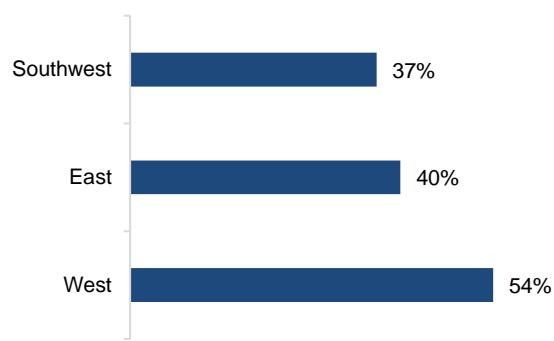


Figure 7 - Active members as a % of total members

5.1.2 AVERAGE PROFILE

The profile of people belonging to CSOs is quite varied and reflects the diversity of civil society across Libya.

- **Age:** Across the sample group, interviewees were aged from 20 up to one 80 year old, with the median age being 38 years old.
- **Membership focus:** While some organizations by their nature recruit only or mostly from specific demographic or professional groups, most CSOs are open to all potential members.

Members of CSOs from the sample group were found to be composed largely of degree holders, students and public sector employees, which seems to be natural given that these groups come either from more educated and less poor segments of the society (degree holders), or from groups with slightly more free time and motivation (students). It is not surprising to see public sector employees apparently over-represented in the sample group, as approximately 70% of individuals of working age are employed in the public sector.

5.1.3 WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT

Women are quite involved in Libyan civil society, representing approximately 46% of active members in the organizations that form the sample group (Figure 8). Nevertheless, they are less likely to hold senior or decision-making positions within the organization than men, and represented on average 35% of core members across the sample group. This was true across all regions, and was also reflected in the gender breakdown of the sample group, where 53 interviewees were women compared to 84 men (Figure 9).

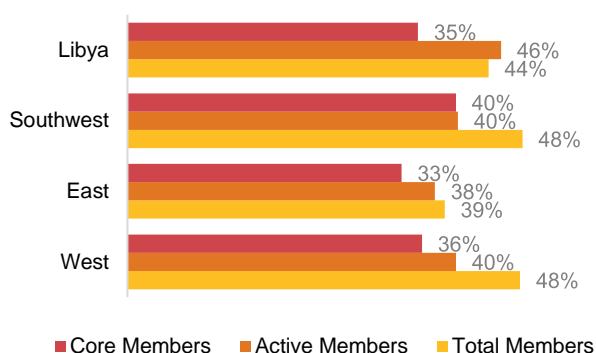


Figure 8 - % of female membership

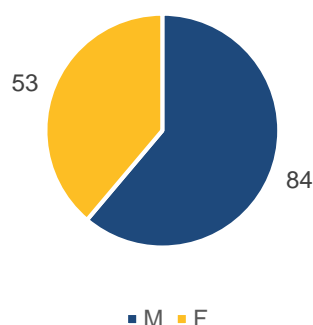


Figure 9 - Sample group by gender

5.2 RESOURCES AND CAPACITY

5.2.1 OFFICE, EQUIPMENT AND ONLINE PRESENCE

Many CSOs lost access to their office or their centre (where events and activities could be hosted) at the end of 2013 or in 2014. Indeed, centres that had been set up to provide basic medical services, to host cultural events, to help Libyans find work, to host IT training sessions, etc. had to be closed due to the ongoing conflict. Some were stolen or destroyed ("Our office was burnt during the war"), and others are simply not accessible anymore. Other CSOs had to cancel their projects of opening an office or a centre and therefore find themselves without any space to work from several years after their creation.

Further, rent is currently quite high in Libya and CSOs often cannot afford offices or centres due to lack of funding. When they can afford rent, it usually comprises a large amount of their budget for activities: one CSO member from Misrata explained that more than 70% of their 2015 budget had been set aside to pay for rent. Understandably, funding – to cover rent and core activities – was the most requested form of support for CSOs (see section 7.2.3 Required Support).

Regarding other equipment, few CSOs had dedicated computers or video recording equipment (other than a phone) to facilitate general organization, activities, and outreach campaigns (Figure 10). Only 34% had access to the internet (Figure 11) outside of mobile phones (e.g. a modem, DSL, Wimax, cable, etc.). Most CSOs use personal equipment to carry out their activities (personal laptop, personal smartphone to access the internet) and hold meetings in the office or house of one of the members.

We cannot go to our office because it is in a conflict zone.

CSO member from Benghazi

IDPs are currently living in our office.

CSO member from Benghazi

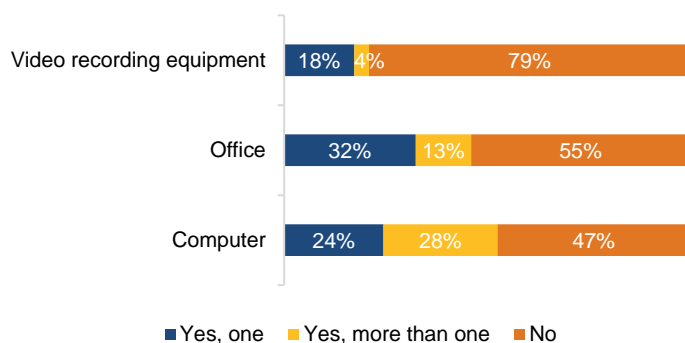


Figure 10 – Equipment dedicated to the CSO

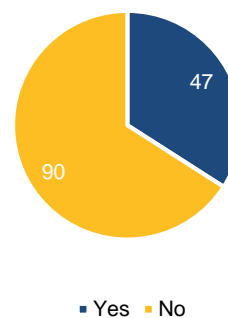


Figure 11 - Internet access

A small but nevertheless significant fraction of our sample (15%) had no online presence whatsoever – no email address for the organization, no account on any social media and no website. For CSOs that did have an online presence under a form or another (85%), it usually involved a Facebook page for the organization (77% of respondents). For 50% of our sample, Facebook is the only way the organization communicates online: these CSOs have a Facebook page but no email address for the organization and no website or pages on other social media accounts. In fact, only 5% of the sample had what could be called a 'strong online presence': an email address for the organization as well as a page on another website than Facebook (whether their own website, Twitter account, Instagram, etc.).

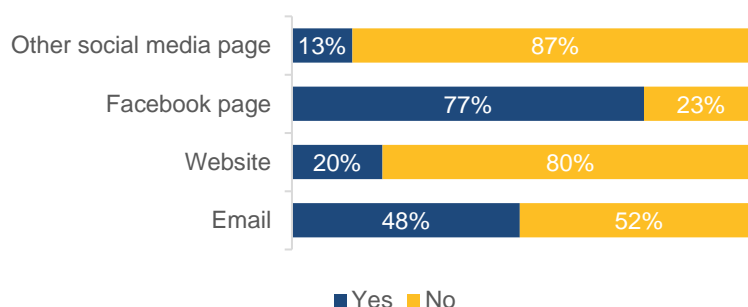


Figure 12 – Online presence

5.2.2 CAPACITY

Most CSOs had rather low levels of organizational professionalism in terms of project management, strategic planning, budget management, communication and English language skills.

Despite efforts to make training available to a broader array of CSOs, it appears that training sessions organized by the international community tended to focus on the same small circle of well-organized and established CSOs. While this is understandable given that donors need to find legitimate and effective Libyan partners to implement activities, particularly in the current context where access to the field is extremely limited, the downside is that many other CSOs are left with limited capacity.

We do not have enough experience to properly meet people's needs.

CSO member from Tripoli

We do not have anyone who can design a project plan in terms of money and time.

CSO member from Misrata

More specialized areas such as environmental and climate issues, social research, certain IT skills such as Photoshop, and assisting the disabled tended to be the least developed in terms of training and capacity building. Training was also a major area where CSOs expressed the need for support, to develop both general skills and specific subject matter expertise (see section 7.2.3 Required Support).

5.3 FUNDING

5.3.1 BUDGET AND PLANNING

Less than 10% of all CSOs interviewed had budgets of over 100,000 LYD for year 2015, while 17% reported budgets of up to 10,000 LYD, hardly enough funding to conduct significant activities for most CSOs (Figure 13). Of the organizations that were able to provide a budget estimate, some specified that they had yet to prepare a budget as they only prepare figures at the end of the year.

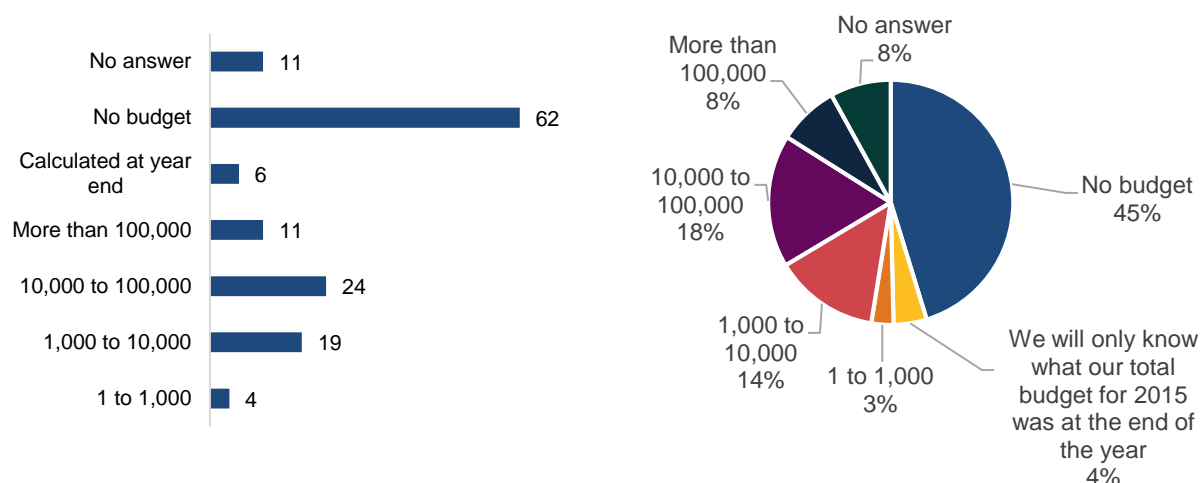


Figure 13 - CSO budgets (in LYD)

Nearly half (45%) of CSOs interviewed had no budget to report, which was generally for the following reasons:

- Lack of activity due to the conflict;
- Activities focusing on directly redistributing donations (i.e. organizations who immediately distribute funds or goods collected without keeping track of activities);
- Activities are funded solely by ad-hoc contributions from members (e.g. when the organization wants to do an activity, they pool funds between members);
- Lack of access to bookkeeping due to the loss of an office and official papers.

In addition, many CSOs have very limited capacity to forecast their budget. Some attributed this to the fact that as they did not have a stable financial situation (i.e. depending heavily on grants and other ad-hoc funding mechanisms), they were unable to plan effectively for the year. This is similar to many international NGOs who depend almost entirely on donors and do not collect funds from the general public. Nevertheless, few CSOs had the capacity to manage effectively their budgets. While most CSOs did have accounting systems, those who did not mostly reported it was because they had no budget to manage, limited expenses, and saw no need to set up an accounting system. Those CSOs who did prepare a budget usually saw significant changes due to delays in payment (from both international and national donors), largely caused the current crisis.

We have not prepared a budget yet because we are still waiting for the donor to approve our funding.

CSO member from Benghazi

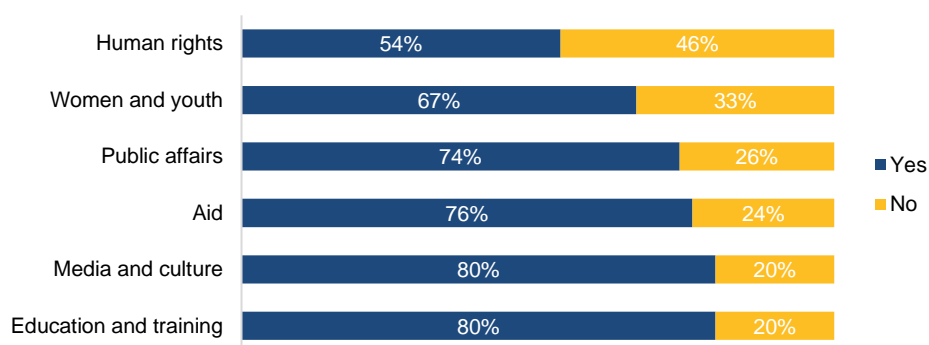


Figure 14 - Accounting by sector

5.3.2 SOURCES OF FUNDING

In terms of funding, CSOs in Libya rely primarily on contributions from their members, which in many cases is their sole source of funding (Figure 15). Generally, this can be attributed to the current political and security crisis that led to the departure of international organizations and embassies, the economic downturn, and reduced presence of State institutions.

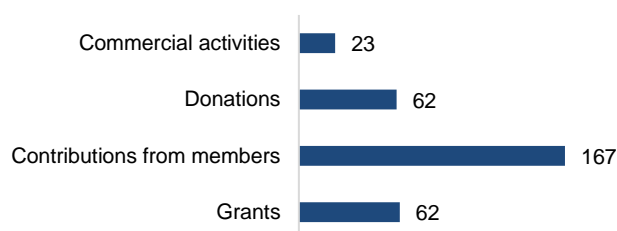


Figure 15 - Sources of funding (multiple response)

In the CSOs from the sample group, it appears that organizations focusing on women and youth have the most diverse sources of funding, and are the most likely to attract grants from donors (Figure 16). Aid-based organizations are more likely rely on contributions from members and donations, which – as discussed above – are often redistributed directly to beneficiaries.

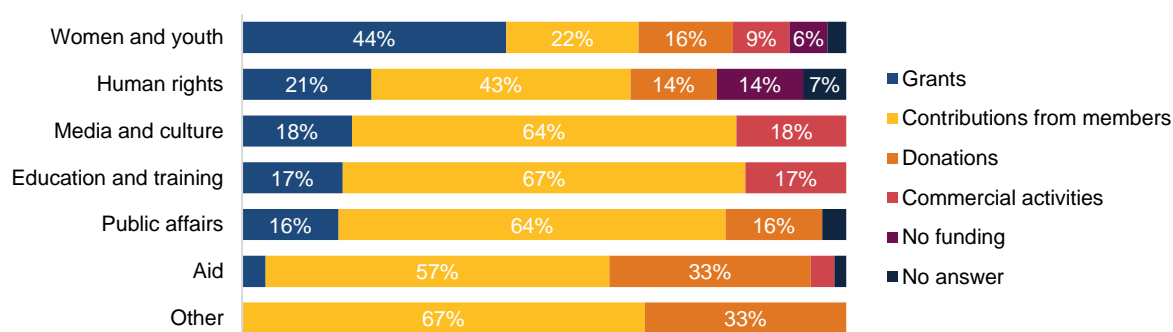


Figure 16 - Sources of funding by sector of activity

5.4 ACTIVITIES

5.4.1 SECTORS OF WORK

What CSOs claimed to be doing – based on their mission statement and their self-chosen areas of work during the pre-screening interviews – often differed dramatically from what these organizations were currently doing in reality. A CSO's mission statement can be misleading for a number of reasons. While

all CSOs registered with the Civil Society Commission at the Ministry of Culture had to produce a mission statement, these statements were often produced several years ago and have not been updated to reflect current activities. Furthermore, around half of CSOs interviewed during the research had trouble producing and/or recalling their original mission statement. Examples of activities not lining up with the original mission statement included cultural CSOs providing basic health services and women's rights CSOs working with IDPs.

In order to clarify actual activities and gain a more accurate picture of what CSOs interviewed had been doing in 2015, the research team developed **18 'thematic areas of work in 2015' categories**, based exclusively on current activities described by CSOs. The most popular activities focused on providing relief, education or training, and promoting human rights (see Figure 18 and Figure 17 for a breakdown of human rights).

This break-down of activities made it apparent that Libyan CSOs rarely focus on one specific activity or thematic area (see section 4.3 Specialization). CSOs prefer to conduct cross-cutting activities or ad-hoc activities to support beneficiaries based on current needs and funding opportunities, which is why a number of them are conducting activities in several seemingly unrelated thematic areas of work.

As one of the main goals of the research was to find reliable local implementing partners for DFID, 'relief' (included in the "Aid" category for the primary sectors of work) was not a priority sector for interviews. Nevertheless, many CSOs implementing activities on other thematic areas (and sampled for their activities in these other areas) also provide relief. Further, the emphasis on providing 'relief' may be a relic from the former regime, where CSOs were only allowed to conduct charitable activities.

Very few CSOs currently focus on youth demobilization and integration (and DDR in a broader sense) – a priority area for this research. Most security and safety focused CSOs were conducting safety awareness campaigns, normally on mine risk and awareness.

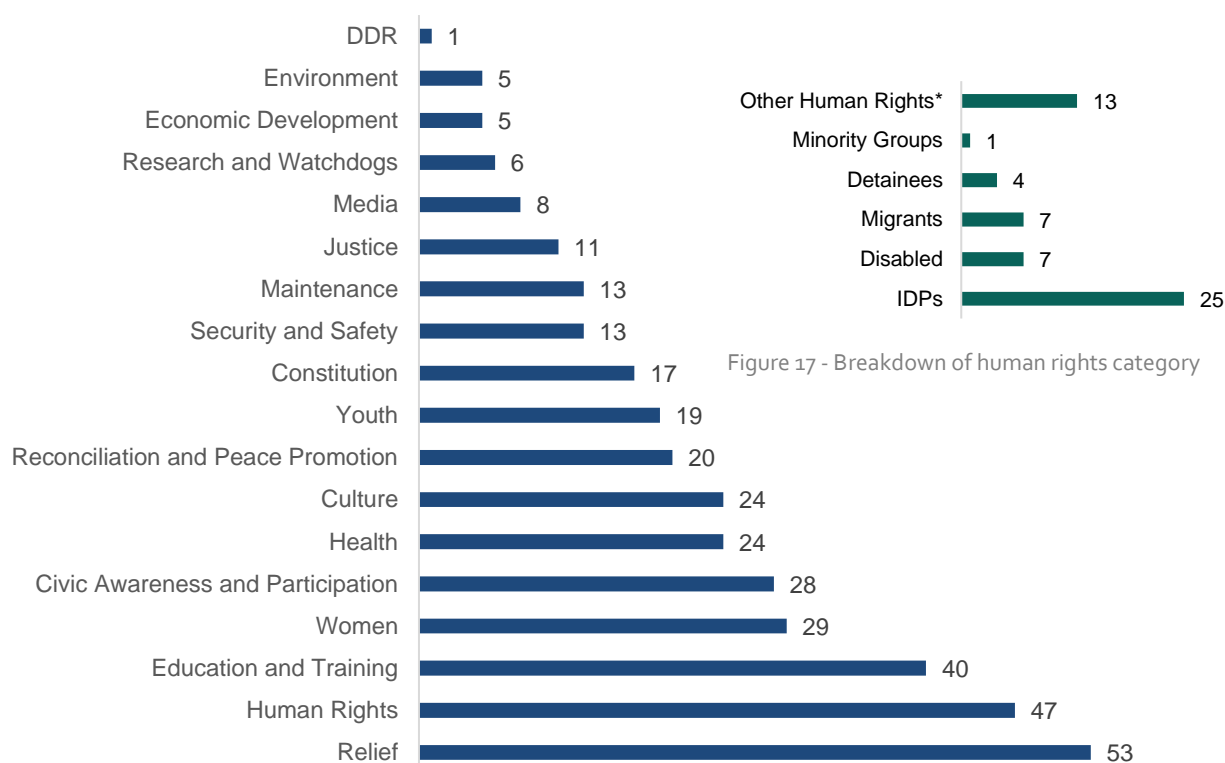


Figure 18 – Thematic areas of activity in 2015 (multiple response, recoded based on activities in 2015)

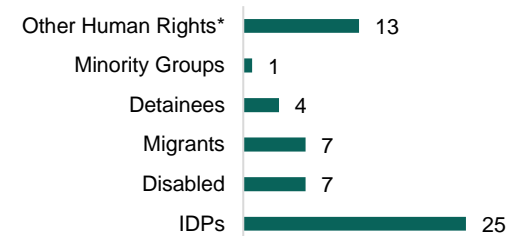


Figure 17 - Breakdown of human rights category

The research team also divided CSOs interviewed in seven **primary sectors of work** (Figure 19), according to the objectives, mission statement of CSOs, current activities as well as activities from previous years described by CSOs during open discussions with the interviewers. The seven categories were named as follows: **aid, media and culture, women and youth, education and training, public affairs and governance, human rights and justice, and other** (environment or economic development). For the rationale behind this process and a full description of the categories, please refer to section 3.3.4 Recoding.

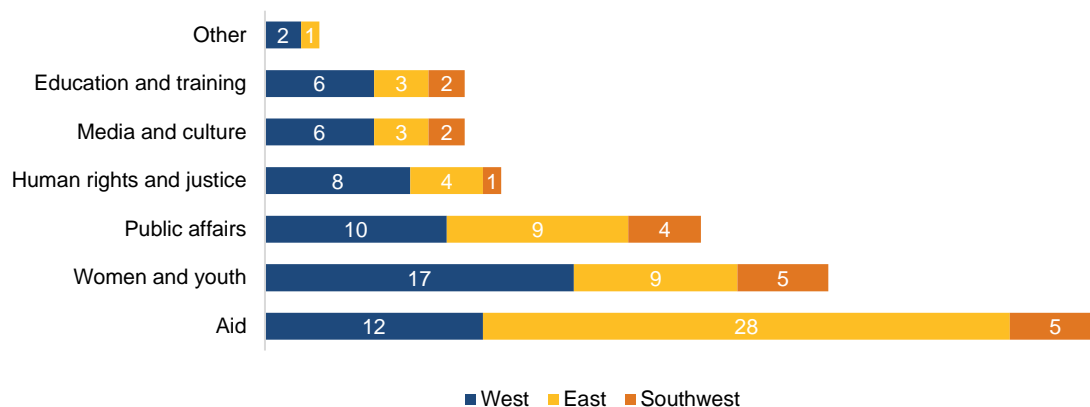


Figure 19 - Recoded primary sectors of work

5.4.2 EVOLUTION IN SECTORS OF WORK AND CRISIS RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

To understand how CSOs have evolved over the past year (and generally since the beginning of the crisis in July 2014), it is interesting to compare current activities with those reported in in UNDP's *Libyan Civil Society Mapping and Roster* (published in 2015, research conducted between September 2013 and May 2014).¹

The most common activities remain relief (referenced as 'charity' in Figure 20 below but defined similarly), Human Rights and Training and Education, followed by Civic Awareness and Participation.

Several general changes in CSO activity include an increased focus on IDPs, peace awareness, and reconciliation. This change of activity is understandable given the current context, where a civil war has displaced many Libyans and is the main current concern for most of the population. Notably, when asked how they had modified their activities as a result of the current crisis, 9% of CSOs interviewed for the research stated that they began to focus more on crisis response activities (mostly reconciliation, mediation, prisoner-exchanges, and IDP-oriented activities).

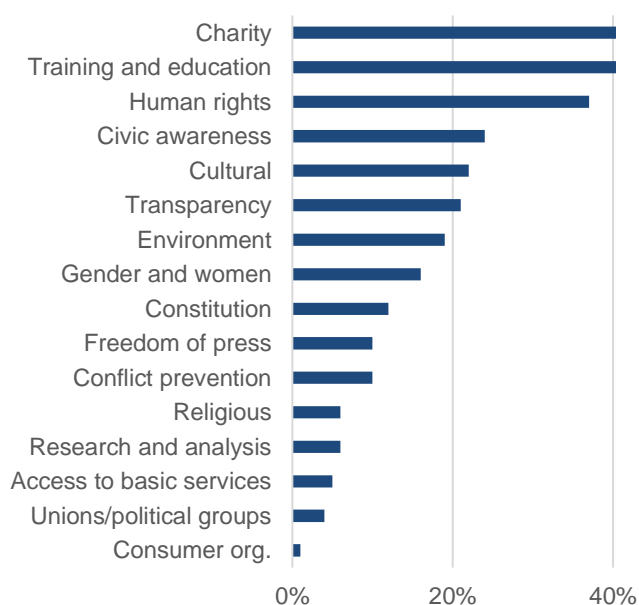


Figure 20 - Sectors of activity from 2014 UNDP report

¹ When comparing data on activities, it should be noted that the research objectives, and thus the sample groups, of both studies were different. For instance, this study did not focus on CSOs working on culture and media, which is why this area of work appears to be less important. The categories used in recoding are also different. Nevertheless, broad conclusions can still be drawn when comparing both groups.

From the outset of the crisis, **CSOs have focused less on the constitution, women's rights, media, trainings, environment, economic development and specific cultural activities.** These are areas that are not seen as a priority by the general population given the current context. This change of focus is also likely due to the difficult security context and general crackdown on CSOs and NGOs,

From the beginning of the revolution to 2014, the work of CSOs was focused on political issues. Since 2014 it changed, due to the many problems related to displaced people, refugees and relief needs.

CSO member from Benghazi

the fact that significant numbers of civil society activists have fled the country, as well as the difficulty in obtaining office space or centres for training in addition to the requisite experts and trainers. In addition, the drop of activities in some of these areas reflects changing resourcing opportunities: in general, Libyan CSOs interviewed were keen to focus on activities that the donor community was currently funding or seeking to implement. In 2013 and early 2014 the donor community was heavily involved in areas such as the constitution or women's rights for instance, which is partly why many CSOs focused on these issues. After the donor community left Libya and resources to work on these areas

became sparse, these CSOs turned to other activities (see section 4 **Civil Society Landscape**). It is worth noting that in the current sample group, culture generally involves sports and social activities: very few CSOs are currently organizing cultural events such as concerts, festivals, and poetry and cinema nights.

5.4.3 LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

Most organizations from the sample group stated that they had similar levels of activity compared to the period prior to the current crisis, although many CSOs have difficulty organizing regular activities. Lack of funding in particular is preventing a majority of CSOs from organizing regular streams of activities. Most CSOs currently focus on providing punctual activities to beneficiaries, based on available levels of funding. For example, of the 45 CSOs interviewed in Benghazi, only 10 are fully active (i.e. implementing activities most or all of the time). In addition, many CSOs have had difficulties expanding or scaling up successful activities, also due to the current challenging operating context.

Nevertheless, these 'stable' levels of activity need to be taken in the broader context of civil society in Libya. First, the sample group for this research included mostly currently active CSOs, as one of the goals of the research was to identify potential partners for DFID. Thus, the sample group is a rather resilient group of organizations who were able to weather the crisis and continue to implement some activities. Geographically speaking, CSOs in Benghazi seem to be still struggling more to implement activities than in the southwest and west, as the former were hit harder by the conflict (Figure 21).

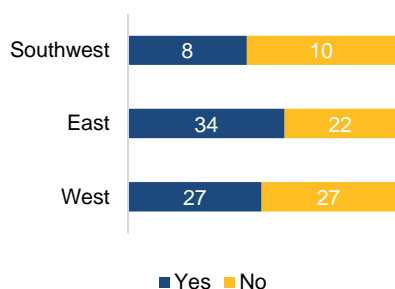


Figure 21 - Have you reduced the number of activities compared to last year? (by region)²

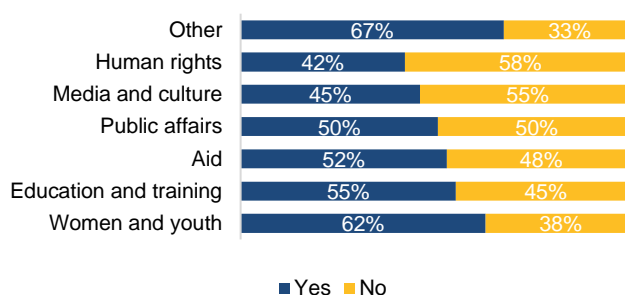


Figure 22 - Have you reduced the number of activities compared to last year? (by sector)³

Even so, many CSOs from the sample group did stop activities for significant periods of time due to the crisis, with the majority resuming activities following the summer of 2015, and some shifting the focus of their activities (as discussed above). Resilient CSOs who were able to adapt and continue operating

² Out of the 128 CSOs that were able to answer the question.

³ Out of the 128 CSOs that were able to answer the question.

despite challenging conditions were also able to maintain their networks, and would likely be able to restart 'core' or original activities once the situation in Libya improves.

5.5 SCOPE OF ACTIVITIES AND ACCEPTANCE

5.5.1 GEOGRAPHICAL REACH

Nearly half (47%) of CSOs are only active in their city, and few organizations are currently implementing activities in different districts – despite what respondents tend to answer at first about the geographical reach of their organisation. Many CSOs reported difficulties in expanding their activities to other cities, generally linked to issues with transportation and security, and the current lack of funding (see section challenges).

Because of the war, we cannot work beyond certain areas of the city.

CSO member from Benghazi

In terms of where activities took place, nearly all CSOs conducted activities in their own city, while much less were able to reach rural areas, other cities in their district, or other districts in general (Figure 23).

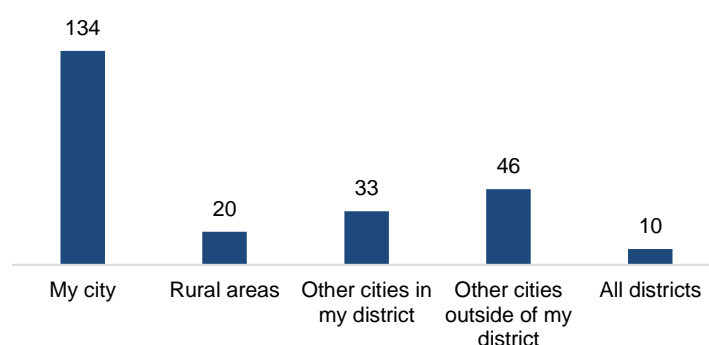


Figure 23 - Geographical scope of activities

5.5.2 ACCEPTANCE BY THE POPULATION

A large majority (78%) of CSOs interviewed believe that Libyans accept their organization and its activities. The exact level of acceptance, however, depends to a certain extent on the types of activities implemented by CSOs. Results from in-depth interviews support the findings discussed in section 4 **Civil Society Landscape**, notably that activities related to relief/charity, health and maintenance (all recoded as part of the 'aid' sector) and youth generally garner wide acceptance. Similarly, work on state building (recoded as 'public affairs'), disabled people, children and IDPs is also generally accepted.

On the other end of the spectrum, anything seen as related to politics is likely to be viewed with greater suspicion. CSOs reported that when they are seen as being politically biased or implementing politically biased activities, they are much less likely to be accepted by the general population. This is likely due to the concept of *fitna* or conflict, whereby Libyans have a strong aversion to activities and discussions that may generate or contribute to the overall atmosphere of conflict and strife. Specific activities highlighted by CSOs included work related to corruption and trafficking, human rights violation regarding prisoners, and migrant rights. Even work against drug traffickers, while not necessarily viewed with suspicion, is generally not accepted as it may create additional conflict in the local area and people are afraid to work or volunteer with these CSOs.

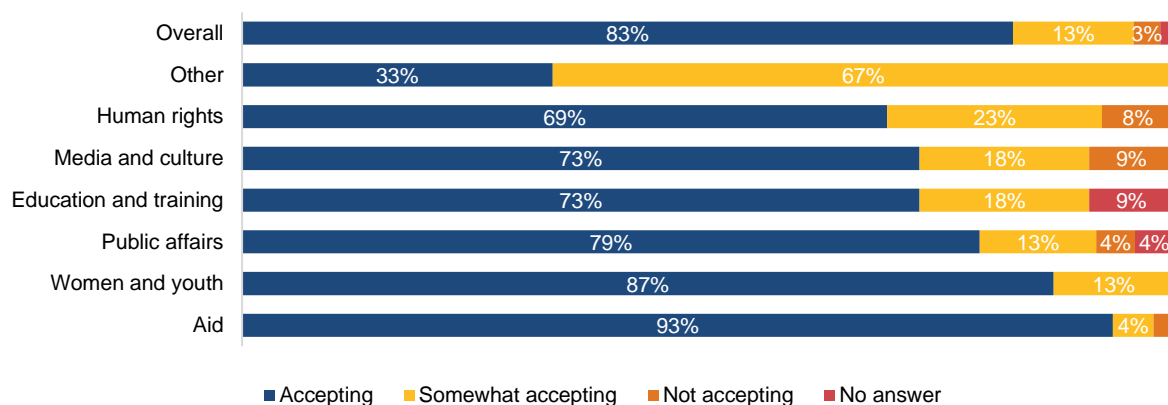


Figure 24 - Are Libyans generally accepting of your organization?

Another key factor in acceptance by the population is how a CSO presents itself and its work. A frequent comment during interviews was that acceptance or rejection 'all came down to the way things are presented' to constituents. A CSO member in Tripoli explained that "you can work on sensitive topics, you can work on everything as long as you use the right words and present things in the right way, a way that not provoking people and going against the culture."

For topics that are less accepted by the population (e.g. women's empowerment, media and environment), the main factor appears to be whether an organization presents itself in a professional and constructive way. One CSO member, also from Tripoli, explained that "because we come with a very good presentation and show only positive things they always enjoy hearing of our activities or the new projects we are working on."

People did not trust us until they attended our events and benefited from our training and workshops.

CSO member from Tripoli

Transparency and visibility (e.g. whether activities and impact are visible) also seem to play a strong role in acceptance. For instance, several CSOs commented that at first people were not very accepting or were suspicious of their organisation, but once they started seeing the results of their activities they became more accepting. This is an understandable reaction given the current political climate in Libya, and it appears that successful CSOs are able to carefully navigate and shape the perceptions of the local population.

5.6 IMPACT OF THE CONFLICT

5.6.1 IMPACT BY GEOGRAPHICAL AND THEMATIC AREAS OF WORK

A clear majority of respondents (81% of the sample) said they were either affected or very affected by the conflict. The impact of the conflict on CSOs interviewed was more significant in Benghazi than in Misrata and Tripoli. It also varied according to sector of work: due to the nature of their work, some CSOs continued work largely unscathed, such as those working on orphans, disabled people, and specific diseases.

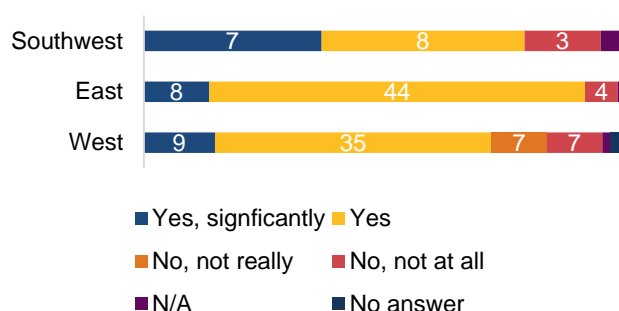


Figure 25 - Has the conflict affected your organization? (by region. N/A: organisations that were created after the conflict)

The 'primary sector of work' category 'Human rights' has the largest section of CSOs that declared not having been affected by the conflict at all. These unaffected 'Human rights' CSOs are mostly providing support to disabled people and IDPs (as well as one CSO focusing on prison detainees). Most of the other CSOs that declared not having been affected at all are:

- helping orphans (recoded as "education & training" or "relief" depending on their type of activities),
- monitoring elections,
- working on peace and reconciliation (both recoded as "public affairs"),
- youth organizations (some only),
- working on specific health issues (e.g. AIDS, medical home services),
- relief organizations (some only).

The sectors that we chose to focus on for this study are possibly those most affected by the conflict. Compared to the entire universe of CSOs in Libya, some sectors are over-represented and others under-represented (or not represented at all) in our sample, as we focused on specific thematic areas. An exhaustive survey of all CSOs working in Libya might show more CSOs working on relief (e.g. distributing blankets, conducting Ramadan campaigns) that were not affected by the conflict.

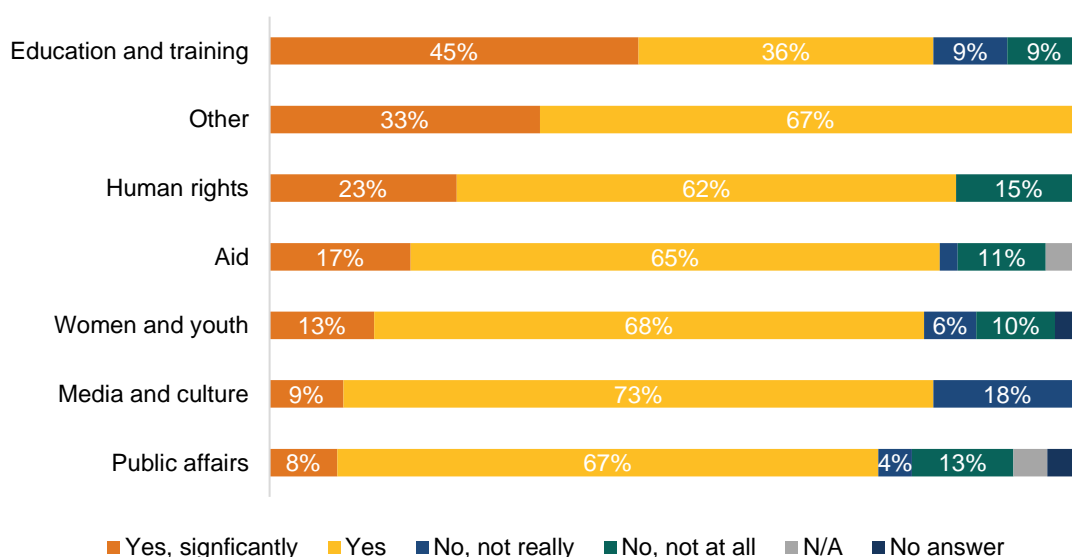


Figure 26 - Has the conflict affected your organization? (by sector. N/A: organizations that were created after the conflict)

5.6.2 CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT

The four most common consequences of the conflict for CSOs were security issues, a reduction or stoppage of activities, and the loss of team members.

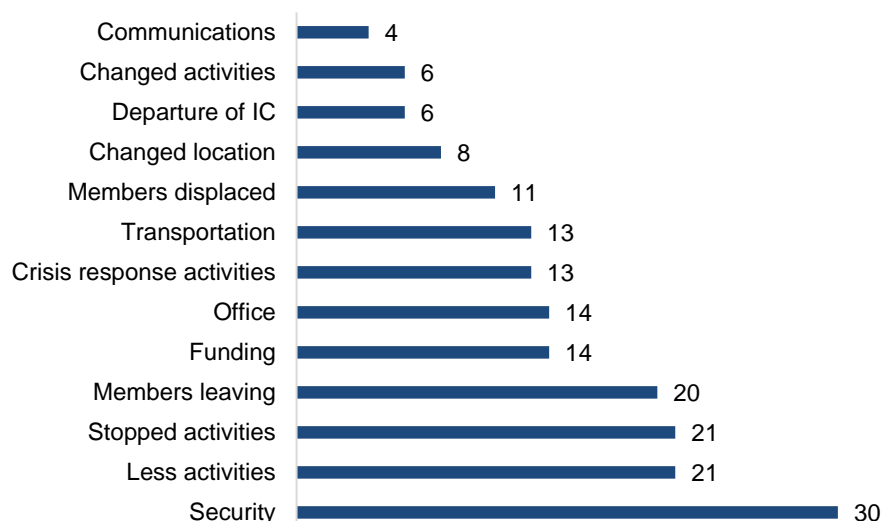


Figure 27 - In what way has the conflict affected your organization? (multiple answers, open-ended, recoded)

Understandably, given the current context, security was the main issue faced by CSOs as a result of the conflict (it was mentioned by 24% of respondents). The conflict also had a direct impact on activities, with 19% of respondents explaining that because of the conflict they had less activities and an equal portion saying they had to stop all activities (either permanently or temporarily), while some said they changed the focus of their activities.

Another main consequence of the conflict on CSOs interviewed was the departure of members, with members either less interested and becoming more less active, or leaving altogether due to lack of motivation or because they had to stay home, while others had to flee Libya.

Many CSOs are also facing issues securing office space: 12% of respondents affected (10% total sample) lost their office or centre or cannot access it anymore because it is a conflict zone. A further 7% of respondents affected (6% total sample) said they had to change the location of their office or activities.

'Transportation issues' generally referred to the restrictions of movement due to the conflict and, in some areas, the shortage of available petrol. 'Communications issues' meant outages in communication networks (mobile phone networks and internet) that reduced communication and organisation capacity between members.

Finally, some CSOs explained that they were negatively affected by the departure of the international community (including international companies such as Repsol that were sponsoring some organizations) as a result of the conflict, which resulted in less support in the form of training and funding.

Other issues reported include the multiplication of governments (making partnerships and registration with line ministries difficult), the difficulty in getting trainers to come to Libya under the current circumstances, power cuts, and an unclear legal framework (e.g. laws protecting the rights of women married to foreigner and their children were stopped).

6. COORDINATING CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **A variety of coordination bodies for civil society exist in Libya.** On the institutional side, the Commission for Civil Society of the Ministry of Culture is still currently active and registering CSOs. A number of small independent networks/unions exist, gathering CSOs by location or by sector of work. A few CSOs interviewed however stated to have left such networks/unions, **explaining that they were politically oriented or not active enough** to justify the amount of time dedicated to them.
- The registration process with the Commission for Civil Society is mostly described **as rather simple and efficient, but very few CSOs ever renew their registration.** Most CSOs are not registered anywhere else than at the Commission. Data collected through registration is unfortunately not updated, meaning that many CSOs that have closed or become inactive are still on the lists. Further, little use is made of these registries in terms of coordination and support.
- **Most CSOs are in contact or cooperate with other CSOs,** and a majority of members of CSOs seem to be involved in more than one organization.
- **Most CSOs do not receive any kind of support from local or national authorities** and the possibility of contacting and working with authorities (e.g. partnering with municipal councils or ministries) depends largely on personal connections and personal reputation.
- **Difficulties working with Libyan authorities (national as well as local) is one of the main challenges identified by CSOs in implementing activities.** The multiplication of governments and administrations following the political crisis led many CSOs to experience a 'governmental dilemma', especially for securing approval for activities. Indeed, some CSOs expressed regret that they were forced to 'choose sides', even as they try to avoid engaging in politics. Many lamented that the current political climate made securing the most basic of approvals an extremely complicated task.
- **Relationships with the international community are tinted by a feeling of abandonment and suspicion,** as CSOs reported that the population would often distrust CSOs working with or being funded by the international community.
- **A few CSOs were of the opinion that the current situation provides a much-needed operational space for Libyan organizations,** when in previous years INGOs used to 'take all the work', not letting Libyans do and learn by doing.

6.1 COORDINATING BODIES

6.1.1 INSTITUTIONAL BODIES

The Commission for Civil Society of the Ministry of Culture (المدني المجتمع مفوضية) is the official government body that regulates CSOs, and currently focuses primarily on maintaining a CSO registry. Several CSOs mentioned that they have received promises of support in the past, however the Commission does not currently have the capacity to support CSO activities financially or logistically. The Commission has an office in each district or *shabiyat*, where CSOs can also register.

At the subnational level, certain municipal councils are involved in supporting civil society, for instance in Tobruk, the Green Mountain area and Zuwara, where the municipal councils and CSOs are cooperating on health, public information campaigns, education and transparency. This cooperation appears to be mutually beneficial, strengthening local governance and bolstering service delivery, while also raising the profile and capacity of local civil society.

6.1.2 INDEPENDENT INITIATIVES

At the local level, several 'Libyan Unions for NGOs' (المدني المجتمع مؤسسات اتحاد) exist in most major urban centres. These are non-governmental and describe their role as providing a link between CSOs and municipal councils and the Ministry of Culture and Civil Society. Nevertheless, the independence of these unions is not always clear: two CSOs interviewed in Tripoli claimed that two local Unions supported political parties, and did not want to be involved with them.

In addition to these Unions, many small independent networks (mostly based on sectors of activity) also exist. While these networks provide some degree of coordination and structure to the CSO sector, the current multiplication of small and disorganized CSO networks that are only punctually active may at times be counterproductive.

6.2 REGISTRATION

6.2.1 REGISTRATION PROCESS

The registration process with the Commission is described mostly as rather simple and efficient, and a large majority of CSOs interviewed had completed their initial registration during the year they were created (Figure 28). Nevertheless, although CSOs are required to update or renew their registration every year, especially if core members have changed, very few CSOs interviewed had done so. Further, the sample group may not be representative of the total universe of Libyan CSOs, as most of the CSOs interviewed were at least semi-formal (i.e. structured and organized enough to be conducting activities on a semi-regular basis). It is likely that most informal and ad-hoc CSOs, who operate on a loose ad-hoc basis, are not registered with the Commission.

Most organizations used the services of a solicitor to take care of the paperwork needed to register at the Commission. A number of organizations cited issues with the registration process, mostly related to the conflict (e.g. slowing the process of registration), transportation (e.g. not being able to travel to the district office to register or the office not being in a secure area, which was even the case in Tripoli), or paperwork requirements (e.g. the necessity to have a clear organigram, which some organisations deliberately avoided).

Most CSOs are not registered anywhere else than at the Commission. Those that are registered with another authority are almost exclusively registered with municipal councils (14 CSOs) or line ministries related to their sectors of work (four CSOs) (Figure 29).

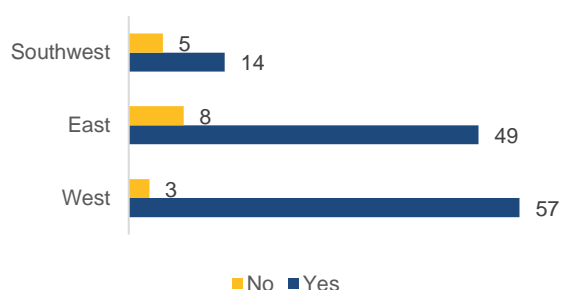


Figure 28 - Are you registered with the Commission for Civil Society at the Ministry of Culture?

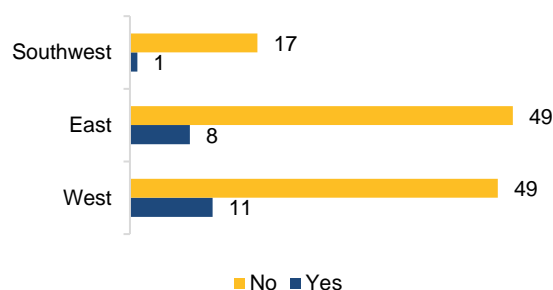


Figure 29 - Are you registered with any other authority?

Registration at municipal councils depends on the location and date of creation of the CSO, which is understandable given that municipal councils are rather recently created bodies. Some municipal councils are not able to take registrations, while others are quite active in trying to keep track of CSOs in their territory: municipal councils in Susa, Shahat, Beida, Benghazi, Ubari, Hai Andalus, Misrata were all mentioned as active by CSOs interviewed.

6.2.2 MANAGEMENT AND USE OF REGISTRATION DATA

Registration data is not being exploited and CSOs that have closed are not being tracked, hence the unavailability and unreliability of CSO listings. The Commission does not proactively seek to update its roster of CSOs.

A key challenge to maintaining this roster is the lack of accessibility. CSOs frequently change telephone numbers, use email addresses only sporadically, and sometimes change their names, making it difficult to track and contact these organizations. While a large number of CSOs recognize the need for greater coordination and are often keen to receive details of other organizations with whom they could potentially coordinate, a climate of suspicion and fear regarding security often mitigates free and open coordination between CSOs.

The extreme fluidity and unreliability of CSO listings has become a major challenge for coordination. This seems to be caused by two main factors: the first is that existing NGO lists are seldom updated; the second is that many NGOs are created but only a few survive, so there is a constant state of flux within the sector.

6.2.3 LACK OF A CLEAR LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The topic of registration makes the lack of a clear legal framework governing CSOs apparent – most CSOs do not know what their obligations are in terms of registration. While CSOs in the Southwest and the West understood that registration was indeed mandatory, more than half in the East saw it as an option (an official at the Commission confirmed that registering was indeed a legal obligation for CSOs).

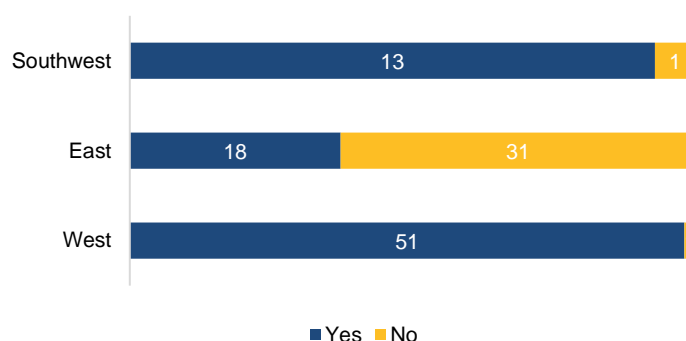


Figure 30 - Is it mandatory to register your CSO?

Among those who said that registration is indeed mandatory, many seemed to interpret this as 'necessary but not as a legal obligation'. Rather, some CSOs see registration as a way to gain trust and credibility, to open a bank account and to facilitate the organization of activities.

6.3 COOPERATION AMONGST CSOS

6.3.1 HIGH INVOLVEMENT OF THE GENERAL POPULATION IN CIVIL SOCIETY

Most Libyan CSOs are in contact and cooperate with other Libyan CSOs, and most CSO members are involved in more than one organization (Figure 31). Members of CSOs working on human rights and policy are often activists working in several CSOs, whereas relief and cultural organisations and unions are able to attract a different kind of audience, mostly people who would not otherwise be involved in civil society.

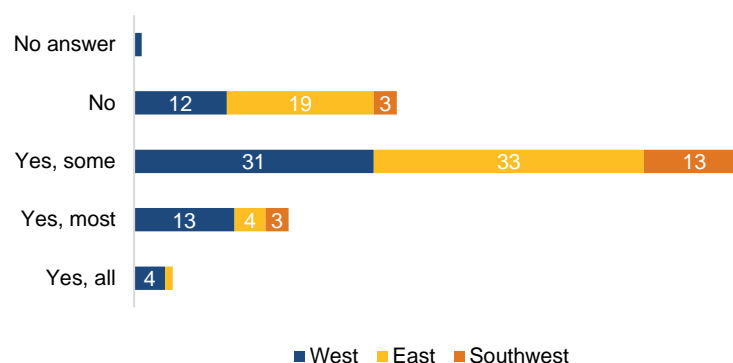


Figure 31 - Are your members working with other civil society organizations?

A large majority of respondents also answered that their organization cooperates with other CSOs – with no significant differences across locations and thematic areas of work.

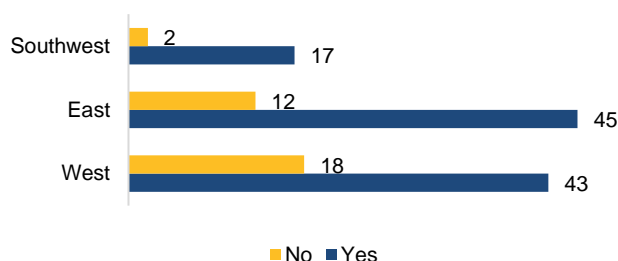


Figure 32 - Do you cooperate with other active CSOs?

6.3.2 MISTRUST AMONG CSOS

Accusations of misappropriation of funds, hidden agendas (e.g. politically motivated CSOs), and other criticisms are quite common between CSOs. More than 15 respondents criticised other CSOs during the interview, unprompted. These comments paint a rather cynical picture of Libyan civil society but also reflect misconceptions about civil society and the general climate of suspicion prevalent in the current Libyan context.

6.4 COOPERATION WITH OTHER LIBYAN ACTORS

6.4.1 RELATIONSHIPS WITH LIBYAN AUTHORITIES

Half of the CSOs interviewed said they had contacts or worked with at least one Libyan authority, with no significant difference across the country and primary sectors of work (Figure 33).

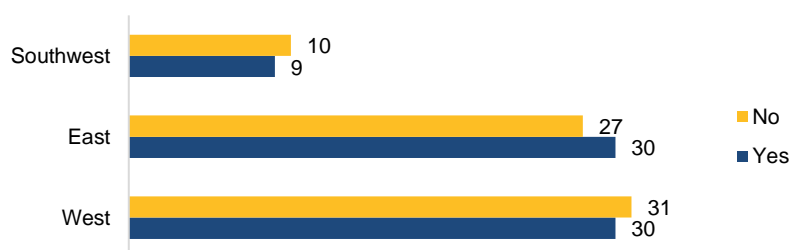


Figure 33 - Do you have contacts with any government institutions or authorities?

Municipal councils and line ministries are the two main Libyan authorities with which CSOs are in contact. They have little contact with the General National Congress (GNC) or House of Representatives (HoR), with the armed forces or other security actors (both independent militias and national security actors).

linked to either government). Municipal councils are the easiest authorities with which CSOs can communicate and collaborate. As one organization from Tripoli explained, 'the municipal council is the only body really working right at the moment: that is why CSOs working right now are collaborating with them.'

CSOs also collaborate with a wide range of line ministries, largely depending on the thematic areas of work of the respondents, including the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Sports and Youth, and Ministry of Local Government. Organizations who interact with ministries explained that they are in contact to get approval for activities or because they are co-organizing events or campaigns.

Some CSOs are in contact with the CDA, however the relationship seems to be exclusively one-sided, generally involving CSOs monitoring the work of the CDA or presenting them with findings (e.g. suggestions for the Constitution).

Very few CSOs maintain contacts with a militia or military force (2 respondents), elders' councils (2 respondents), *shura* councils (one respondent), or the HoR (one respondent).

Other institutions mentioned include specialized institutions such as the High National Electoral Commission (HNEC), the Amazigh Supreme Council, the National Audit Bureau, Hospitals, and Municipal Crisis Committees.

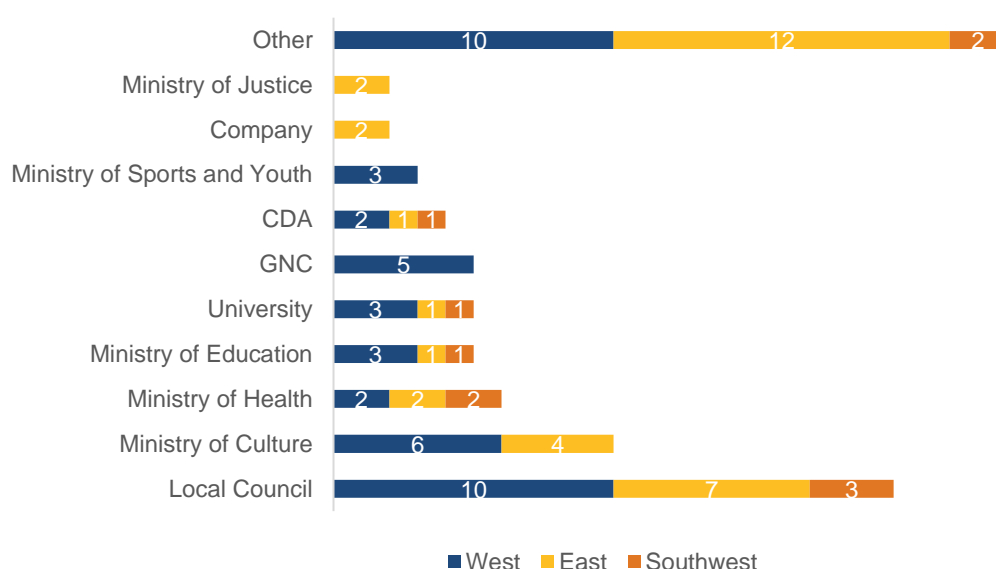


Figure 34 - Do you have any contact with government institutions or authorities? (open ended)

6.4.2 SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM AUTHORITIES

Most CSOs do not receive any kind of support from local or national authorities. On the contrary, a third of CSOs describe their relationships with authorities as more of a hindrance than a support. Amongst the 'bad experiences' reported, mostly the fact that authorities did not grant necessary authorizations and paperwork for CSOs to implement their activities (or were so slow to respond to requests for authorization that activities had to be cancelled), as well as the fact that recommendations made by CSOs were overlooked (in particular with the CDA, government and ministries).

Only four of the CSOs interviewed were receiving financial support from municipal councils in 2015. Others described the support received as more of a moral support, generally meaning that government counterparts facilitated necessary paperwork, information and logistical support. Three

Results from our research are not always used by decision-makers; sometimes it is a waste of time, money and effort.

CSO member from Tripoli

respondents mentioned financial support from a Ministry or another in their sources of funding for 2015.

Given the lack of a unified parliament and government to implement policies, we do not have a choice: we have to pick one side since we cannot work with both sides at the same time.

CSO member from Tripoli

The possibility of contacting and getting support from authorities is still quite dependent on personal connections and personal reputation, with CSOs interviewed describing how essential personal relationships were to receiving support. One Tripoli CSO member claimed that they had a good relationship with the municipal council because the husband of one their members was a member of the council. Relationships with Ministries tended to be based on common projects.

Difficulties in working with Libyan authorities (national as well as local) was one of the main challenges identified by CSOs in implementing activities. The multiplication of governments and administrations following the political crisis led many CSOs to experience a 'governmental dilemma', especially for securing approval for activities. Indeed, some CSOs expressed regret that they were forced to 'choose sides', even as they try to avoid engaging in politics. Many lamented that the current political climate made securing the most basic of approvals an extremely complicated task.

6.5 COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

6.5.1 DEPARTURE OF MOST OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Many CSOs described a feeling of abandonment by international NGOs and donors. Some organizations expressed their frustration during the interviews, claiming that 'the international NGOs and international committees left immediately. The only thing they worried about was having their logos on our posters and office doors.'

6.5.2 SUSPICION TOWARDS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Furthermore, some CSOs reported a climate of suspicion among the Libyan population towards the international community and CSOs backed by the international donors. They claimed that people often accused CSOs working with the international community of being spies or of trying to influence the internal politics of Libya, and that any organizations funded by external actors were immediately suspect.

6.5.3 PERCEPTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S CURRENT INVOLVEMENT IN LIBYAN CIVIL SOCIETY

A number of CSOs interviewed recommended that donors 'should be more careful who they give their money to' and monitor activities better, claiming that some 'fake' CSOs had received funding but did not do any work. A few CSOs were of the opinion that the current situation provides a much-needed operational space for Libyan organizations, when in previous years INGOs used to 'take all the work', not letting Libyans do and learn by doing.

7. CHALLENGES AND FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The main obstacles to the successful implementation of activities are the security situation, the lack of funding, low levels of professionalism, low sustainability and the lack of awareness about the nature and role of civil society.
- **The involvement of women in activities can be an issue to CSOs.** For instance, several CSOs reported that they were targeted or threatened because of the way they engage and employ women in their organizations, explaining that some Libyans do not accept organizations who have men and women working side by side.
- The main keys to success appear to be positioning, strategic vision, organizational structure, reputation and financial sustainability.
- CSOs interviewed mostly felt that they needed training, funds, equipment (e.g. office) and last but not least a stable environment to operate better.
- The level of perceived security risk for CSOs varies according to location, sector of work (CSOs working on sectors well accepted by the Libyan population, e.g. orphans care, feel safer), and reputation.
- **Reputation appears to be paramount** as the personal reputation of the manager and members of a CSO has a strong effect on the reputation of the organization itself, directly impacting its level of acceptance by the population, perceived security risks for members, and how easily it will be able to implement activities in the current context.

7.1 CHALLENGES

The main obstacles to the successful implementation of activities appear to be the security situation, lack of funding, low levels of professionalism, low sustainability, and lack of awareness about the nature and role of civil society (Figure 35). CSOs interviewed mostly felt that they needed training, funds, equipment (e.g. office) and – last but certainly not least – a stable and permissive operating environment.

Additional issues recoded as 'other' in the figure below include having to travel abroad (e.g. to attend meeting with the international community), the reluctance of trainers to come to the CSO's location, the high cost of rent, changes in legislation, members displaced or exiled, the poor state of the country's economy, corruption, the lack of a legal framework, the lack of media coverage, the lack of moral support.

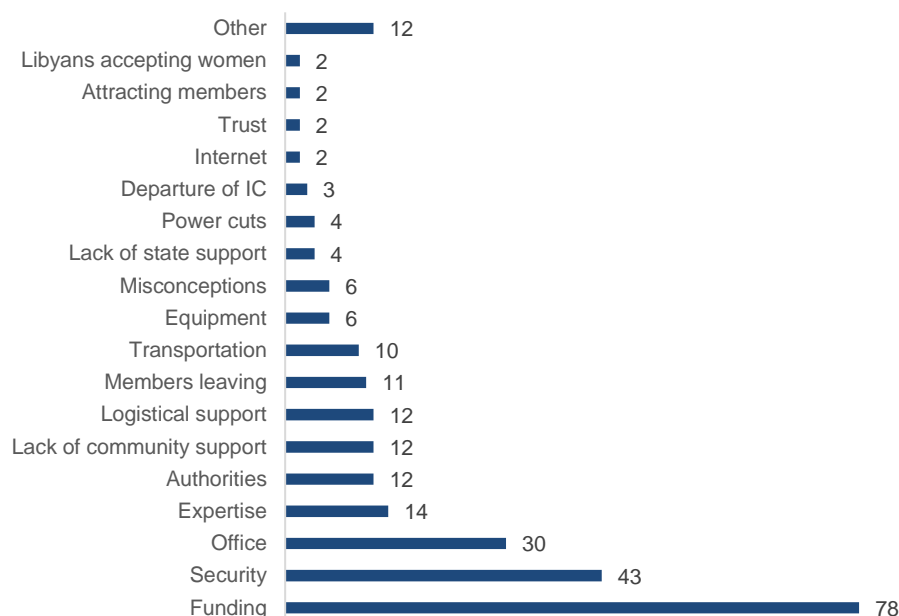


Figure 35 - Main challenges faced by CSOs (multiple answers, open-ended, recoded)

7.1.1 SECURITY

SECURITY IN GENERAL

The lack of a secure and stable environment remains the primary challenge for CSOs to implement activities, despite the fact that many organizations mentioned that their security situation has now slightly improved compared to the period between summer 2014 and summer 2015, which was widely viewed as the worst period for CSOs in terms of security. A small majority of organizations (54%) interviewed reported that the security situation for civil society organizations in their area is now acceptable or very good, while for 34% it is still bad or very bad (Figure 36).

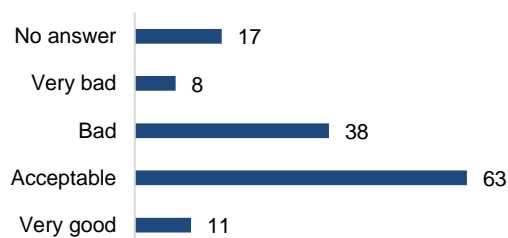


Figure 36 - Could you tell us about the security situation for civil society organizations in your area? (recoded)

Since the beginning of the conflict, CSOs have had to face threats, security issues during activities/events, kidnapping of members, murder of members, storming, robberies and destruction of their offices, as well as damage to CSO property (generally cars). These issues were already prevalent prior to 2014 in some parts of the country, notably in the East, where one CSO member from Ajdabiya explained that he had "been threatened and arrested in a workshop with an international organization in Benghazi in 2012; Ansar al-Sharia entered the workshop." A significant portion of CSOs (20%) interviewed for this research reported having experienced at least one such security incident.

I was shot and I received several threats because we had women working with us.

CSO member from Tripoli

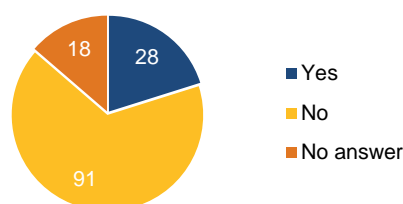


Figure 37 - Have you experienced a security incident in the past year?

Finally, several CSOs reported that they were targeted or threatened because of the way they engage and employ women in their organizations, explaining that some Libyans do not accept organizations who have men and women working side by side.

SECURITY BY LOCATION

The level of perceived security risk for CSOs varies according to location, which is an understandable finding given the localized nature of the conflict in Libya.

In Benghazi, the security situation seems to be slowly improving for CSOs, with a number of respondents reporting that while the situation was very poor from 2012 to late 2014, it had improved with the return of a measure of security to certain central neighbourhoods. These CSOs are rather pro-Libyan Armed Forces (LAF), and as such feel more secure now that the LAF has pushed back Ansar Al Sharia and other Islamist groups.

In 2014, security was not much of a problem, but now it is hard to go to poor areas and to travel between cities.

CSO member from Ajdabiya

Indeed, security in areas with open conflict such as Benghazi was largely dependent on the specific neighbourhood and political proclivities of a given CSO. Security tended to be a more significant issue for organizations operating out of Tripoli and Sebha (Figure 38). In Tobruk and the Green Mountain region (Susa and Beida), perceptions of security were split, while the one CSO interviewed in Derna deemed their security situation as 'acceptable'.

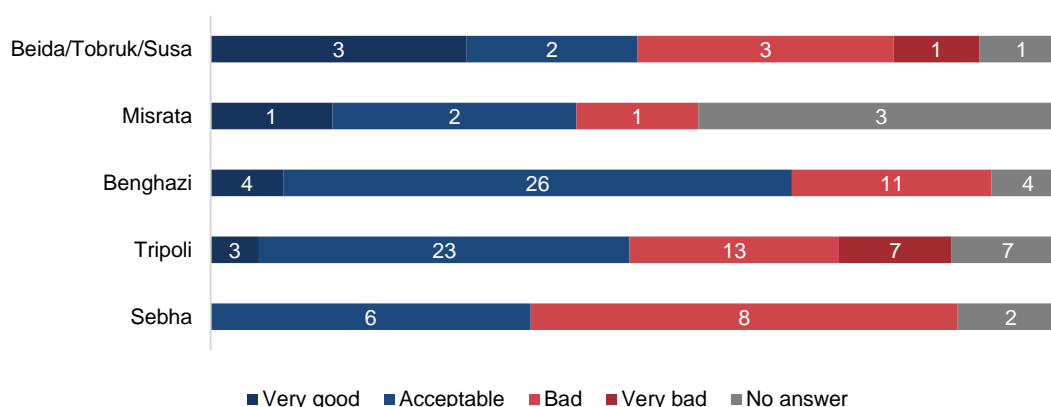


Figure 38 - Perceptions of security by city

Other issues seem to stem from the security challenges faced by CSOs, notably transportation, which many respondents cited as regularly hindering their activities that involved both moving within a given city and moving between cities.

7.1.2 RESOURCES

FUNDING

Lack of funding was a major issue reported by CSOs from all locations, widely attributed to the departure of international organizations and donors, business people and other national benefactors, and the general difficulty in obtaining grants and approval from national institutions and authorities for funding. Many CSOs explained that it was difficult to find funding for activities that were not priority areas for international and other donors. In addition, several CSOs stated that it was difficult to secure funding as they had little contacts or relationships with donors, or were confused or put off by the process of applying for, receiving and implementing grants.

Securing core funding, which would allow continuity of activities and improved capacity to plan and implement a broader strategy, is the main issue for most CSOs.

You need to have good relations to get any sort of help. Anywhere you go people usually give support to those they know.

CSO member from Tripoli

OFFICE SPACE AND RUNNING COSTS

Many CSOs either saw their offices or centres destroyed or they were forced to relocate due to the conflict. Further, operating costs have risen dramatically due to the devaluation of the Libyan dinar, limiting the capacity of many CSOs to purchase necessary equipment and rent office buildings.

We lost our office. We do not hold any more seminars: we postponed some and canceled others because we did not have enough money to rent places.

CSO member from Tripoli

7.1.3 LACK OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

LACK OF INTEREST

Many CSOs reported that communities were less interested in their core areas of work, and due to the current poor state of public services were more interested in basic services and aid/charity. Organizations working on environmental awareness, medical hygiene, women and migrants are often deemed 'trivial' when compared to the larger problems faced by Libyans in the current context. In addition, CSOs working on sectors with less visible and immediate results (e.g. civic awareness, human rights, etc.) are having a harder time gaining public acceptance.

Some people accept us, but the rest think that we should not be wasting our efforts on the environment but focus on people that are dying

CSO member from Tripoli

LACK OF AWARENESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Another challenge for CSOs is the general lack of knowledge of what civil society is and how organizations operate. Lack of understanding of the nature and role of civil society seems to affect all sectors, the only exception being purely relief-based activities (e.g. Ramadan campaigns, giving clothes, blankets, food, etc.). While interviewees explained that Libyans tend to have serious misconceptions regarding the role and activities of most CSOs, the problem appears to be exacerbated for more specialized CSOs with harder to define missions (e.g. youth entrepreneurship).

Some (Libyans) do not understand the nature of our work, and do not accept us.

CSO member from Benghazi

People always think that CSOs have political affiliations.

CSO member from Tripoli

This lack of understanding can often encourage 'conspiracy theories' targeting CSOs, even when their work is largely apolitical. Suspicion increases significantly when CSOs work with and/or are funded by international donors. Unfortunately, the media seems to play a role in fomenting these conspiracies, and several organizations blamed their coverage for heightened suspicions towards civil society.

7.1.4 LACK OF STATE SUPPORT

ISSUES DEALING WITH AUTHORITIES

Due to the political conflict, CSOs no longer have much support from state institutions, a particular challenge for organizations whose work involves coordinating and partnering with ministries. Some CSOs cited a lack of skills and capacity within ministries to work with civil society actors, complaining that the government does not take care of CSOs and offered little or no support.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

The absence of a legal framework is another problem faced by CSOs in organizing and implementing their activities. As a result, many CSOs described the sector as 'chaotic' without the necessary regulations in place. CSOs also mentioned that the absence of a functional legal system meant that they had little recourse when threatened or faced with other problems.

The absence of laws governing civil society organizations causes a lot of chaos in the sector.

CSO member from Benghazi

7.1.5 INTERNAL CHALLENGES

LACK OF EXPERTISE

Many CSOs in Libya have serious issues regarding the expertise and capacity of their staff. Many lack trained managers and core team members and have issues with general management (e.g. preparing and managing budgets, project management, strategic planning, etc.). Interviewees often cited this as a major issue, a problem further complicated by the lack of available training. Indeed, when asked what kind of support they would need (see section 7.2 Factors for Success for more details), CSOs ranked training as the second most important type of support they require to successfully implement activities. These results are in line with findings from KIIs conducted with donors and with the assessment of CSOs' capacities (see section 5.2 Resources and Capacity).

ATTRACTING AND RETAINING MEMBERS

Because of the reluctance of people to work in the current context, the departure of many qualified and core members, and the psychological effects of the conflict on members, many CSOs suffer from a serious lack of personnel. An interviewee from Tripoli explained that the assassination of a core member had an understandably very negative impact on staff morale. While this is an extreme example, it does show the kind of pressure faced by CSO members who continue to operate in Libya.

Not all members are active and motivated to work; volunteer work is very little accepted within our society and nowadays people are losing motivation to work voluntarily.

CSO member from Tripoli

Further, the excitement that followed the fall of the Gadhafi regime and the newly created space for civil society actors has passed. Interviewees explained that many previously active members of civil society have lost enthusiasm for their work due to the current difficult context.

7.1.6 NEW CHALLENGES

More than half of CSOs interviewed claimed to face new challenges in 2015 compared to the previous year, including 66% of respondents from the East, which appears to be the region with the largest number of new challenges (Figure 39).

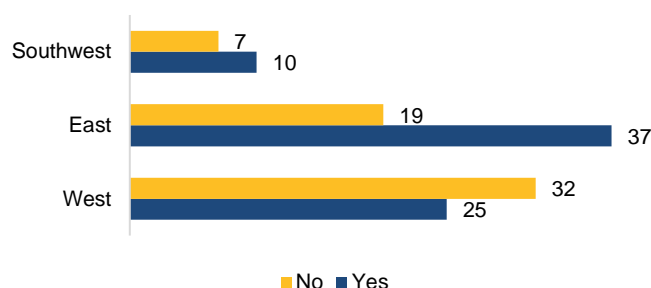


Figure 39 - Have you faced any new challenges compared to last year? (Seven respondents did not answer this question)

When prompted to describe these new challenges, many CSOs explained that they had new security and funding concerns when compared to 2014, highlighting the increasingly difficult operating environment for civil society actors in Libya. The third most cited new challenge was attracting competent new members, reaffirming the finding above (Figure 40). Challenges recoded as 'other' include having to travel abroad (e.g. to attend meetings with the international community), having to change the CSO's location, lack of logistical support, the poor economic situation, issues with the justice system, lack of access to some areas, and the lack of media support.

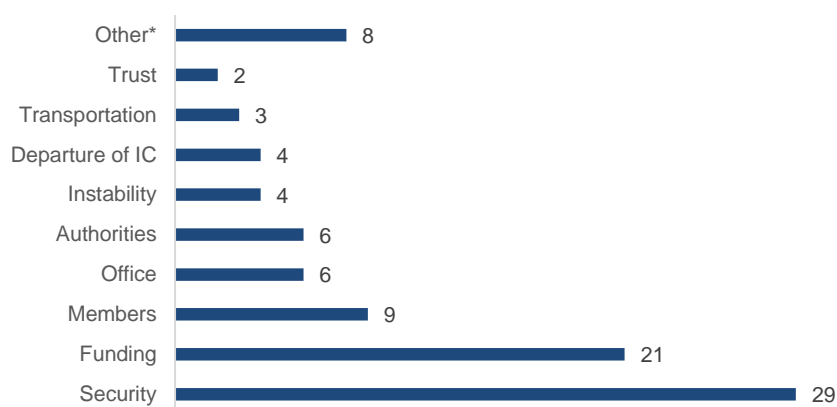


Figure 40 - New challenges experienced by CSOs (multiple answers, open-ended, recoded)

7.2 FACTORS OF SUCCESS

The main keys to success for Libyan CSOs are positioning, strategic vision, organizational structure, reputation and financial sustainability.

7.2.1 SUSTAINABILITY AND STRATEGIC VISION

Successful CSOs tend to have a sustainable business model in terms of internal structure, finances and human resources. Strong leadership and recruitment models also contribute to the success of an organization. Other CSOs cited the need for innovation and creativity, regardless of the sector of activity, when dealing with problems and implementing activities. Case studies and further details can be found in the annex Basic Profile of CSOs Interviewed.

7.2.2 REPUTATION AND POSITIONING

Reputation is paramount for successful CSOs, and successful organizations generally have strong links to the community and strong levels of community participation in activities. The personal reputation of the manager and members of a CSO has a strong effect on the reputation of the organization itself, directly impacting its level of acceptance by the population, perceived security risks for members, and how easily it will be able to implement activities in the current context. Some point out that they acquired a good reputation through their work.

We never faced any security issues with our organization because we are well known and known to do good work, so most Libyans are very accepting.

CSO member from Benghazi

CSOs also cited the importance of becoming a 'household name' amongst community members to build acceptance and local support. Interviewees explained that people are more welcoming of activities when they perceive CSO members to be close to the community, and that maintaining a good relationship with community members was very important.

Finally, successful organizations point out that they made significant efforts to establish their neutrality, and that they were very careful to avoid direct work on policy-related topics. CSOs who do work on

We provide very practical services; people can see the results of what we do: people get jobs thanks to us. When you help people, they appreciate it.

CSO member from Tripoli

sensitive issues explained that the key to acceptance and success was to portray activities and goals as inclusive. For example, one Amazigh organization explained that while they do work to promote more recognition of Amazigh issues in the constitution, they do so by presenting these issues as a preservation of culture and research. To establish their credibility, they also focus on providing visible and practical services, such as helping to fix traffic lights.

7.2.3 REQUIRED SUPPORT

Requested support from CSOs effectively mirrored the challenges they face, with funding, training, office space, logistics, and equipment being the most cited types of support (Figure 41). Support required recoded as 'other' in the figure below includes the need for more members, law enforcement and new ideas for projects.

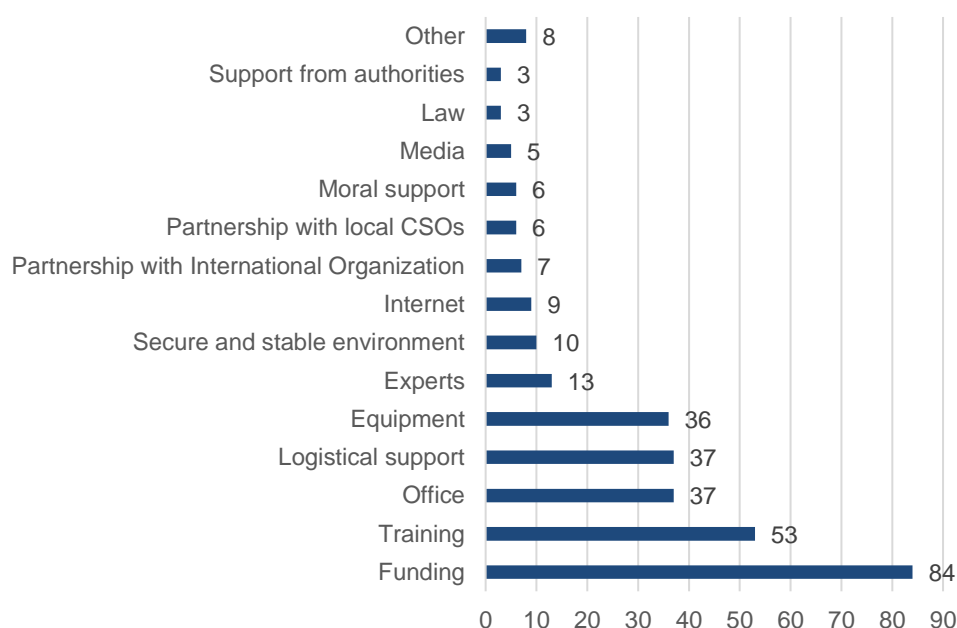


Figure 41 - Required support (multiple response)

In terms of training, CSOs generally asked for training in project management, general management, accounting, English, and specific sectors of expertise (e.g. anti-human trafficking measures). While most both expect and need training in the basic skills listed above, several CSOs who had already attended donor-led training sessions would like to see more advanced training in communication and public relations, risk management, conflict resolution, and technical training or training of trainers (ToT) training. The main challenge in training support is that most of the sessions happen abroad, as international trainers cannot travel to Libya, and are thus expensive and time consuming for Libyan CSOs. One solution proposed by a CSO member was to partner less experienced CSOs with more established organizations in order to develop their capacity and pool resources.

In Libya, most CSOs fail because they lack knowledge of how to manage a CSO and corruption. The international community could help in establishing new CSOs by providing training and helping them to concentrate on their objectives.

CSO member from Misrata

8. CONCLUSION

As a direct result of the conflict, many CSOs have become inactive or have stopped work altogether. For CSOs that are still active, the main sectors of work remain the same as before the crisis – relief, training and education, and human rights. However, many CSOs have switched their focus to new areas of intervention, choosing to focus more on crisis response than on pure development, an understandable reaction given the current context.

While Libyan civil society has been significantly impacted by the current crisis, CSOs face many of the same challenges they did prior to July 2014 – if anything these same challenges have been amplified due to the current context. CSOs still require similar support regarding resources and capacity building. Thus, while the findings from this report confirm the assessment conducted by UNDP in 2013 and 2014, it also means that building and supporting civil society will require significant efforts from the donor community. This presents a serious challenge given the current difficult operating environment, and donors such as DFID must therefore develop innovative and targeted ways to help Libyan CSOs.

8.1 PERSPECTIVES

CSOs interviewed were split on perspectives for Libyan civil society, with half believing that the situation will improve and half expecting the situation to further deteriorate. However, there seems to be a consensus among respondents that Libyan CSOs lack experience, despite the significant efforts made and risks taken by CSO members. Thus, while enthusiasm is not lacking, many CSO members reported that they did need help organizing and implementing activities, explaining that the concept of civil society was very new in Libya.

Many also felt that the perceptions of their compatriots, generally suspicious and distrustful of CSOs, needed to be addressed in order to facilitate effective activities and partnerships with communities. With the lack of a clear legal framework or clear national authorities, CSOs feel they are operating in a dangerous and unstable context, and worry that they will be seen as political actors or agents of foreign governments.

While women are still quite present in Libyan civil society, many organizations faced gender-based issues during the conflict, and organizations with mostly female members reported facing more security challenges, including office raids, threats, and harassment during outdoors activities. Other CSOs with mixed membership lamented being condemned for holding mixed activities. Further, organizations that previously focused on women's rights and gender issues have scaled back activities, worrying that such work could be construed as political, and focused more on direct relief and training for women, or turned into women groups working on non-gender-related issues.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The uncertain future of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) and the future shape of a new Libyan government present a challenge when attempting to develop targeted recommendations for donors and the international community. As such, the following recommendations have been developed to be applicable regardless of the outcome of the LPA, and target apolitical (or as apolitical as possible given the current context) Libyan counterparts and authorities.

8.2.1 SUPPORT COORDINATION MECHANISMS

Support networking and coordination mechanisms by promoting strategic partnerships between elite and grassroots organizations.

Large organizations need the connections and endorsement of small local organizations. One of our main findings is that local reputation and relationships are of paramount importance in terms of credibility and acceptance at community level. At the same time smaller organizations need the expertise, project management support and access to funding that may be offered by larger 'elite' organizations. Further, smaller organisations need to develop the capacity and professional skills of their members, learn how to better attract and retain members, and develop sector-specific expertise.

Encouraging partnerships between elite and grassroots organizations will provide grassroots organizations with the necessary support without compromising their greatest asset: their grassroots nature. This will also allow grassroots organizations to have a greater opportunity for impact through the opportunities offered by elite organizations, and provide elite organizations with a voice from the ground, an authentic connection to core constituencies, and an ability to redirect priorities to what is coming from the community rather than the donor.

Support the best and most efficient coordinating institutions and bodies

Support for effective coordination bodies should begin by helping them regularly update and publish CSO listings. While this responsibility is currently under the purview of the Commission of Civil Society, their efforts thus far have not been very conclusive. This is further complicated by the multiplication of small sector-specific listings. Efforts should be made (such as the UNDP online platform) to provide updated listings accessible to all members of civil society.

In addition, more understanding is needed of the coordination bodies, in particular the functionality and activities of institutional bodies. While the international community has supported and spurred the creation of many small independent networks (grouping CSOs from the same place or the same sector of work), without further support these networks do not appear to be sustainable.

Encourage registration and communicate on the need to renew registration

While it is important to make sure that registering and updating details is simple and straightforward, CSOs also need to understand that registration is mandatory. More communication on the need to renew registration annually is necessary. In addition, the international community should emphasize the need, in the long term, for a clear legal framework on civil society in Libya.

8.2.2 ADDRESSING SUSTAINABILITY

Target specific important but non-profitable sub sectors

Some important sub sectors that are not profitable may be neglected in a period of transition, such as independent media, women's rights, culture, and environment. Subsidizing such sectors will allow them to continue operating.

Provide training on financial management and stability

Such training could involve marketing for income generation, grant application, and how CSOs could best position themselves and their services, and will be conducive to their long-term sustainability. This training could be coupled with training on management, creative collaborative approaches, building middle management, and efficient use and retention of volunteers.

Developing management capacity

In addition to sustainability training, CSOs expressed an urgent need for training on project management and strategic planning. Such training could be a means of encouraging internal governance and best practices, and was also requested two years ago when research for the UNDP assessment was conducted.

Connect CSOs with subnational authorities

Although some municipal councils are quite active in civil society, having set up dedicated committees and making efforts to establish contact with CSOs, most CSOs declare not receiving any support from local authorities. CSOs would value logistical support, administrative support and information sharing from local authorities as much as financial support. Access to and opportunities of working with local authorities still seem quite dependent on personal connections.

As such, the international community should assess opportunities for partnerships between CSOs and local authorities. Such partnerships could bolster the capacity of local authorities to conduct outreach and service delivery activities, although this must be done carefully to ensure the independence and neutrality of CSOs.

8.2.3 EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION ON THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Manage community expectations and perceptions

In the current Libyan context, CSOs are one of the most trusted types of organizations (along with municipal councils). Nonetheless, broad misperceptions and suspicion exist amongst communities. Clearly communicating the role of civil society and the activities of organisations will enhance the image of the sector and highlight organizations that are affecting positive change in their communities; it also has the potential to inspire action in youth and other community members. Nevertheless, links to foreign donors should not be showcased given the current politically charged context.

Discuss the nature and role of civil society with CSO members

Many divergences about the concept of civil society could be observed among CSO members, particularly regarding the role of CSOs and their relationship to government and authorities. Working with Libyans to develop a functional concept of civil society that is appropriate to Libya and clarifying the role of civil society in Libya might benefit the situation.

8.2.4 DIVERSIFYING CIVIL SOCIETY INITIATIVES AND ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTED IN LIBYA

Tapping into the more informal CSO actors, in addition to the more recognizable 'traditional' NGOs, could be an effective way for agencies like the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and DFID to support the development of civil society in Libya, as most CSOs supported are somewhat 'westernised', urban and educated, have already attended workshops and are familiar with proposals and grant applications.

While reaching these less visible actors is challenging, several steps could be taken to better access more informal and smaller CSOs. Communication in Arabic is essential, as only few CSO members are fluent English speakers. Less than half (39%) of the pre-screening respondents said they spoke English, and these individuals tend to be focal points for communication with the international community. Further, many organizations interviewed explained that they were unaware of previous research and outreach efforts conducted by the international community. Sharing results with CSOs who are currently not being supported could also be a good way to engage and coordinate with them.

Further, communication on grants could be conducted not only online but over the phone, as many CSOs do not have internet access or do not know where to look for requests for proposals. One CSO member explained that 'we wish you to contact us via our mobiles because of our constant electricity cuts.'

8.2.5 PROGRAMMING DURING THE CRISIS/CONFLICT

Support in priority non-partisan CSOs that are careful to avoid being perceived as political and are therefore well accepted

Support should be provided to CSOs who can demonstrate some measure of neutrality and are perceived as apolitical by the local community. These organisations can continue to grow and develop their capacity and networks through mostly apolitical work, helping them to gain local acceptance all the while gaining the necessary project management, professional, and outreach skills that can be applied to other types of activities once the current situation stabilises.

Most Libyan CSOs are quite flexible in terms of thematic areas for their activities and not specialized on only one sector, so organizations that are functioning well can be supported to do things that are not their primary focus.

8.2.6 ADDRESS KNOWLEDGE GAPS

Civil society networks in major cities other than those studied for this report remain unmapped and unknown. In addition, the donor community has a very limited understanding of how civil society operates in many semi-urban and rural localities. Further, knowledge is limited on the impact and effectiveness of CSOs, something that could be remedied with basic monitoring and evaluation of donor supported programs, as well as other CSOs that may not be working directly with donors. While this research paints a more detailed picture of CSO activities than previous efforts, this remains the

CONCLUSION

perspective of CSO members themselves. Understanding how communities perceive specific CSOs and their activities could help donors to better target interventions. In addition, little is known of links and partnerships between CSOs and local and national authorities.

9. ANNEX

- List of IDIs Conducted
- Basic Profile of CSOs Interviewed (IDIs)
- List of KIIs Conducted
- Research Tools
- Results of the Initial Prescreening Phone Survey
- References