Mapping Study of Civil Society Organisations in the occupied Palestinian territory

Final Report

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For further information on the EC thematic programmes in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt), please visit the following websites:

European Union Representative Office the West Bank and Gaza:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/projects/overview/index_en.htm

EuropeAID page on oPt:

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/neighbourhood/country-cooperation/occupied_palestinian_territory/occupied-palestinian-territory_en.htm

An electronic version of the Mapping Study can be downloaded from the following link:

http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/westbank/projects/overview/index_en.htm

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ACRONYMS

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
Addameer	Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association
Al Haq	Al Haq Institute
Al Mezan	Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights
Al Tareeq	The Palestinian Institution for Development and Democracy
AMAN	Coalition for Integrity and Accountability
ARIJ	Applied Research Institute
ATTA	Aid to the Aged Services
BADIL	Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights
BDS	Campaign for Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel
BISAN	Centre for Research and Development
CAC	Community Action Centre
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
Data	Applied Studies and Research Institution Society
DCI	Defence for Children International – Palestine Section
DED	German Development Service
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
EC	European Commission
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid
ECRC	Early Childhood Resource Centre
ELCJHL	Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
ESCS	The Elderly Supportive Community Services Society
EU	European Union
Euromed	Euro-Mediterranean
FOEME	Friends of the Earth Middle East
FSD	Social and Development Fund
GCMHP	Gaza Community Mental Health Program
GCRC	General Commission for Regulating Cooperatives
GTZ	German Development Agency
HDIP	Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute
HR/GG	Human Rights and Good Governance Secretariat
Hurryyat	Centre for Defence of Liberties and Civil Rights
HWC	Health Work Committees
HWC	Health Work Committees
ICB	International Centre of Bethlehem
ICCO	Inter-church Organisation for Development Cooperation
ICP	Institute of Community Partnership
IEPALA	Instituto de Estudios Politicos para America Latina y Africa
INGOs	International Non Governmental Organisations
IO	International Organisations
IPCRI	Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information

IPPC	International Peace and Cooperation Centre
LFC	Fund for Local Cooperation
MA'AN	MA'AN Development Centre
MAS	Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute
Masader	Masader Web Portal set up by the NGO Development Centre
MIFTAH	Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue & Democracy
MIP	Micro Intervention Programme
MUSAWA	Palestinian Centre for the Independence of Judiciary and Legal Profession
Muwatin	Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy
NDC	NGO Development Centre
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NORAD	Norwegian Aid Agency
NORWAC	Norwegian Aid Committee
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
NSA	Non State Actors
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PalVision	Palestinian Vision
PANORAMA	Panorama Centre for the Dissemination of Democracy and Community Development
PAP	UN Programme for supporting the Palestinian People
PARC	Palestinian Agricultural Development Association – Palestinian Agriculture Relief Committees
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
PCC	Palestinian Counselling Centre
PCHR	Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
PENGON	Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network
PFPPA	Palestinian Family Planning & Protection Association
PFU	Palestinian Farmers Union
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PNCR	Palestinian Network for Children Rights
PNGO IV	World Bank "Palestinian NGO Project IV"
PNGO	Palestinian NGO Network
PNIN	Palestinian National Institute of NGOs
POGAR	Programme on Governance in the Arab Region
PPC	Palestinian Peace Coalition
PYALARA	Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership and Rights Activation
REEF	REEF Finance - Rural Microfinance
SAWA	All the Women Together Today and Tomorrow
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
Sharek	Sharek Youth Forum
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
TIRI	TIRI Make Integrity Work

TRC	Treatment and Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture
UAWC	Union of Agricultural Work Committees
UHCC	Union of Health Care Committees
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US	United States of America
WA	Welfare Association
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene
WEDO	Water and Environmental Development Organization
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWW	World Wide Web

Executive Summary

1. Introduction and methodological framework

In January 2011, the Office of the EU Representative in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) launched the Mapping Study on Civil Society Organisations in the oPt. The study aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of CSOs in the oPt, including their capacity-building needs and recommendations for possible intervention areas to be supported by forthcoming cooperation programmes. The study was finalized in May 2011.

The geographic scope of the study included the entire oPt: the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. **A total of 262 CSOs were consulted** so as to have an adequate representation of the dynamics and processes characterising Palestinian civil society at the national and local levels. Of these organisations:

- **87 were met with and involved in interviews** (49 in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and 38 in the Gaza Strip) **and also filled out questionnaires**; thus, different tools for the collection of information were administered to these organisations with the aim of obtaining information on different features of the organisation and also for the aim of crosschecking gathered information.

- **100 participated in focus groups** (73 in the West Bank and Jerusalem and 27 in the Gaza Strip) **and filled out questionnaires**, as per the above description. These organisations were studied using two different tools for the collection of information.

- **75 CSOs only filled out questionnaires**.

Moreover, among these CSOs, 68 participated in feedback meetings and seminars, held in Ramallah and Gaza. The feedback meetings and seminars served as a further tool for verifying the study findings.

2. The main issues and stakes for the Palestinian civil society

A peculiar characteristic of Palestinian civil society organisations is the fact that – unlike most civil societies and against the concept of civil society itself – most of the CSOs were created out of an established "state framework." As many authors point out, most organisations emerged and developed in the absence of the state, the absence of national independence, the absence of sovereignty over land and the absence of citizenship. Following the creation of the Palestinian National Authority this situation changed, as also remarked by the promulgation of the "**Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organisations**" in 2000. In the last decade, a process of concentration of CSOs on service delivery activities became apparent, while their engagement in the policy arena was often marked by difficulties, also if in specific cases policy dialogue and the engagement of CSOs in local governance improved.

At first glance, civil society organisations in the oPt appear as a wide and vibrant set of actors, managing a large variety of activities (over 90% of social services in the oPt are managed by CSOs), working in all sectors, maintaining the most precious of Palestinian human resources and a most important reservoir of information and knowledge, constituting a main bridge between the oPt and the rest of the world. Nevertheless, CSOs in the oPt face an important set of issues and are somehow actors in a risk situation, namely:

- an unclear relation with politics and the need to find a new and specific role in the process of political transformation and state building which is under course in the oPt;

- the exclusive focus on service delivery, which implies for Palestinian civil society the risk to completely leave the policy arena, the risk of competing with the public authorities in service provision and the risk of being relegated into the peripheral space of the provision of services to the so-called "special groups" i.e. the poor and destitute, persons with disabilities, etc.;

- the permanent condition of insecurity and emergency created by the Israeli occupation and the periodic armed clashes in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, which also generates divide within the Palestinian civil society;

- the lack of a common voice of Palestinian civil society, despite the long experience, the great number of organisations, the accumulated knowledge assets and the economic dimension of civil society activities in the oPt;

- the lack of recognition of civil society out of the NGOs and a limited recognition of grassroots organisations and the tendency of most NGOs to lose their linkages with communities and original constituencies;

- the increasing tendency towards the emergence of competition and conflicts among CSOs, with a decreasing effectiveness in the use of available resources;

- the inadequacy of internal governance, accountability and transparency, and the persistence of non-democratic practices within CSOs, which results in limited public trust and mobilization capacity.

Some specific issues emerge when dealing with East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

The special context of **East Jerusalem** produces a two-fold set of challenges for civil society organisations. On the one side, their legitimate existence and activity are at risk; while on the other side the increasing social exclusion conditions create a growing demand for services and for human rights protection activities.

The siege situation of **Gaza** seriously affects the CSOs. There is a decrease of trust among the organisations, with constituencies and with political authorities. There is also little space for political dialogue and participation in governance, a lack of access for qualified human resources, equipment and materials, and a dependency on external donors and resources. Despite all this, CSOs are sometime assuming a role of **change catalysts**, fostering technological innovation and social change concerning gender and age, supporting active social integration of underprivileged groups, mitigating and reducing the long-term and structural effects of the "closure" of social space, supporting access to information and knowledge.

3. An analytical view of Palestinian Civil Society Organisations

Palestinian CSOs were analysed in reference to four different organisational levels. As summarized below, for each level specific capacity building needs were identified.

For first level organisations (which include grassroots groups and the different categories of CBOs):

- Individual capacity and skill-building needs emerge regarding "needs analysis", project management, policy monitoring and for the construction of a recognized "volunteer profile" for activists.

- Organisational capacity needs particularly concerning the definition and strengthening of the organisation identities, the management of relations and negotiation with local authorities; the raising and management of local resources; the monitoring of services and processes in the communities and at the local level.

- Context and institutional environment-related needs concern: the recognition of local CBOs as actors and not as simple beneficiaries or project implementing agencies, the strengthening and

reconstruction of CBOs relationships with communities, the recognition of CBOs at the local level by local authorities without passing for the registration process, construction of space for dialogue on development policy at the community/local level involving CBOs and local authorities.

For second level organisations (that comprise NGOs and other intermediary organisations):

- Individual capacity and skill-building needs emerge regarding project design and management, policy analysis, the civil society role in governance, and fund raising.

- Organisational capacity needs particularly concerning the organisational governance; the recognition and support to CBOs; the communication and transparency functions; the participation in local governance; the monitoring of public policies and services; the negotiation and management of partnerships and relations with public authorities.

- Context and institutional environment related needs concern: the creation of space for policy dialogue at a national level; the recognition of the civil society role by public authorities; the recognition of new CSOs by the older ones and the opening of existing coalitions and networks to a larger number of CSOs.

For third level organisations (including the aggregations of CSOs focusing on a sector, a geographical area or a campaign) **and fourth level organisations** (that consist of the general aggregations of CSOs, such as the national civil society platforms):

- Individual capacity and skill-building needs emerge regarding project design and management, policy analysis, the civil society role in governance, fund raising.

- Organisational capacity needs particularly concerning the organisational governance as regarding the relationships with member organisations; the volunteers and activists management; the communication and transparency functions; the negotiation and management of partnerships and the relations with public authorities; the analysis of "constituency needs".

- Context and institutional environment related needs concerning the creation of space for policy dialogue at the local and national levels; the recognition authorities; the enlargement of network and platform constituency, the recognition by public authorities.

4. The resources for supporting CSOs

The resources for supporting CSOs in the oPt have also been considered, focusing on the EC, the European donors and the international aid agencies, the international NGOs and national public authorities and non state actors.

While a large amount of resources are available for supporting Palestinian CSOs, most of them are used to support project-based service delivery initiatives. Resources for CSO engagement in local and national governance and policy dialogue activities are seldom available. Support for long-term programmes is also scarce. Current allocation of resources risks fostering a further concentration of Palestinian CSOs on service delivery – sometime in competition with public authorities – and to produce effects such as the increase of competition among CSOs, the tendency to attribute to grassroots CSOs only the role of "beneficiaries" and the escape of CSOs from governance functions.

5. Operational recommendations

Based on the study, operational recommendations were defined. These recommendations find their main context in the setting of a general strategy for supporting CSOs in the oPt adopting the **global objective** to **strengthen the position of civil society in public debate and in the elaboration and implementation of development strategies, complimentary with the Palestinian Authority's strategy and actions**.

In relation to this objective, **three main strategies** were identified, namely:

- **supporting a shift from service provision to governance**, involving a CSOs increased engagement in the policy setting process, in the monitoring of policy implementation and public service management, in the setting and functioning of local and national councils on development, and in supporting civic participation in decision making;

- **supporting the integration of the CSO community and the matching of first and second level organizations**, particularly through the construction of a shared vision of Palestinian society, the setting of stronger collaboration relationships among CSOs at different levels and the greater recognition of 1st level organisations by the 2nd level ones, not as simple beneficiaries but as active, autonomous actors;

- **supporting the opening of space for local agenda setting and for policy dialogue** in which CSOs can represent the perspectives emerging at the grassroots level.

The three strategies identified above may be concretized through the adoption of three specific objectives: **the diffusion of capacities for assuming a governance role by CSOs**; **the creation of space for "policy making from below"** and **the facilitation of policy dialogue and the improvement of local sustainable development initiatives**.

This would also require the adoption of **a common framework by stakeholders** and the construction of **conditions for making the most of available resources**. This can be facilitated by increasing consultation activities with CSOs, by supporting CSOs in front of public authorities, by pulling together the resources from different donors and by fostering the adoption of measures for increasing the relevance and consistency of CSOs initiatives.

Finally, **opportunities and options for supporting civil society development** were identified as well as **sector priorities**. Opportunities and options focus on:

- supporting first level organisations to **maintain their "grassroots" links and functions**, while achieving greater capacities and sustainability; maintaining grassroots links and functions is strongly connected with the possibility and capacity to play an active role in the management of local public services and development initiatives;

- supporting second level organisations to **increase their pro-activity in the policy arena** and their **attitude to recognize first level organisations as "policy actors"**;

- supporting third and fourth level CSOs in achieving **higher participation by member organisations**, in being able to **perform permanent and continuous activities** and in **increasing their influence on policy making**, both at national and at local level.

Sector priorities concern the EU thematic programmes (NSA, EIDHR, PfP, IIP/Gender, Cultural Activities, and East Jerusalem). Namely:

- **NSA Programme** can provide a privileged space for promoting mutual recognition among civil society organisations and other actors, including the PA and other NSA, through initiatives aiming at knowledge production and sharing; promoting the formulation of common perspectives (conferences, workshops, etc.); construction of partnerships for policy setting or for solving local problems.

- **EIHRD**'s priorities comprise: strengthening existing coordination and collaboration platforms; advocacy for an effective application of existing legislation on associations and CSOs; advocacy for the opening of space for public recognition of "unregistered" community based, grassroots organisations; research and monitoring; activities focusing on citizenship rights in the daily life (accessibility and quality of basic services, relationships among citizens and public bureaucracy, etc.).

- **Partnership for Peace Programme**'s emerging priorities are: public discussion on peace perspectives (including state building) and on peace building policies; improvement of the CSOs capacity to face the threats produced by political divides and by the "political invasion" of civil society space; support to local committees and initiatives for promoting the recognition of Palestinian CSOs and their role in the occupying authorities; support to CSO initiatives aimed at making visible conflict impact and at promoting local initiatives for solving and reducing them.

- **Investing in People**/Gender thematic programme emerging priorities concern: the strengthening of the cooperation among women's organisations and the fostering of a policy focus on gender, aimed at increasing the recognition that it is not only a matter of individual rights (and of protection of these rights) but also a matter of collective rights.

- For **Cultural Activities**, priorities emerge concerning the access of CBOs and small CSOs to national and international cultural arenas and concerning the possibility of opening opportunities for sharing cultural production outcomes.

- **Cooperation initiatives in East Jerusalem** identified key priorities, such as: the recognition of Palestinian civil society actors by the occupying authorities; the opening of space for negotiation and dialogue in which Palestinian citizens' organisations can play a role other than the simple provision of basic services; the assumption of a mediation, legitimating and political support role by international donors.

1. Background: Institutional Framework and Objectives

In January 2011, the Office of the EU Representative in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) launched a Mapping Study on Civil Society Organisations in the oPt. The study was finalized in May 2011.

The framework in which the study was carried out is two-fold.

On one side, it includes the process of recognition of Non State Actors (NSA) by the European Commission, which in all recent documents considers Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) not only as service providers or implementers of EC strategies, but also as key political actors in development processes. Strong civil society involvement in policy dialogue and in influencing policies is in fact recognized as an important element contributing to making development processes more effective and hence promoting democratization.

On the other side, the framework of the study includes the need to promote more structured and effective participation of CSOs in policy dialogue and in sustainable development processes in the oPt. The current situation in the oPt is characterised by territorial, legal and political fragmentation – where East Jerusalem is under Israeli control, Hamas rules the Gaza Strip and Fatah the West Bank. This fragmentation caused difficulty in the recognition of civil society actors and their role in development, as well as their participation in policy dialogue, setting and monitoring.

Overall and specific objectives

Within this complex framework, this study has one **overall objective:** "to strengthen the position of civil society in public debate and in the elaboration and **implementation** of development strategies, complementarily with the Palestinian Authority's strategy and actions." Therefore, the **specific objective** of the study is to **"provide a comprehensive overview of CSOs in the oPt, including their capacity-building needs and recommendations for possible intervention areas to be supported by forthcoming cooperation programmes."**

In fulfilling these objectives, assuming both the perspective of **policy dialogue** that includes influencing government decision making processes, monitoring policy implementation and performing an effective advocacy role at all levels and of **sustainable development**, the study is expected to:

- Identify **key organisations and structures** in civil society, as well as their **key constraints** and their primary **capacity building needs.**
- Identify the **key policy areas** in which CSOs could successfully engage, given their current capacities, the political context and the current state of the sector.
- Provide an overview of current **donor strategies** in civil society development and an indication of future trends in terms of overall involvement and areas of focus.
- Elaborate an **operational strategy** for effectively promoting civil society engagement, including recommendations on possible usage of **existing EC instruments** (bilateral assistance, thematic programmes, geographic programmes, etc.).

In implementation of this study a team was established comprising of: Gianfrancesco Costantini (Team Leader), Jamal Atamneh (Civil Society Expert), Feda Al Husseini and Khaled Ayesh (Field Researchers).

2. Theoretical and Methodological Framework

2.1. Theoretical framework of the study

The study's theoretical framework is based on the *operationalisation* of a set of concepts and analytical instruments applied for the purpose of identification and analysis of relevant actors, including a study of the processes and dynamics in which these actors are involved.

These instruments include:

- Adoption of an **operational concept (or working definition) of civil society**, which focuses not only on NGOs, but also on a wider and multifaceted universe of organisations. According to this operational concept, actors can be present at any of the following four tiers or main organisational levels: the **first level** includes grassroots groups and CBOs; the **second level** is composed of NGOs and other intermediary organisations; the **third level** comprises the aggregation of CSOs focusing on a certain sector, geographical area or a campaign; the **fourth level** consists of general aggregations of CSOs, such as the national civil society platforms. Moreover, according to the concept adopted in the research, civil society actors are those entities with a **focus on social responsibility**, since they are operating in favour of the collective interest and of social and economic development in their own territory.

A Graphic Representation of the Levels of Civil Society Organisations
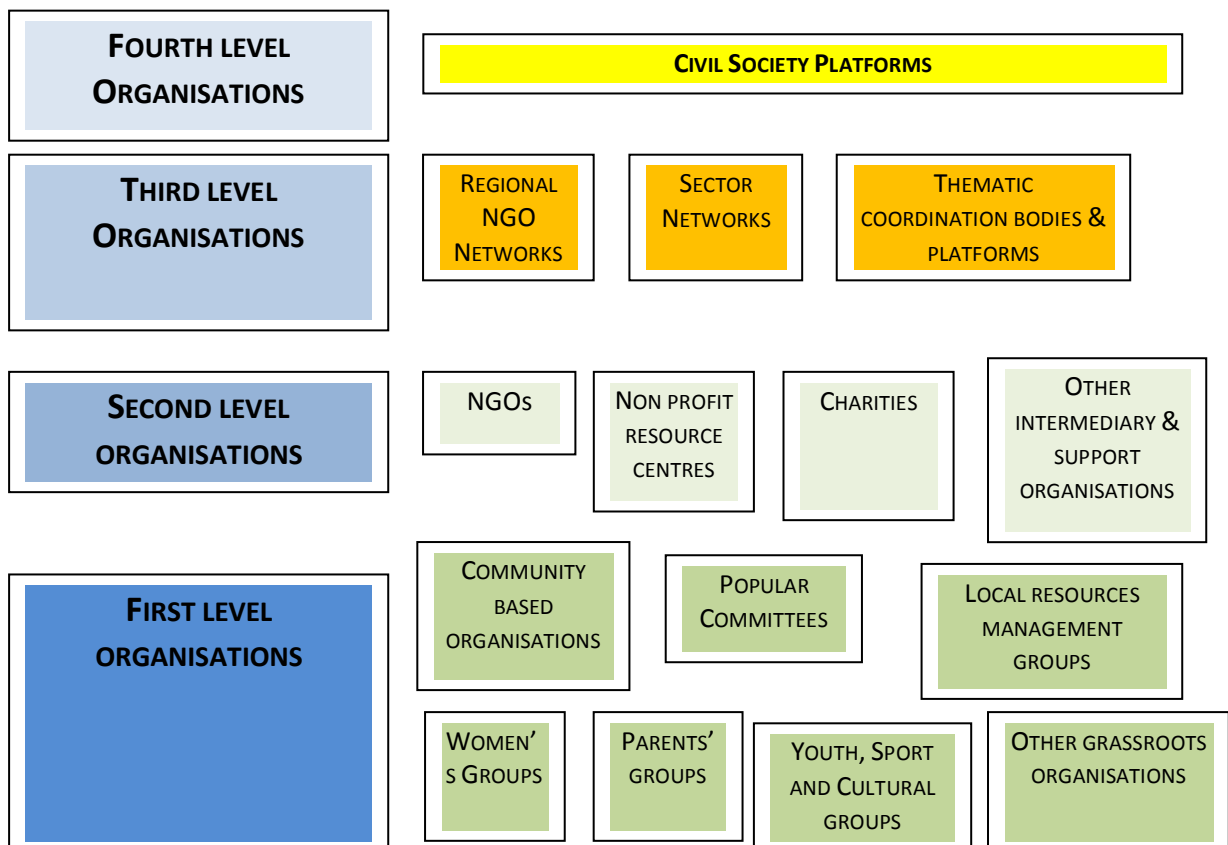
- Identification of a set of dynamics to be considered when analysing the strategic dimension and positioning of civil society and CSOs, particularly *vis-a-vis* local development processes and EU policies. These dynamics concern **governance** and the participation in policy dialogue; **service delivery and project implementation**; **knowledge**; **bonding and bridging functions** (i.e. the strengthening of internal links and cohesion vs. the linking with external actors, increasing social capital and external "trust relationships"); **innovation** and **sustainability**.

- Focusing on factors influencing the possibility for CSOs to adopt a relevant role in sustainable development initiatives and in policy dialogue, taking into consideration that both the exogenous factors representing constraints and opportunities (i.e. **external dimension)** and the endogenous factors, such as resources, capacities, organisational structure, organisational culture and short-medium-long term goals, as well as the governance setting of the organisations **(i.e. internal dimension)**.

- The analysis of CSO capacities and relevant needs, focusing on three main dimensions: **individual skills,** such as strategic leadership; **organisational internal dynamics**, such as organisational identity (values, mission and ethics), efficient and effective management and available resources; **organisation's interactions with other actors** and the **external context**.

2.2. Methodological framework of the study

The Mapping Study was not characterised as a census of civil society organisations and has not conduced a general survey. Rather it consisted of a study aimed at understanding the main processes and challenges that Palestinian civil society is facing. To this aim, from the methodological perspective the study is characterized by some main features, such as:

- A **general methodological approach** based on the use and integration of a variety of information sources.

- Integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

- Reference to "facts" and "representations" as indicators of the considered phenomena.

- Construction of knowledge through an iterative process, aimed at bringing in the stakeholders perspective.

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The scope of the study

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The geographical scope of the study includes the entire oPt, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. Despite the fact that some studies were previously carried out to produce an overview of Palestinian civil society (e.g. the MAS NGOs Mapping of 2007, carried out in collaboration with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics) the universe of Palestinian CSOs appeared in the theoretical and the methodological perspective of this mapping study is an "unknown universe"[1].

To portray such a universe, some main choices were made:
1. Making a distinction between two main groups of CSOs: a) organisations based in the **West Bank and East Jerusalem** (since most large Jerusalem organisations now have their headquarters in Ramallah, and many Jerusalem CSOs that do not have an office in the West Bank currently have an "informal" character) and b) the organisations based in the **Gaza Strip**.
2. Consulting the organisations belonging to the 4 organisational levels.
3. Consulting organisations active in all the recognised "sectors" and mandate areas including agriculture and the environment, human rights and democracy; women's rights; special needs; education, health, etc.

Without being able to define statistical representation of Palestinian CSOs, a sociologically meaningful representation was built up. A further choice concerned the identification and selection

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[1] As a matter of fact, most previous studies were based on an administrative definition of NGOs, including in one only set all kinds of different "registered" associations and without adopting any distinction among levels and social functions of organisations. Moreover, the estimates made by previous studies and the public authorities (such as the Ministry of Interior) are very diverse where the number of CSOs is esteemed to range between 1400 and 2200.

of informants. This was a particularly sensitive operation mainly when looking at CSOs. To identify key organisations among the wide group of CSOs, the following criteria were adopted:

- the **central position in the Palestinian Civil Society**, identified by examining the participation in national networks and at the geographic and organisational range of action;

- the **capacity to provide information**, determined by the previous research activities and by the experience and relations with other organisations;

- the engagement in at least one of the **sectoral areas** considered in the mapping study.

Quantitative features of the study

As explained in the following paragraphs, **a total of 262 CSOs were consulted**. 100 belong to the 1st level, 152 belong to the 2nd level and 10 belong to the third and fourth levels. Of these organisations:

- **87 were met with and involved in interviews** (49 in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and 38 in the Gaza Strip) **and also filled out questionnaires**; thus, various tools for the information collection were administered to these organisations with the aim of obtaining information on different features of the organisation and also for the aim of crosschecking gathered information.

- **100 participated in focus groups** (73 in the West Bank and Jerusalem and 27 in the Gaza Strip) **and filled out questionnaires**, as per the above description. Also these organisations where studied using two different tools for information collection.

- **75 organisations filled out questionnaires**.

Moreover, among these CSOs, 68 participated in feedback meetings and seminars in Ramallah and Gaza. The feedback meetings and seminars served as a further tool for verifying the study findings.

Information sources

The **information sources** identified for implementing the study can be classified in two main sets, as presented in the following table.

Source of Information	
Primary sources	Representatives of CSOs
	Representatives of donors and other international partners of Palestinian CSOs
	The European Union delegation task managers involved in cooperation initiatives with CSOs
	Representatives of public authorities, both at the central and local level
	The CSOs participating in activities carried out during the study (interviews, field visits, focus groups, etc.)
Secondary sources	Databases and CSO registers
	Documents produced by CSOs to present themselves and their activities
	CSO websites
	Projects reports, both from CSOs and donors
	Donors evaluation reports
	Project – Programme documents
	Policy documents concerning CSOs and their role in the oPt and Middle East
	Academic essays, studies and research reports

The **consultation of information sources** was carried out through a variety of methods, including:

- individual in-depth interviews;
- collective interviews with 2nd, 3rd and 4th level organisations;
- focus groups with 1st level organisations;
- visits to organisations and their projects;
- analysis of documents;
- self-administered questionnaires filled out by the involved organisations;
- feedback meetings and restitution seminars.

For the consultation of information sources through these different methods the tools presented in the following table were used.

Tools for the Consultation of Information Sources	
Primary Sources	Grid for the analysis of 3rd and 4th level organisations
	Grid for the rapid appraisal of 2nd level organisations
	Interview guide for donors and other partners
	Discussion Guide for 1st level organisations collective interviews - focus groups
	Self-administered questionnaire for 2nd level organisations
	Self-administered questionnaire for 1st level organisations
	Feedback meetings and restitution seminars
Secondary sources	Grid for the collection of data on 3rd and 4th level organisations
	Grid for the collection of data on 2nd level organisations
	Guidelines for the analysis of documents

2.3. An overview of the primary sources of information

In reference to the aforementioned methods and tools, this paragraph provides an overview of each of the tools used to collect data from primary sources of information, each classified by region and organisational level.

In depth interviews

As stated previously, the first modality for consulting information sources consisted of in- depth individual and group interviews with a total of 87 CSOs. These were made using grids for the analysis of organisations.

Type or Organisation	West Banks and East Jerusalem	Gaza Strip	Total
2nd Level (NGOs, etc.)	42	35	77
3rd Level (networks, etc.)	5	2	7
4th Level (networks, etc.)	2	1	3
Total	49	38	87

In addition to interviews with civil society organisations, in-depth interviews were also carried out for consulting donors and technical partners of the Palestinian CSOs. A total of **10 interviews** were conducted, involving researchers, representatives of donors, PA ministries, local authorities, international NGOs and other resource centres.

The second modality for consulting information sources consisted of focus groups with 1st level organisations. These focus groups were carried out using a discussion guide with groups that contained, in average, 8 to 15 CBOs and other grassroots groups.

In the **West Bank and East Jerusalem, seven focus groups** were held with the participation of 73 of the 1st level organisations. Whereas, in the **Gaza Strip, two focus groups** were organised for 27 organisations.

Questionnaires

Another important means of consulting primary information sources consisted of the collection of self-administered questionnaires, answered by CSOs at the different level, as per the table below:

Type or Organisation	West Banks and East Jerusalem	Gaza Strip	Total
1st Level (CBOs, etc.)	71	27	98
2nd Level (NGOs, etc.)	90	62	152
3rd Level (networks, etc.)	3	2	5
4th Level (networks, etc.)	2	1	3
Total	166	92	258

Feedback meetings and restitution seminars

A final means of consulting primary information sources consisted of feedback meetings and restitution seminars to discuss the findings of the Mapping Study with relevant organisations. Considering the nature of the meetings, only 2nd, 3rd and 4th level organisations will participate in them. In fact, rather than focusing on the experience or needs of the single organisation, meetings were focused on the general overview of CSO experiences. A selection was therefore made among the consulted organisations, with preference to involve only those organisations that have a general view of the processes, such as those engaged in the study of civil society sector and those engaged in capacity building and networking actions. The participants were classified by level and regions as in the table below:

Type of Organisation	West Banks and East Jerusalem	Gaza Strip	Total
2nd Level (NGOs, etc.)	30	30	60
3rd Level (networks, etc.)	3	2	5
4th Level (networks, etc.)	2	1	3
Total	35	33	68

Overview of the consulted primary information sources

In the table below an overview is presented of the primary information sources, according to the various consultation modalities.

Overview According to Consultation Modalities									
Type of organisation	West Banks and East Jerusalem				Gaza Strip				Total
	In depth Interviews	Focus groups	Questionnaires	Feedback meetings / seminar	In depth Interviews	Focus groups	Questionnaires	Feedback meetings / seminar	
1st Level		73	71			27	27		198
2nd Level	42		90	30	35		62	30	289
3rd Level	5		3	3	2		2	2	17
4th Level	2		2	2	1		1	1	9
Total	49	73	166	35	38	27	92	33	513

Since the various tools and consultation methods were sometimes applied to the same organisations, the **above table does not present the number of consulted organisations**. That is the subject of the following table. As already stated, **a total of 262 CSOs were consulted**: 100 belonging to the 1st level, 152 belonging to the 2nd level and 10 belonging to the 3nd level.

Of these organisations:

- **87 were met with and involved in interviews** (49 in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and 38 in the Gaza Strip) and filled out questionnaires;
- **100 participated in focus groups** (73 in the West Bank and Jerusalem and 27 in the Gaza Strip) and filled out questionnaires;
- **75 organisations only filled out questionnaires**.

2.4. An overview of the secondary sources of information

Existing documentary information was considered an important element of the research study. As a matter of fact, existing documents offer relevant information for identifying the processes and the challenges faced by the oPt civil society, as well as information on their capacities and activities. The following categories of documents were analysed:

- Reports produced by **Palestinian CSOs**, regarding their activities, their organisational features and the context of their work (43 documents);
- Studies carried out by **international organisations** on Palestinian CSOs, aimed at providing an overview and analysis of the sector (10 documents);
- **Reports produced by donors** on their cooperation activities with CSOs (about 50 documents);
- **Academic research studies** (books, essays and scientific articles, totalling 25 documents).

In addition to these documents, the study examined two **databases** on Palestinian NGOs managed by NDC (NGO Development Centre) and by the PNGO-Gaza (Palestinian NGO Network in Gaza Strip).

Donors were asked to provide documentation on their activities. Moreover, the study team carried out specific search for documents using the Internet and other sources. The study examined documents available online, furnished by the following donors:

Agency Country	Provided by the Agency	WWW and other sources
Austria	*	
Belgium		*
Denmark	*	
France	*	
Finland	*	
Germany		*
Italy		*
Ireland	*	
Netherlands	*	
Spain	*	
Sweden	*	
Switzerland		*
UK		*
USA		*
UNDP and other UN Agencies		*
World Bank		*

2.5. Problems and Challenges

The main problem met during the implementation of field activities was the **limitation on mobility**, due to the political situation in the oPt. Particularly, support to the field researcher in the Gaza Strip was mainly provided through frequent Internet, telephone and Skype communication. In fact, a field visit by the Team Leader to the Gaza Strip was only possible during the second mission. However, the difficulty in entering in the Gaza Strip had a limited negative impact as in this geographical area organisations were individually met, focus group meetings were also regularly held and questionnaires were filled by the expected number of organisations, providing a diverse picture of the many existing CSOs.

The **limitations on mobility** also affected field work in the West Bank, work in East Jerusalem was also difficult for one of the field researchers and travel among the different areas of the West Bank was somewhat restricted (both for researchers and representatives of organisations invited to participate in meetings).

The **political control** and **conflict** between the local ruling parties, and the CSOs considered to be "linked to other parties", had little influence on the field study. Organisations with different political and religious affiliations participated in focus groups meetings, sometime expressing concern about the closure of organisations or the forced changes in their respective board of directors. Paradoxically, a greater influence was observed in the filling of questionnaires. The uncertain situation of some organisations precluded them from accepting to respond to questionnaires. It is well known that in some cases NGOs and CBOs have been "closed" by the authorities, so that even if they continue to have some activities they tend to adopt a very low profile. Taking this into consideration, some organisations were excluded from the questionnaire administration, while their existence was considered as a specific phenomenon to be analysed. As a further measure for ensuring the consistency of data from questionnaires, an analysis of organisations registered in existing databases – such as those of NDC "Masader" Portal and those of the PNGO in Gaza – was carried out.

In general, compared with other countries, the **need for all organisations to be registered** makes it more difficult to distinguish between 1st and 2nd level organisations. Under the term "Associations" which is used in Palestinian Law, organisations having different natures are registered. As a general principle, organisations that have contracted workers are considered NGOs, while organisations based on voluntary work are considered CBOs. The need for registration, together with the presence of resources and an uncertain organisational identity often creates a self-perception of CBOs as NGOs, as well as a wide group of organisations that are still mainly at the grassroots level, but use paid professionals. Frequently CBOs tend to present themselves as NGOs and try to transform themselves into NGOs. However in many cases, grassroots organisations maintain an informal character and tend not to participate in meetings and even "hide" themselves in a complete way, declaring that they are not "permanent" or organising themselves as "local branches" under the umbrella of national NGOs and associations.

Also because of the reasons illustrated above, the administration of questionnaires proved to be time-consuming and required greater work than expected. In fact, most organisations proved not to have an interest in filling out questionnaires (of 700 questionnaires sent, 191 were returned[2]). This implied a huge workload for collecting questionnaires. This also explains the need to use extra sources—not only the questionnaires—for collecting data for quantitative analysis.

During the **administration of questionnaires**, assistance from field researchers was necessary due to the potential contrary interpretation of some items once translated into Arabic. However, thanks to the assistance work carried out, the questionnaire process was generally consistent. Some of the collected data- particularly those concerning the CSO budget - required further checks by field researchers. Final validation of collected information and questionnaires was carried out during their processing. Interpretation and use of data was facilitated by the pre-test activity carried out in the first mission, which also implied some changes in the question formulation.

3. The Context

3.1. A diachronic view

A peculiar characteristic of Palestinian Civil Society Organisations is the fact that unlike most civil societies – and against the concept of civil society itself – most CSOs were created out of an established "state framework." As many authors point out, most organisations emerged and developed in the absence of the state, the absence of national independence and sovereignty over land and citizenship[3]. The origins of Palestinian Civil Society Organisations are often identified as emerging in the **1920s**, including faith-based and religious organizations, women's organizations, charitable societies and youth clubs[4].

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[2] One of the reasons reported by CSOs for not filling out the questionnaires is that EU funds are considered too difficult to obtain, so organizations are often not interested in being known by the EU. Other reasons include the fact that organizations are inundated by questionnaires. In some cases, the national networks used for disseminating questionnaires have now little influence and mobilization capacity on member organizations.

[3] Salem W., Palestinian Civil Society: Characteristics, Past and Present Roles, and Future Challenges, 2006; De Voir J., Tartir A., Tracking External Donor Funding to Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza 1999 – 2008, MAS – NDC, Ramallah, 2009; Bisan Center for Research and Development in PNGO, Guidebook of Member Organizations in the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network in the West Bank, Ramallah, 2010.

[4] In 1922, under the British Mandate, a law on private and non-profit making companies laid the foundation for organizations. Prior to 1922, the Ottoman Law of Association of 1907 guaranteed the right of association in a limited manner. Groups had to report to authorities their intensions before receiving a license to start work (De Voir and Tartir A., 2009; Challand B., *Palestinian Civil Society*, Routledge, 2009). According to some researchers the development of Palestinian charities was parallel to that of the Jewish Zionist movement (Sullivan, cited in DeVoir and Tartir, 2009).

These organizations continued to exist and exercise their activities until 1948. After the creation of Israel, the context changed for Palestinian organizations where some continued to work in the Israeli territory, working on the maintenance of the Palestinian identity, others established themselves outside Israel, mainly in Arab countries. The latter focused their activities on two main issues including the liberation of Palestine and the Arab national identity.

During this period, the West Bank was annexed to Jordan, which gave it the name of the "West Bank of Jordan." Meanwhile, the **Gaza Strip** was under Egyptian administration, but without being annexed to Egypt. This matter produced the first difference in the development of Palestinian civil society. In Gaza, civil society organizations began to work openly, and established relationships with political parties, such as the Palestinian Communist Party of Gaza, the Muslim Brotherhoods' Gaza Branch, and also the Gaza Branch of the Arab Nationalist Ba'ath Party. This led to the development of **political institutions** in Gaza such as the Palestinian National Council in 1948 and the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1963.

In the West Bank, organizations continued to exist, but they did not have the ability to work in a public manner – other than for the purpose of providing services and assuming the form of "charities" under Jordanian law. A **Federation of Charities** was then established in 1958. According to the law, charities were obliged to ask permission from the authorities for carrying out any activity (even meetings).

In the period between 1964 and 1988, the development of Palestinian Civil Society Organisations is closely linked to that of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and its various factions. The PLO supported the establishment of voluntary work committees, grassroots youth and women's organizations. Health and education NGOs also emerged in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the 1970's and the 1980's. Many key civil society organizations originated in this period and environment. The charities (at least partially faith-based) continued to work and exercise their functions in service provision in this period, particularly focusing on the key issues of health and education. In the absence of a state and under occupation, the main activities carried out by civil society organisations during these decades can be summarised in two broad categories, which are **service provision** and **relief work**. Policy was out of the field of action of civil society organisations within the oPt, but was the focus of the PLO based abroad.

Since 1948, a privileged location in which CSOs developed was in refugee camps. In these camps, people organise themselves with the support of external actors (such as political parties and UNRWA). Many community-based organisations started to work as a means for organising and distributing aid to the camp population.

With the surge of the **First Intifada in 1987** a new period emerged for civil society organisations. A new agenda and priority emerged. There was a focus on setting a political agenda within the oPt, the creation of a vision of development within the framework of protracted conflict and the long, continuing occupation, and the priority for defending human rights – mainly against the violations committed by the Israeli occupation.

Moreover, while the traditional PLO-linked NGOs tended to lose ground in the field, new grassroots organizations emerged, including different types of so-called popular committees that constituted the main participants in the Intifada. This is also the period that Islamic charitable organizations began to adopt a new role, much more related to political participation. In addition, this is the environment in which Hamas emerged as an active participant in the Intifada in 1988.

The 1990s represented another defining period for Palestinian CSOs. While the capacity of political parties to represent the actors and interests of Palestinian society became weaker, CSOs expanded and started to adopt an agenda focusing on the internal social conditions of the oPt. The focus on

service provision continued to be the top priority, but because of the creation of the Palestinian Authority in 1994 and of its engagement in the provision of services, CSOs also intervened on other issues including: democracy building, institution building, different approaches to development, PA violations of human rights, advocacy and lobbying, anti-militarization plans, peace and non-violence projects, as well as the representation of specific interest groups, such as the disabled, youth and women.

In **1994,** the estimated number of **civil society organizations** reached 1400 in the oPt. This number decreased following the establishment of the PA (according to MAS about **800 organisations disappeared**) and a new generation of organizations was founded after the creation of the PA (about **40% of organizations in 1996 were founded after the establishment of PA**)[5]. In fact, the PA invited civil society organizations to become incorporated in its structures (this occurred with some NGOs, particularly closely linked to Fatah, such as the Health Service Council, that ran 62 clinics and merged into the PA). However, many CSOs refused to merge, and thus competition over funds and activities emerged as a new phenomenon. This created tensions between the PA and CSOs. In this framework, the PA began imposing control over the NGO sector and in 1997 a first draft of a law was presented to the Palestinian Legislative Council providing for the Ministry of Interior to "license" NGOs rather than simply "registering" them.

It is said that during this period, despite growing tensions, some reforms were advocated by CSOs and entered in the PA agenda. Two other trends emerge in this period, the further **expansion of Islamic organizations** within Palestinian society and the increased presence **of international agencies and NGOs** (in 1993, INGOs increased to 200 and international agencies jumped from 3 to 29). As a result of this trend, competition over local human resources emerged and a new group of local NGOs was created but this group was without linkages to communities or social groups and was mainly engaged as implementing bodies in INGO activities[6].

In the year 2000, the new decade began with the promulgation of a law on civil society organizations, the "**Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organisations.**" Despite the inclination of the PA to increase its control over civil society organizations, thanks to the mobilization of CSOs and foreign governments, the law recognized the right of the NGOs to work via registration and not by permit. People were therefore free to create organizations, and the PA did not have the legal basis to claim that such NGOs are prohibited or otherwise not allowed to function. Additionally, the law provided independence to NGOs to make their decisions solely according to their governing boards, without the imposition of policies and decisions on them from the outside[7].

However, the **Second Intifada** – and the return to a period of armed conflict – forced actors to once again change their activities and orientations. Political parties returned to armed struggle, and CSOs returned to focus on relief work. In 2004 and 2005, international funds for Palestinian NGOs and the PA increased again and became dependent on their activities. According to a study carried out in 2009, external aid funds to Palestinian NGOs reached less than 50% of their total funding in 1999 to close to 80% in 2008[8].

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[5] De Voir J., Tartir A., Tracking External Donor Funding to Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza 1999 – 2008, MAS – NDC, Ramallah, 2009.

[6] De Voir J., Tartir A., Tracking External Donor Funding to Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza 1999 – 2008, MAS – NDC, Ramallah, 2009; Challand B., *Palestinian Civil Society*, Routledge, 2009. Among the immediate effects of the presence of INGOs, the increase in salaries of NGO professionals was a most apparent, becoming the basis for public discourse about rich and corrupted NGOs, making profit on resources to be addressed to the poor.

[7] Hanafi S., Tabar L., *The Emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite*, Muwatin, Ramallah, 2005.

[8] De Voir J., Tartir A., Tracking External Donor Funding to Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza 1999 – 2008, MAS – NDC, Ramallah, 2009.

A portion of these funds was dispersed to support governance, democracy and human rights activities as well as to support initiatives concerning "peace building" and "normalization" of relationships with Israel[9]. Paradoxically, the rise of NGO projects on these themes resulted in a decrease of civil society engagement in advocacy for policy setting. A further factor leading to a decrease of CSO engagement in policy advocacy in this period was the limitation of funding to organizations considered to be linked to groups jeopardizing the peace processes (such as Islamic organizations or those promoting initiatives against Israeli occupation).

On the other hand, as apparent in the results of the second Palestinian Legislative elections in January 2006, this period was characterized by a further increase of consensus towards Islamic organizations, at least partially based on Palestinian public opinion of the PA and NGOs as dependent on international aid and prone to corruption.

The work on other issues also continued, like the advocacy for policy reforms, but somehow this work was annulled by the mainstream agenda of both civil society organizations and the PA.

The **divide of the West Bank and Gaza Strip** is the main feature of the period following the 2006 elections. Two main processes became apparent following the separation: **increased pressure on CSOs** to become affiliated and loyal to the local ruling party (open conflicts between political authorities and CSOs, the stop of CSOs activities by security forces and even the nomination by political authorities of new boards to run organizations' activities are among the most apparent phenomena that emerged in both Gaza and the West Bank) and **further concentration of CSOs on service delivery activities**, avoiding active participation in local governance if not specifically requested by the political authorities and competing with the PA on funding, also due to the lack of definition of a clear division or responsibility. Still, it can be said that in this difficult situation, some improvements took place at least on the local level. As a matter of fact, in some cases, municipal authorities established "local councils" involving CSO representatives, and ministries often consult "specialized" CSOs, which remain a major partner of public authorities in certain sectors.

3.2. The legal framework

Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organisations

The main element of the regulatory framework concerning civil society organizations is the "Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organizations" (Law No. 1, Year 2000)[10].

This law[11], that emanates from the Palestinian Legislative Council, formalizes the right of Palestinian citizens "to practice social, cultural, professional and scientific activity in all freedom, including the right to establish and run Associations and Community Organizations" (article 1), and it defines the conditions and the modalities for exercising this right, according to the main norms briefly reported below.

The law provides a definition of concerned organizations:

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[9] "People to people" or "peace from below" activities based on the good practices tested in other regions became a fashionable activity. However, these activities are not considered very effective and are often viewed with suspicion in the CSO environment. The scarce effectiveness of the "peace from below" activities also emerged by some evaluation studies (PAL Vision, *Evaluation Study for the Exchange and Reunion of Palestinian Israeli Youth Aiming to Urge the Peace Process through Dialogue and Accord*, Palestinian Vision, 2008).

[10] By effect of this law the preceding laws on CSOs, the Ottoman Law of Charitable Organizations issued on 29 Rajab 1327 A.H. and the Law of Charitable Organizations number 33 for the year 1966 effective in Palestine were repealed.

[11] Palestinian Legislative Council, *Law of Charitable Associations and Community Organizations,* Law No. 1, Year 2000 (http://www.pogar.org/publications/other/laws/associations/charlaw-comorg-pal-00-e.pdf).

Any charitable Association or Community Organization with an independent judicial personality, established upon an agreement concluded among no less than seven persons to achieve legitimate objectives of public concern, without aiming at attaining financial profits to be shared among the members or achieving any personal benefits.

Moreover, the law also considers: **foreign associations** or organizations (identified as any foreign charitable Association or Community Organization which has its main headquarters or centre of activities outside the oPt or the majority of whose members are foreigners) and the **union among organizations** (as the process of unification of two or more associations or organizations whereby a single representative body is established, but each association or organization maintains its independent judicial personality).

According to the law, a **community activity** is defined as any social, economic, cultural, community, developmental or other service or activity, undertaken voluntarily, that would lead to the improvement of social, health, professional, material, spiritual, artistic, sports, cultural or educational conditions in society. The competent ministry is identified as the **Ministry of Interior.**

Concerning the registration of associations and organizations, the law provided for **the creation of three general registries**: a) demands of registration, b) registered organizations (organizations that have been registered)[12] and c) associations whose requests for registration have been refused[13].

The **procedure of registration** foresees that the founders of an organization submit a written application in compliance with a set of conditions[14] to the Competent Department for registration set up under the Ministry of Interior. The Ministry must then issue its decision regarding the compliance of the application with the conditions of registration within a period not exceeding two months from the date of submission of the application.

If the two-month period following the submission of the application for registration expires without a decision being made, the association is considered registered by law.

If the Minister rejects the application for registration, it must then specify the reasons for the rejection and the applicants have the right to contest this decision before the competent court.

According to the law, **associations have certain obligations and entitlements**. The first ones address: the keeping of records (article 11); the deposit with the Ministry of Interior of statements regarding amendments and changes of headquarters, by-laws, objectives and purposes, board of directors (article12); the yearly presentation to the ministry of a report on activities and of an audited financial report (article13). The latter ones include the exemption from taxes and customs duties on the transferable and non-transferable funds necessary for the implementation of its objectives.

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[12] For each organization, the following items should be recorded: names, fields of activity, objectives and any other facts that the Competent Department considers necessary for the information of all competent bodies.

[13] The register should record their objectives and the reasons for the refusal, and any other additional information that the Competent Department considers necessary.

[14] Conditions includes some formal elements (i.e. the signatures of three founding members authorized to register and sign on behalf of the association; copies of by-laws signed by the members of the founding committee, indicating the name, address and purposes; the main headquarters; the financial resources and way they are used; the conditions for membership; the organizational structure and rules concerning its amendment; the procedures for convening the general assembly; the method of financial supervision; the rules for the dissolution of the association, etc.(see article 5 of the law) and some conditions concerning its objectives and modalities of work, concerning the funds, the activities, the organizational and governance structure; the merger and union among organizations, etc.

The law also establishes modalities and reasons for **dissolving an association**. The decision to dissolve an association can be taken by its General Assembly or by the Ministry. In the latter case, two main reasons can be the origin of the dissolution:

- The fact that an organization does not commence its actual operations within the first year from its date of registration or of obtaining its license;

- The proven fact that an organization has committed a substantive violation of its by-laws, and has not rectified the above conditions within three months from the date of notification to that effect by the Minister or the Department.

The decision of the Ministry to dissolve an organization must formalize the cause/s in writing and this decision can be contested before the competent court. If the decision is contested, the association has the right to continue its work until a (temporary or final) judicial decision is issued.

The law also defines other conditions as guarantees of association independence and freedom. Mainly, it is not permissible to take possession of the finances of any association or organization, or to close or conduct a search of its headquarters or any of its premises or branches without an order issued by a competent judicial body (article 41).

Currently the Law 1/2000 is **debated**:

- On the one hand, the **PA and the Ministry of Interior** claim for greater authority and control over the CSOs. According to their point of view, the issue of coordination among CSOs and public authorities is not well defined. No control exists over the activities actually carried out by CSOs and their impact and CSOs often hide specific political interests or even private interests.

- On the other hand, NGOs and charities want greater autonomy and independence and want a more accurate use of the law (bureaucratic reasons for CSO registration delay is common).

Moreover, both CSOs and public authorities consider the law as a tool unable to guarantee the quality of CSOs and their actions. Both sides want greater attention to corruption and bad internal governance[15]. Based on the experience of other countries, a solution promoted by NGOs with the support of international aid has been the setting of **a self-regulatory framework**, namely under the name of "Code of Conduct" (see box below).

The NGO Code of Conduct

In 2006, following a broad based consultation that involved more than 250 NGOs, the NDC (NGO Development Centre) formulated a "Code of Conduct for NGOs." The code states the ethical values and principles with which NGOs are expected to comply, namely:

- Compliance with Covenants & Law;
- Priorities of Development (in line with the national agenda without any normalization activities with the occupier)
- Participation
- Networking and Coordination
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Equality and Inclusiveness
- Prevent Conflict of Interest
- Influence and Effectiveness
- NGO's Integrity
- Dispute Resolution

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[15] According to a survey carried out by AMAN, the Palestinian Coalition on Transparency and Accountability, over 90% of the Palestinian population views NGOs as corrupted.

After the definition of the code (2008), a dissemination activity among NGOs and Charitable Associations was promoted by NDC in cooperation with the main umbrella NGO networks (Palestinian General Union for Charitable Societies; Palestinian NGO Network, National Institute for Palestinian NGOs, Palestinian General Union for NGOs – Gaza) creating the "Code of Conduct Coalition." The Code of Ethics was then *operationalized*, through the preparation of manuals and guidelines, and a further action was launched to put the code in operation. Such an action is based on three main steps: 1) **Ratification and Promotion** of the Code of Conduct by the individual CSOs: more than 500 NGOs have adopted the Code. The Code was also adopted by the Arab League as a model for Arab countries; 2) **Capacity Building for Good NGO Governance**, aimed at supporting organisations in actually practicing the code, through a set of technical assistance and coaching activities involving 50 organisations for 24 preparation and dissemination of a "toolkit"; 3) **Setting a compliance mechanism** to assure the enforcement, through consultation with all concerned stakeholders on possible enforced mechanisms, including: self regulation (audit program), third party certification and introduction of a ranking system (incentive system).

Source: Kasabreh G., *Accountability and Reliability. Enhancing Democratic Governance of Palestinian NGOs. A Voluntary Code of Conduct*, NDC, 2010; Code of Conduct Coalition, *The Palestinian NGOs Code of Conduct*, 2008.

What is currently apparent is that most relations between the political authorities and the CSOs occur both in the West Bank and in Gaza with little reference to the existing legal framework: registration and temporary or permanent closure of organizations[16] is often attributed to political linkages rather than based on the rule of law. Moreover, some changes in the existing local framework are produced through Government decisions, such as in the West Bank the **Decision No.20, 2007 of the Minister of Interior**, requiring associations to submit registration procedures to security agencies.

The obligation of civil society organisations to become registered produced further results: the **proliferation of registered organisations** and increased difficulty in distinguishing and identifying "first level" grassroots organisations (as "self-help groups", committees, community based organizations) and "second level" organizations where in 2009 over 2100 associations were registered in the West Bank and over 890 in Gaza. As a matter of fact, the only difference in registration is among organisations based on "voluntary work" and organisations using paid workers. However, as some studies point out, increasingly "voluntary work" is paid and an increasing number of small local organisations (family run) tend to self-define themselves as NGOs in order to access donor funds.

The proliferation of registered organisations indeed is another factor hindering the possibility to verify the quality of actions and internal governance. While this activity can be performed by the Ministry of Interior for a relatively small number of organisations, it became an impossible task when these organisations number in the thousands and have very different features.

Other relevant laws

In the West Bank and Gaza, other relevant laws are those addressing cooperatives and sport clubs; the first are registered under the Ministry of Labour, and the latter under the Ministry of Youth and

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[16] Closure of organisations, the forced change in the board of directors and the search and occupation of CSO offices were frequently reported in interviews carried out – and are widely reported in the media – as occurring both in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank. In 2008, 28 Interim Committees were appointed in the West Bank for running organizations; in 2009, another 11 were appointed; in 2008, 58 associations were reported as being dissolved, and another 22 in 2009, because of political affiliation and "national security" reasons. In these actions, hardly any judicial decision was involved but the "de facto" authority of public and private security forces legitimated by the discourse of the "war against terror." Paradoxically, the current situation of limited application of the law pushes for lesser transparency and visibility of CSO activities and in some cases of the same organizations.

Sport[17]. Frequently, organisations that play a role in local development are registered under these ministries.

<div align="right">**The Cooperatives Law**</div>

600 cooperatives are operational in the oPt and the majority of them work in the agriculture and housing sectors[18]. Until 2010, the Palestinian cooperatives were established under the authority of the Directorate General of Cooperatives in the Ministry of Labour, following two legal frameworks: West Bank cooperatives were under Jordanian law; Gaza cooperatives were under the Egyptian law. A **new law** was endorsed by the Council of Ministers in July 2010 and forwarded to the Palestinian President's Office for approval. Once operational, the unified cooperative law will end the "dual structure" of cooperatives in the West Bank and Gaza; instead, it calls for the establishment of a new and semi-autonomous cooperative development administration. In addition, the **General Commission for Regulating Cooperatives (GCRC)** will take over the functions of the Directorate General of Cooperatives in the Ministry of Labour. The GCRC will be represented by a tripartite Board of Directors comprised of relevant government agencies, the cooperative movement, and workers' and employers' organizations. By virtue of this new law, the GCRC will serve as an independent technical service delivery centre, providing cooperatives with technical assistance to improve their performance and upgrade their structures and operations. The Palestinian cooperative law is considered as a model in the Arab world[19].

However, the most important regulative framework in the considered context seems to be the **Israeli law**. As a matter of fact, organisations active in East Jerusalem and also in Area B of the West Bank are under the Israeli authority (in Area B, organisations should be under the Palestinian Authority civil control, but are subject to Israeli security actions). No Israeli law prohibits unregistered groups and organisations from operating and in 2009, Israel's Supreme Court recognized the "freedom of association" as a fundamental human right. Nevertheless, organisations are required to be authorized by the Registrar of Associations, which is under the Israeli Ministry of Justice.

Three main sets of rules regulate the freedom of association:

- Law of Associations (1980), regulates the formation and operation of NGOs, corporations and cooperative associations;
- Criminal Law, and particularly the "Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance" (1948), the "Law implementing the Interim Agreement in the West Bank and Gaza Strip" (1994) and the "Law on the Prohibition of Terror Funding" (2005);
- Restrictions to the practice of professions, requiring professionals to belong to Professional Associations, such as the "Bar Association."

The Palestinian Law, and also the **Israeli Law of Association** provides that organisations may be dissolved because of the will of members or by a court order, on request of the Attorney General or Registrar of Associations, but only after failing to comply with written warnings. Moreover, the law mainly focuses on two kinds of offenses by associations: fraud and administrative irregularities.

Actually, measures against organisations are often taken in an arbitrary fashion and based on political (and military) opportunities/reasons. It is, for instance, the case of the "Ansar Al-Sajeen" (Prisoners' Friends Association) being declared illegal by the Israel's Defence Minister (2006) or the

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[17] An example of these activities is "Ruwwad, The Palestinian Youth Empowerment Programme." This is a project carried out by the Ministry of Youth and Sport in cooperation with local sports clubs and with some national NGOs, with the support of USAID and the American "Education Development Centre" (http://www.ruwwad.org/).

[18] ILO, Concept note. Support to Palestinian Cooperatives for Employment and Income Creation, 2010.

[19] Huseyin Polat, *Cooperatives in the Arab World*, ILO, 2010

case of the "Nidal Centre for Community Development[20]" closed in June 2009, pursuant to the 1948 "Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance." Israeli authorities closed over 25 organisations in similar contexts. These include the Orient House, the Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce, and the Arab Studies Association[21].

4. Main Issues and Stakes for Palestinian Civil Society

4.1. A general perspective

At first glance civil society organisations in the oPt appear as a wide and vibrant set of actors. These organizations manage a large scale of activities (over 90% of social services in the oPt are managed by CSOs), work across all sectors, and maintain precious Palestinian human resources and reservoirs of information and knowledge. They constitute a key bridge between the oPt and the rest of the world. Still, CSOs in the oPt are facing an important set of issues and are actors in a risk situation.

These issues, analysed in the following paragraphs, were identified in the framework of the study through consultation with many different sources, and are not always perceived as issues by the CSOs themselves. Therefore, the identification of these issues offers both a key for the analysis of CSOs and a framework for CSO reflection.

An unclear relationship with politics and the need to find a new role

Looking diachronically at Palestinian civil society, its development has been strongly influenced by the political situation of Palestine: the presence of the British Mandate, the annexation of the West Bank to Jordan and the Gaza Strip to Egypt, the conflict with Israel and the Israeli occupation, and the following peace agreements. The political situation is therefore a factor that cannot be eliminated when considering the main issues and stakes for Palestinian civil society. **The risk of being "occupied" by the political dynamics and losing the nature of civil society appears indeed as a main risk factor for CSOs**.

CSOs not only have to face **the pressure of political parties** and political authorities which seldom understand the autonomous nature of civil society, but they also have to identify a **specific role** in the process of political transformation and state-building which is under course in the oPt. Many key actors in Palestinian civil society have been created in the past with clear roles such as supporting Palestinian people in the absence of a Palestinian state, allowing Palestinian people to resist occupation, and producing "grassroots governance" in a situation in which political power was not allowed to exist[22]. This is the case of many NGOs and CSOs participating in the main Palestinian NGO network (PNGO). Now, their functions and roles have to change, but it is not always clear how. In fact, there is no debate on the role of CSOs and some organisations have different ideas of their role. Some think they should resume their old role because of the uncertain

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[20] The Centre provides mainly educational and vocational training activities, but claimed being affiliated to the "Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine," designated as a terrorist organization under the Israeli Law.

[21] Civic Coalition for Defending the Palestinians' Rights in Jerusalem, cited in Lendman St., *Freedom of Association Restrictions and Discrimination in Israel and Occupied Palestine*, March 2010 (www.thepeoplevoice.org).

[22] This situation was also characterized by the presence of strong links between the political parties and civil society organizations. Civil society organizations represent often the only possibility to take part in the management of local social and economic processes. After 1994, the linkages with parties became looser. The crisis of parties in the period between 1994 and 2006 resulted in the further increase of CSO autonomy and in many cases the emergence of new identities and new leadership, legitimated by technical capacities. The original functions of these organizations – governing in the absence of government – made them, despite their linkages with political parties, actors that are fully consistent with the roles and features attributed to civil society in sociological literature – an expression and a vehicle for the expectations and needs of social groups out of the state (political representation) and of the private sector (market) dynamics.

situation of PA, others believe they should assume a watchdog role, a third group assumes to have a role linked to social change, a still a further group focuses on the need to continue to deliver services. However, most CSOs are not even reflecting about their role.

The exclusive focus on service delivery

On the opposite side, another emerging risk for Palestinian civil society is that of completely abandoning the policy arena in favour of specialising in **service delivery**. As opposed to the past, a state structure is emerging in the oPt, also playing functions linked to the management of public services (and particularly health and education), an exclusive focus on service delivery implies for CSOs two further risks. One is that of **competing with the public authorities** in service provision namely for financial resources and for "beneficiaries" (in fact, these are sometimes considered as a captive group of clients, rather than as citizens bearing rights). Competition is already an important phenomenon, involving particularly the 2nd level CSOs, that managed resources which are frequently perceived as "escaping" public authority control and producing consensus-building processes that do not always benefit public authorities) and/or that to be **relegated into the peripheral space of the provision of services to the so-called "special groups"** of the poor and destitute, persons with disabilities, etc. In both cases, CSOs would lose their capacity to produce an impact on social reality.

A **focus on citizenship** and on the representation of citizens' point of view in the process of state-building can be a perspective in such a difficult context. This would imply increasing the participation both to policy setting (providing the PA with information and knowledge, and facilitating the integration of citizens' perspectives in public policies) and to monitoring the function of public authorities and services delivery, claiming for greater transparency and accountability. This would imply as well an effort to cooperate with public authorities not only in service delivery, but also (and mainly) in setting space for **policy dialogue** and in recovering the existing dialogue space that entered in a crisis situation in recent years (despite the participation of many CSOs in setting the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan, dialogue between political authorities and CSOs is often made difficult by the lack of reciprocal trust and by the attempts of political authorities to control CSOs activities and policies).

Conflict and emergency

Another area of risk for Palestinian CSOs is linked with the Israeli occupation. Israeli occupation and the periodic armed clashes in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza produce a **permanent condition of insecurity and emergency**. As a response to this situation, relief activities and an orientation to work according to emergencies increased their weight in the functioning of Palestinian CSOs, making the setting of a clear agenda and the production of mid and long term plans an uncommon feature. Moreover, the permanence of the Israeli occupation and conflict situation **produced a set of divides within Palestinian civil society**. A first important divide is among the organisations assuming the national perspective and the struggle against Israeli occupation as the focus of their identities and those that focus their action mainly on service provision avoiding direct engagement on "conflict related activities" (such as the information and awareness campaign at international level or the "Boycott Israel" campaign). Another important divide is that among the organisations, some focus their action on the resistance against occupation and some focus their action on "peace building." A further divide follows the lines of Palestinian politics. Among the organisations, some are linked to Fatah, others to Islamic movements and still others belong to the Palestinian national secular tradition.

Often, divides appear to be linked to external (donors or PA) **agendas** more than to civil society strategies focusing on the representation of the interests and needs of citizens. Developing a local agenda focusing on citizenship must be viewed as a main path to escaping the cage imposed by the seemingly permanent conflict situation. Developing a civil society agenda based on peace-building

would also be a means for informing the governmental policy agenda and the development of public opinion.

The construction of a common voice

Despite extensive experience, the great number of organisations, the accumulated knowledge assets and the economic dimension of civil society activities in the oPt, **CSOs do not share a common voice**. The main umbrella organisations only regroup a small percentage of organisations and have an unclear role. The **3rd level and 4th level organisations exist**, but only a small number of 2nd level organisations are actually participating in their activities.

As will be further analysed in following paragraphs, the need for a common voice is not even perceived. Some main factors for the lack of attention to this matter include the increased focus on service provision and the competition for resources among CSOs. The lack of political, collective interpretation concerning the organisations' sustainability and the lack of debate on CSOs' role in Palestinian society are also notable factors.

The same issues also apply to the initiatives aimed at improving the capacity, reliability and accountability of CSOs (such as the "Code of Conduct" initiative) if not directly related to the access to resources. Often, participation in networks and coalitions is seen by organisations as interference in their activity.

In such a sense, a challenge for civil society organisations is that of going beyond the formal establishment of networks and umbrella organisations to develop a common vision and to formulate joint strategies. In such a process, a further challenge is integrating and facilitating the participation of all actors and sectors in Palestinian civil society. This includes faith-based organisations, which often seem to be part of a "separate environment."

The recognition of civil society and the representation of constituencies

An even greater challenge for civil society in the oPt emerges when considering the 1st level CSOs and their relations with more established NGOs and charities. A **vibrant civil society exists at the grassroots level**, made up of many informal groups and committees. Still, the existing legal framework and the reference to CBOs just as beneficiaries of NGO actions tends to **reduce grassroots organisations visibility and public recognition as a relevant actor** for governance and policy making. Research and outreach by NGOs and public authorities aiming at facilitating the recognition of local civil society are lacking. A tendency emerges among registered CBOs. They often adopt the organisational shape and service providers' function of NGOs. This also causes them to lose links with communities and original constituencies.

Links with their own constituency actually emerges as a major risk for Palestinian CSOs.

Indeed, both NGOs and charities (which often involve a reduced number of "members" and a large number of "workers" and "beneficiaries") and smaller, less structured 1st level organisations tend to adopt as a reference model that of "service providers." They risk assuming a main focus of "sustainability" of their own organisation, rather than that of organisations aggregating common interests and needs.

Recognising civil society and CSOs' constituencies implies moving away from an approach based on "targeting beneficiaries" to an approach based on participation. It also implies another shift: moving away from an approach based on "access to services or to benefits" to an approach focusing on supporting actual exercise of citizenship.

In recent years, the availability of financial resources resulted in a set of processes that risk producing crises and conflict among CSOs, particularly at the 2nd and 1st levels. The following phenomena can be considered indicators of these risks:

- the proliferation of CSOs without a real constituency and without mid or long term vision;
- the competition for qualified human resources;
- the increasing dependency not only concerning financial resources but also concerning the setting of agendas and the identification of activities and projects;
- the growing tendency of CSOs to act as simple "implementing agencies" or "contractors";
- the widening of the gap among key organisations and those that were mainly created for implementing a project;
- a tendency of community based organisations to adopt the shape and features of NGOs, so as to access available funds without the intermediation of other actors;
- a tendency of small NGOs and CBOs to perceive themselves in competition with others for financial resources, resulting in a reduction of inter-organisational cooperation and communication.

How to make the most of resources? According to different estimates, the amount of external aid to Palestinian CSOs is between 110 and 210 million Euros per year; this is about 10% of the external aid to West Bank and Gaza Strip[23]. But these resources risk being used in a very inefficient and ineffective manner if a common agenda or harmonisation measures are not established.

Internal governance, accountability and transparency

Palestinian civil society has come under attack for being corrupt and non-democratic. There is an absence of proper internal democratic structures (out of those required under the law, but often mainly just a formal arrangement). According to some analysts, this is because of the permanence of patrimonial and neo-patrimonial structures. Despite the increasing diffusion of the "Code of conduct", participation, transparency, accountability and rotation of authorities inside the civil society organizations are still an exception rather than the norm. Due to this situation, other important challenges emerge. It becomes difficult for CSOs to diffuse information and knowledge about their "new" accountability and about the great extent of their activities, so as to change the "common opinion" and to improve their participation and mobilization capacities. The exclusive dependency of CSOs on external aid also diminishes the capacity to mobilize local financial and human resources.

4.2. The issues and stakes arising in East Jerusalem and in Gaza

Out of the main issues mentioned above, the following specific issues emerge for East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

East Jerusalem

The special context of East Jerusalem produces a two-fold set of challenges for civil society organizations. On the one hand, their legitimate existence and activity are at risk. On the other hand, the increasing social exclusion conditions create a growing demand for services and for human rights protection activities.

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[23] See the debate on external aid to Palestine in DeVoir and Tartir, *Tracking External Donor Funding to Palestinian NGOs in the WB and Gaza, MAS*, 2009.

It is important to consider some main factors contributing to the emergence of these challenges:

- The disconnection of Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank has led to negative economic and social consequences, access to resources and markets was lost as well as access to social and safety networks. East Jerusalem suffers from a double marginalization. Israeli authorities often adopt discriminatory policies and PA policies are mainly addressed to the rest of the West Bank[24].

- Social and economic marginalisation of the city has contributed to the rise of many negative phenomena, e.g. drug use, violence, disorders and crime in the Palestinian community in Jerusalem.

- Palestinian communities in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip hold an idealized and false image of the city. This is due to the fact that the new generation of Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza does not know Jerusalem and has never seen or visited it.

- The transformation process in the urban structure and population, characterised by a growing impoverishment of the population and by the lack of basic services and infrastructures (including education, water supply and sanitation, space for youth and children, primary health service and hospitals).

- Palestinian residents in East Jerusalem lack citizenship. This exposes them to discriminatory practices and reduces the possibilities of having them participate in policy making, even at local level.

- Since the closure of the "Orient House" there is not any representation of Palestinian Authorities in the city, and there is no agreed upon leadership in urban management.

- Human rights violations and harassment of Palestinians by the Israeli security forces occur frequently.

- There is a gap between Palestinian residents and the municipality, which is characterised as an illegitimate Israeli institution.

- The loss of Palestinian heritage and cultural presence in the city is ongoing, particularly in the neighbourhoods mostly inhabited by the Palestinian population.

- The risk of eviction of many Palestinian Jerusalemites due to conflicts on land property, occupation, lack of appropriate housing solutions and difficulties that Israeli urban regulations create for the construction or renewal of buildings that results in the irregularity of new buildings.

- Israeli authorities are hostile towards Palestinian organisations and prohibit public activities by Palestinian organisations. Twenty-four civil society organisations were closed, 33 NGOs in Ramallah were forced to relocate and experienced a reduction in the capacity to support both Palestinian populations and Palestinian local committees and grassroots organisations.

- The need for civil society organisations to provide answers to a wide range of demands, that involve in most cases an over-diversification of the activities carried out (in the absence of adequate capacities).

- Mobility is restricted. It is difficult to gain access to the city and there is a disconnection of East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank.

- Reliable and updated information on the processes of urban change in Jerusalem is scarce.

- There is an inadequate allocation of resources both by donors and the PNA for CSOs and other institutions to serve the Palestinian community in the city, that also results in an increase of conflicts and competition among civil society actors.

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[24] Despite the "*Strategic Multi-sector Development Plan for East Jerusalem*" prepared in 2010 by the Jerusalem Unit of the Office of the President of PA, Jerusalem remains outside main Palestinian development policies.

- Most of CSO work and actions focuses on individual rights; they are far from being able to produce qualitative results on the collective rights level and to collectively empower, with the consequence of de-motivating both CSO activists and ordinary citizens.

The possibility of having civil society organisations adequately respond to these challenges is closely linked to:

- increase of resources for supporting access to human resources and the launching of initiatives both on service delivery and policy issues, particularly focusing on the development of cooperative arrangements among civil society actors in East Jerusalem;

- the possibility of identifying and implementing solutions for reconstructing **space for policy dialogue in the East Jerusalem**;

- maintaining Jerusalem based CSOs and the strengthening of their capacities particularly regarding good governance, the link between social processes and policies; human rights and urban planning;

- recovering civil society capacities, particularly regarding the access to **information and knowledge**; the access to **qualified human resources**; the reduction of **dependency** on external funding; the setting of arrangements for mitigating **competition and improving coordination**; and the building of more effective governance systems;

- reconstruction of linkages between NGOs and Jerusalemite communities, enhancing the relationships between 2nd level organisations and "popular committees";

- increasing "**international protection,**" of the capacity to monitor urban transformation and social processes and of the capacity to mobilize international organisations and INGOs for supporting local CSOs.

Gaza

The siege on Gaza and its political division from the areas under the responsibility of the Palestinian National Authority in the West Bank seriously affected daily life and the development of the Gaza Strip. Gaza became a crowded enclave for about 2 million people, in which small villages and cities are agglutinating in a large and partially informal settlement, with little space for agriculture[25], few economic activities (because of the blockade of goods entrance by Israel), complete dependency by foreign donors "humanitarian" aid and a local politically difficult situation. Civil society organisations are naturally affected by this situation. Some main processes emerge:

- The political and geographical divide undermines the capacity of organisations to address the needs of their constituencies and at the same time the functioning of organisations; some NGOs were closed, some were threatened by the authorities to report them constantly and to select specific target groups in their activities; in some cases authorities even intervened in the mandate of CSOs; the coordination of branches of national organisations with Ramallah became difficult if not impossible. Trust among the organisations, with constituencies and with political authorities was lost.

- The freezing of the legislative council and of most space for pluralistic political discussion undermines the possibility of CSOs establishing a **functioning political dialogue and to actually exercise activities such as policy monitoring and contribution to policy setting**. Some CSOs continue to carry out advocacy activities particularly in favour of special needs groups, but this must take place through direct contacts with authorities and without a public debate.

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[25] 30 to 40% of the land in the Gaza Strip is considered agricultural land. In reality the expansion of inhabited areas together with the decrease of available water resources (both because of internal consumption and because of the water withdrawal from the Israeli neighborhoods) is producing a progressive reduction of this area and of its productivity.

- The difficulties in access and movement of goods and people **prevent CSOs from access to qualified human resources, equipment and materials**. The consequence is growing competition for qualified human resources, a progressive degradation of CSO infrastructures (offices, spaces for service provision, etc.), delay and untimely arrival of needed materials and equipment also for "humanitarian" activities. Moreover, access to human resources development opportunities is more difficult, as well as direct contact with donors and the participation in national and international events. Nevertheless, information and knowledge are accessible through Internet connection: electronic communication and local dissemination of information, knowledge and culture become in this framework an important intervention space for civil society organisations.

- Dependency on external donors, and particularly on international organisations and international NGOs, is even more important than in the other areas of the oPt. Moreover, both the way the blockade is managed and the increasingly local urgent needs produced a fairly exclusive focus on "emergency" and "humanitarian" aid. Also, initiatives with a development potential are often carried out under this headline. This also impacted design of projects and their implementation, focusing always on a short time span and on immediate impact.

- Dependency on external resources also results in **increased competition for funding**. It also creates a reduction of cooperation and information exchange among organisations, and in the fact that larger NGOs are often questioned for their strategic partnerships with donors and are asked to "channel" financial resources more than support the "development" of smaller organisations. A further consequence of the increased competition risks is **increased sector fragmentation along numerous lines**, the most common of which are factionalism, political affiliation or family affiliation and loyalty, in addition to local vs. national, religious vs. secular and traditional vs. Modern values.

- Dependency on external resources and the local economy crisis also played a role in diffusing a "**dependency culture.**" Rather than increasing the subjectivity and mobilization capacity of citizens, the current situation feeds a growing attitude to wait for help, to not enter in conflict with local authorities, and to avoid taking initiative. This culture affects both CBO development (as a fact, many CBOs mention the resistance of their communities and constituencies as an issue) and the work of NGOs.

- **Development intervention sustainability became in this situation an empty phrase**. While many organisations are achieving the capacity to continue to exist on the long-term (about 50% of local organisations were created more than 10 years ago) also thanks to the availability of a large donor community, their activities (and particularly those that are "programme" or process based, as mental health services or WASH activities) are frequently affected by stops and by the shortcomings of the lack of continuous funding (fund recovery from service provision is a diffused but ineffective practice in the local environment).

- The weakness of local authority service provision and the dependency of service provision on external donors working through international organisations, international NGOs and local NGOs have a "de facto" influence the role CSOs can play. They tend **to replace public authorities in service provision and tend to recede from internal "advocacy" for better quality or the respect of citizenship rights** in public services. Local CSOs frequently carry out "advocacy" activities, but these activities are aimed at claiming assistance for certain special needs groups (i.e. people with disabilities), at claiming for the "end" of external politically related actions (such as the blockade or even in some cases the "division") or at claiming for fair relationships among the local political authorities and NGOs (asking for the reopening of "closed" organisations, such as in the recent case of the "Sharek Youth Forum").

- The role of **change catalysts** emerges in the closure context as an important role that some CSOs (both CBOs and NGOs) are assuming. There many different ways to play such a role. These include fostering technological innovation, fostering social changes concerning gender and age, supporting active social integration of underprivileged groups, mitigating and

reducing the long-term and structural effects of the "closure" of social space, and supporting access to information and knowledge.

5. An Analytical View of Palestinian Civil Society Organisations

The diffusion and geographical distribution of CSOs in the oPt

As previously mentioned, all citizens' organisations in the oPt are requested to register. Nevertheless, the specific number and distribution of organisations is not known; different estimates exist as well as different "ideas" about the number of organisations that really have activities. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Interior, in September 2009 there were **2126** registered organisations (without distinction among 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th levels)[26].

Considering the various intervention sectors, the registered organisations have the following distribution (2006):

Sector Distribution of NGOs in 2006	
Intervention Sector	**%**
Education and Culture	22.1
Charity & Relief	18.3
Youth and sports	13.0
Children	9.8
Women	8.8
Health	7.1
Agriculture, Rural Development, Water and Environment	6.0
Social Development and Assistance to Vulnerable Groups	5.8
Governance, Human Rights and Democracy	3.5
Research + Scientific Education	4.9

Source: Elaboration on the data provided by MAS, *Mapping Palestinian NGOs in the WB and GS*, 2007

It is apparent the prevalence of NGOs (and CBOs, considering that all the organisations are registered together) on sectors in which the delivery of social service is the main scope of activity.

Less than 4 % of organisations are actively engaged in policy-related issues and putting together the organisations working on areas "policy sensible" as women, agriculture and environment and governance, the percentage remains under 20%. It should however be noted that in a growing manner in the last decade (and also most recently) activities concerning youth and sports and activities concerning culture acquired a role in policy making (particularly when looking at youth participation in local governance, at youth civic engagement, and at youth initiatives regarding peace).

It should also be noted that over 23% of organisations are focusing their activities on relief or assistance to especially vulnerable groups (such as the disabled, elderly, etc.).

The Mapping Study carried out by MAS also provides information on the geographic distribution of organisations among governorates. The MAS study as mentioned does not distinguish among 2nd and 1st level organisations. However, it considers the percentage of organisations that receive funds from external aid, and this can be considered as a "proxy" indicator of being a 2nd level organisation.

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[26] De Voir J., Tartir A., *Tracking External Donor Funding to Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza 1999 – 2008*, MAS – NDC, Ramallah, 2009. More recent data was not made available by the Ministry of Interior during the study.

In the **Northern West Bank** region (Jenin, Nablus) there are a high number of organisations (250) but only about 24% are funded from external sources. About 130 organisations are based in the **Central West Bank** Region (Ramallah, El-Bireh), with over 70% of these organisations receiving funds from abroad (thus the percentage of 2nd level organisations here can be expected to be very high if compared with community based organisations). In **Jerusalem** the organisations total 63, but only 23% are receiving funds from outside sources (as in the north a prevalence of CBOs characterises the area). In the **Southern West Bank,** organisations reach over 230, with less than 50% receiving external funds. In the **Gaza Strip** over 380 organisations exist, more than 70% of them receive funds from international aid.

Organisations receiving external funds are therefore mainly based in **Ramallah** and in the **Gaza Strip,** this is due to the fact that most national NGOs have headquarters in Ramallah and the second factor is the fact that the Gaza Strip has become a main target area for international aid in the 2000s. However, organisations are distributed in all of the oPt and their distribution doesn't only depend on international funding and this suggests that a vibrant and vital civil society exists and it is less dependent in the "public discourse" on Palestinian civil society.

While not distinguishing between first and second level organisations, the **MAS mapping observes that a hierarchy among local organisations exists**. Large professional NGOs working on the regional and national level are based in the Central West Bank with over 29% of the organisations in this area claiming to work at the national level. This percentage drops to about 4% in the North, 9% in the South (including Bethlehem) and to 7.8% in the Gaza Strip. According to MAS, the powerful, nationally oriented organisations act as patrons to smaller NGOs and CBOs spread throughout the remainder of the oPt[27].

5.1. First level organisations

A large number of grassroots organisations exist in the oPt. A rough typology should include the following:

- informal groups existing in most communities in order to solve daily problems (school, water, etc.);
- (local) popular committees working on land and agricultural issues (often having linkages with NGOs, or participating in campaigns);
- village, community or "refugee camp" committees, involved in the delivery of services and relief activities on behalf of NGOs, public authorities and international organisations (such as UNRWA and UNICEF, that promoted the creation of committees for community based education and rehabilitation activities);
- youth informal groups, particularly in schools and universities;
- cooperatives working on agriculture and housing;
- local Youth and sports clubs;
- local women's organisations;
- local faith-based charities;
- refugee camp CBOs (different from the committees considered above) involved in income generating activities[28];
- local relief organisations created by communities in an autonomous manner to foster the access to resources and help.

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[27] De Voir J., Tartir A., Tracking External Donor Funding to Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza 1999 – 2008, MAS – NDC, Ramallah, 2009.
[28] UNRWA offers a wide range of social services by partnering with 103 CBOs in refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Gaza Strip and the West Bank

Mission and action relevance and coherence

Despite the "specialised names," often CBOs carry out several types of activities, responding to local needs and orientations. This is the case for a CBO near Hebron that was formally registered with a focus on sports and youth and is involved in a wide range of activities, such as: sports activities (involving boys and girls); cultural and art activities (theatre, music dance, etc.), creation of women's groups and development of income generation activities.

The lack of specialisation and of a reference to a specific sector also emerges regarding the activity sectors, as in the following tables.
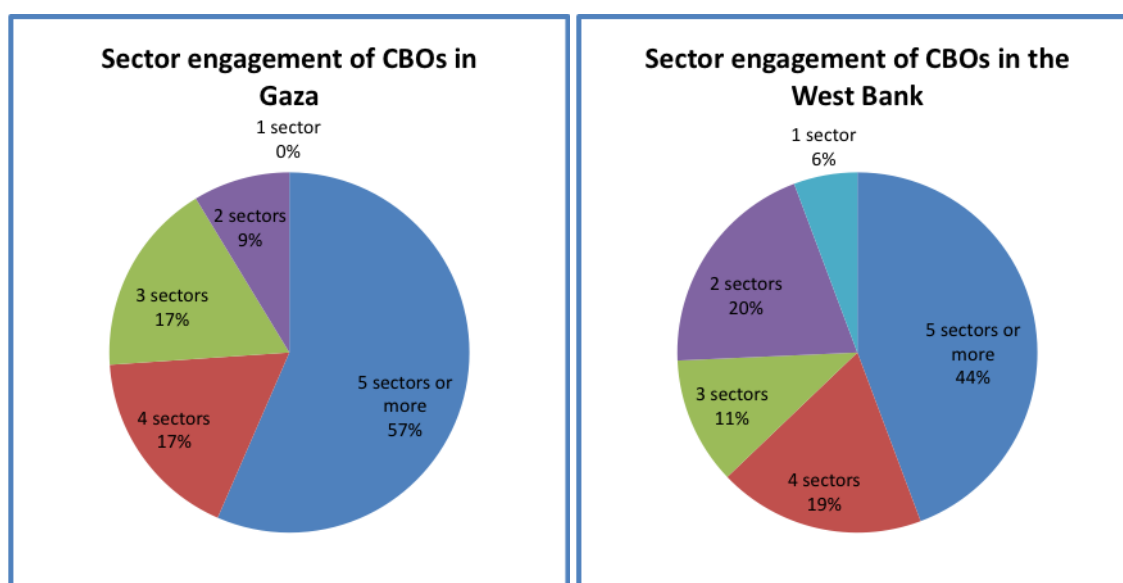
In the Gaza Strip none of the consulted CBOs specialises in one sector only, the majority of them are active in more than five sectors. As is apparent in the figure, the situation is partially different in the West Bank. Also in this case about 43% of CBOs are engaged in five sectors or more and another 18% are involved in four sectors. About 20% of the organisations are involved in two sectors and 5% in only one sector.

CBOs are not specialised, but tend to practice few kinds of activities. Most CBOs are involved only in service delivery, sometimes "implementing contracts" for other organisations, particularly in the West Bank. Few CBOs carry out "policy focused" activities, such as policy monitoring, advocacy or the participation in local committees and other governance bodies are very few (about 6% in the West Bank and less than 10% in Gaza).

Kinds of activities carried out by 1st level organisations

	Service delivery	Policy monitoring	Advocacy	Participation in local governance	Contract implementation
Gaza Strip	100%	0%	7%	7%	7%
West Bank	100%	1%	3%	1%	96%

■ Kinds of activities Gaza Strip   ■ Kinds of activities West Bank
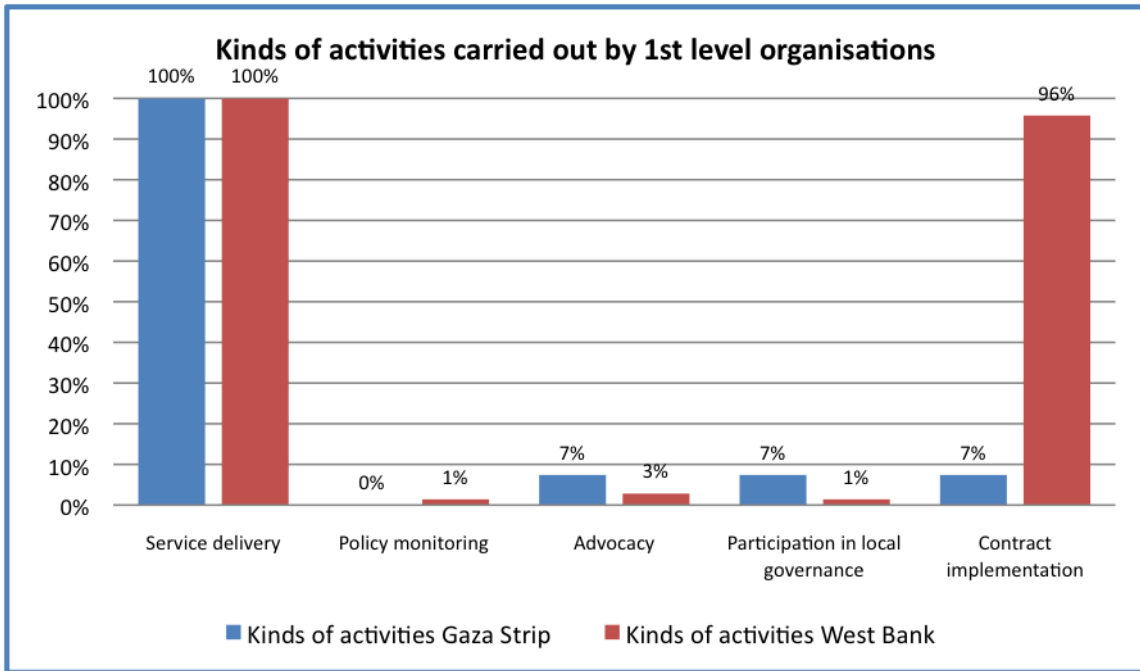
In the Gaza Strip, the participation in local committees and advocacy activities appears slightly more diffused than in the West Bank.

Key Activity Areas of CBOs in the Gaza Strip

- Food assistance, household livelihood and relief
- Empowering women to undertake small-scale projects through vocational training and creation of productive units
- Psychosocial support and conflict resolution
- Special education and rehabilitation services
- Orphan sponsorship
- Children's activities, nurseries, mother and child protection
- Providing elderly support program
- Educational development activities and training
- Advocating women and legal aid support
- Providing nursery services
- Production and marketing of organic agriculture and dissemination of agricultural good practices

Source: focus group with CBOs in Gaza

From the focus groups and meetings carried out some more important elements emerge regarding the grassroots organisations' actions, relevance, and coherence:

- There is a strong linkage with communities and the orientation to respond to "community needs" is diffused, because of the involvement of community member in organisations.

- Resources are limited and do cover actual projects expenses. Maintaining and developing CBO activities are not budgeted and have no alternative resources.

- Many of the CBOs are not self-created but NGO level 2 or INGO created, when project or activity is over, the connection is over, too.

- Internal political division is much more apparent at the CBO level. Activists in such groups are very often highly sensitive to political disputes leading to tensions within the same community.

- Despite this orientation, CBOs are unable to respond to local needs "because they are linked to donors' agendas." Moreover, this last fact entails that "the majority of CBOs are engaged in similar programs and are imitating each other in their activities."
- Even more worrying, local communities are in some areas increasingly dependent on donors in the definition of their own needs.

Gaza Strip Specific Features

The consultation of CBOs and other civil society organisations in the Gaza Strip permits us to identify some issues that are particularly important at the local level:

- CBOs are engaged in responding to relief and recovery activities, which increases the tendency of the local community to be dependent on relief services and food assistance; in fact, most CBOs only carry out relief activities and do not actively promote local development;
- Lack of trust exists among CBOs and other civil society organizations, thus often access to funds is considered as the result of political affiliation or as guided by hidden agendas and by personal relationships.
- INGOs and donors are sceptical about working directly with local CBOs and they are now leaning towards delivering the services directly to the end beneficiaries and through local committees without engaging the local CBOs in the process.
- Many new CBOs are being registered and allowed to deliver same/similar activities and working in the same sector in the same region, resulting in duplication of efforts and resources, increasing the level of competition and in the fact that many CBOs have few or no real activity.
- Lack of space for dialogue is an obstacle in conciliation of conflicts emerging among CBOs.
- Problems emerge in access to funds also for CBOs, due to the restriction and political divides.
- Political divide and the split between Gaza and the West Bank is an obstacle for setting partnerships, particularly with public authorities.
- Political divide and the split produced a greater difficulty of organizations in representing their constituencies, particularly when voices are to be raised in front of authorities.

Source: focus group with CBOs in Gaza

Institutional dynamics and organisational consistency

Formal institutional requirements are generally respected by CBOs, as most of them have an assembly and governing bodies that are functioning according to the organisations by-laws (only four consulted CBOs state that their assemblies are not properly working). In some cases and in addition to the formal bodies, informal committees or executive committees exist for facilitating the work of organisations. Despite these institutional features, often CBOs are very dependent on the personality of founders (a dependency that is increased by the small number of members CBOs normally have. Most CBOs responding to the questionnaire have a membership under 15 units).

Together with the focus on service delivery and the dependency on external resources, the small number of members and the dependency on one leader are factors contributing to the tendency to change the nature of CBOs to professionalised NGOs.

Most CBOs have a relatively strong organisational consistency. Some have "executive committees" for managing activities. Most of them have an office, in some cases rented, often owned. Many have a relatively **long-term permanence** with 50% of consulted CBOs in the Gaza Strip created before 2000 and about 30% of the CBOs consulted in the West Bank were created prior to 2000.

A further element for analysing the organisational consistency is the presence of an "organisational" ideal culture, represented by a set of shared ideal references and a set of defined objectives. Almost all CBOs consulted during the study have both. Few of the organisations lack ideal references (or that are not willing to define them in an explicit manner) with eight over the

whole set of CBOs consulted in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A further element to be stressed in this context is the fact that nearly all the CBOs expressed their ideal references in a secular manner, including the few faith-based and religious organisations participating in the focus groups and consultation activities.

Communication is a further area in which the consistency of CBOs is also visible. In the West Bank, about 20% of the consulted CBOs have a website or a blog. Only 1% does not have an e-mail address. In Gaza, over 50% of consulted CBOs have a website.

<div align="right">

Accountability and transparency

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While CBOs are generally considered to be able to work with communities closer than other organisations, their accountability and transparency have been questioned both by individual informants (mainly from second level organisations) and in the framework of focus groups (by the representatives of CBOs themselves). Lack of accountability and little transparency are considered mainly a feature of "established" CBOs, which tend to transform themselves to "NGOs." However, for the smaller CBOs – like those set up or supported by international NGOs – accountability and transparency are not a real problem, they appear as dependent appendixes of other organizations, having little autonomy in the management of resources.

<div align="right">

Funding

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A common feature emerging both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank is the dependency of CBOs on other organisations – both Palestinian national NGOs and international organisations – for the financial resources needed to carrying out activities.

The dependency on external actors implies in many cases the weakening of linkages with local communities and with the original constituency, as well as the growing "professionalization" (that perhaps is linked to a growing tendency to practice "paid voluntarism" rather than to the acquisition of new and more specialised knowledge) and the emergence of new situations of competition at the local level with (informal) "local committees." In fact, many informants report that international NGOs and donors are growingly sceptical about working directly with "registered CBOs" and tend to directly deliver services to final beneficiaries or to pass through "local committees", especially in areas where there is a suspicious CBOs that could be politically affiliated with Islamist political parties (perhaps, often these committees are artificially created as a service/benefit delivery tool).

Competition over financial resources also influences the cooperation among CBOs. In all focus groups the lack of cooperation (including information sharing) was reported as a main issue.

When looking at the data on the consulted CBOs, **the importance of external funds is apparent**: about 90% of CBOs in Gaza receive funds from international NGOs, while those receiving funds from international organisations are about 60%. The CBOs funded by international NGOs in the West Bank are over 50% and those getting funds from international organisations are about 40%. As expected, an important source of resources is represented by Palestinian NGOs (intermediate with international NGOs and international agencies).

Direct fund recovery from service delivery is practiced in the West Bank by about 40% of CBOs and in the Gaza Strip by about 33% of organisations. Most CBOs used to collect funds from their members.

Funding sources
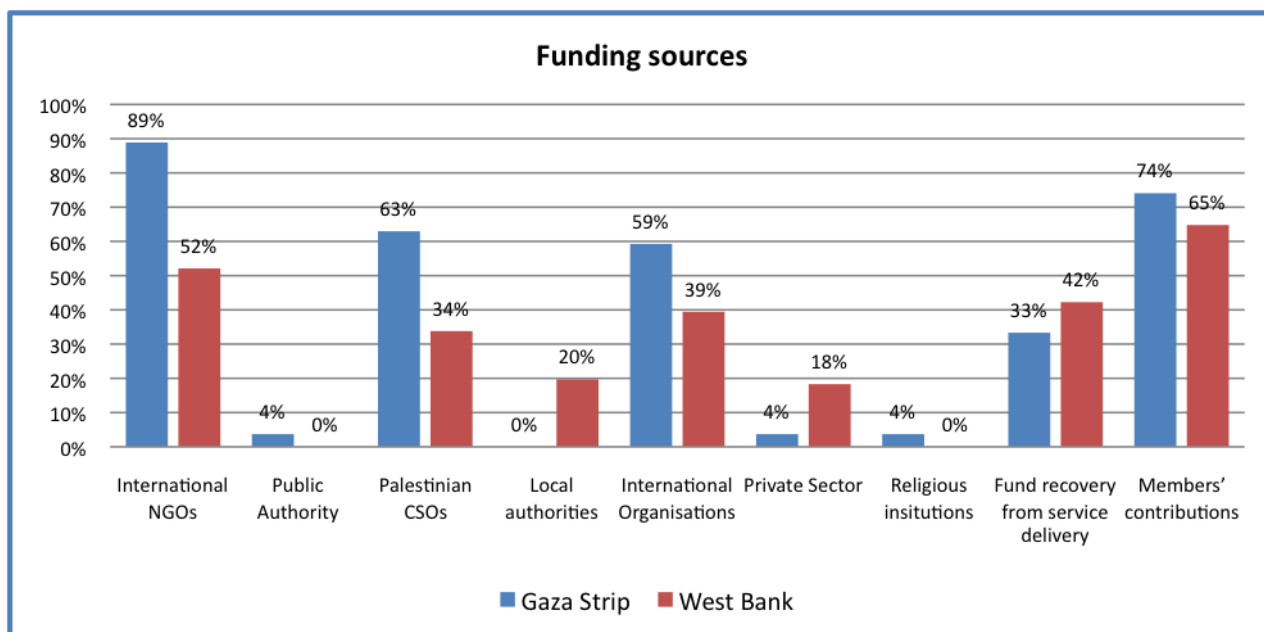
The fact that most organisations declare receiving funds from international NGOs and international organisations is not an indicator of the autonomy of the CBOs. It seems on the contrary an indicator of two risky processes: the fact that – as referred both by CBOs and NGOs – often international agencies and NGOs prefer to "go directly" to the beneficiaries, skipping the national NGOs. It also shows that CBOs are increasingly changing their "nature" and assuming the function of NGOs, leaving a void at the grassroots level.

Partnerships

CBOs maintain partnership relationships with various actors. This is shown in the following figures. Both in the Gaza Strip and in the West Bank the main partner of CBOs are Palestinian civil society organizations (which include other CBOs). The second partner is represented by international NGOs; however, these represent a partner for little less than 80% of CBOs in Gaza, while less than 60% of the organisations in the West Bank collaborate with international NGOs. A more similar situation exists between CBOs and international organisations. The following partner is represented by public authorities: in Gaza they partner with about 30% of CBOs, while in the West Bank the partnership increases to 40%, in addition to those involving local authorities, that concern about 30% of CBOs.

Partners of first level organisations
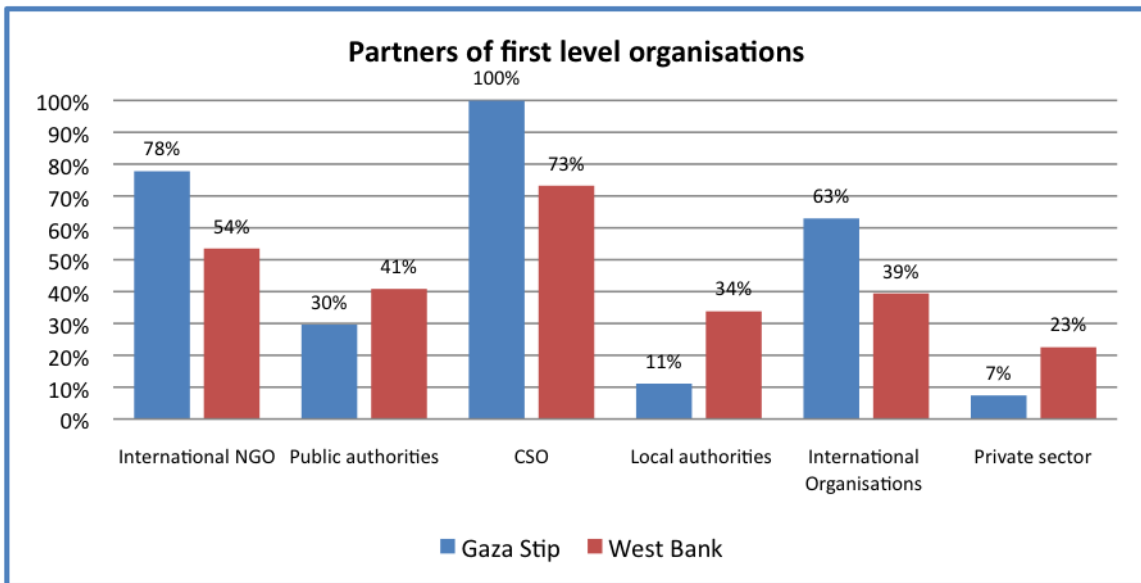
Both in the West Bank and Gaza, an **orientation of CBOs to participate in networks and coalitions** also emerges from questionnaires. Of the CSOs consulted in Gaza about 15% do not take part in any network. Most organisations participate in local and sectoral networks (i.e. Community Rehabilitation Network, Child Protection Network, Cooperative Development Network or local CBOs networks) and networks that are related to their funding sources (i.e. INGO networks, Euromed, Handicap International, etc.). Some organizations are affiliated with national CSO unions (i.e. Cultural Centre Union, Farmers' Union).

The participation in networks and coalitions seems to somehow contrast with the tendency of CBOs to concentrate their activity on service provision. In fact, more than a way to carry out advocacy initiatives or to exert pressure over public authorities or other actors, networks and coalitions are used by CBOs as a gate for accessing funding opportunities. This also explains why very local and small organizations choose to participate in international networks.

Another critical element influencing formation and participation in networks is the access and movement barriers created by Israel (checkpoints, walls, sieges, security interventions, etc.) which contributed to the development of new daily practices formed on the basis of absence of movement, the decrease of trust among actors and the tendency to consider geographic proximity and knowledge of the others as the main indicator for reliability of networks and distance cooperation.

Sector specificities

As previously stated, most CBOs are engaged (or are willing to engage) in several sectors. Still, the activity of CBOs appears particularly strong in the following areas:

- women and children's issues;
- education and health;
- youth, sport and culture;
- agriculture and rural development[29];
- assistance to vulnerable people (disabled, elders, homeless).

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[29] Also due to the presence of local cooperatives among CBOs

The following table demonstrates the involvement of organisations in the various sectors, aggregating together those CBOs that were consulted in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.
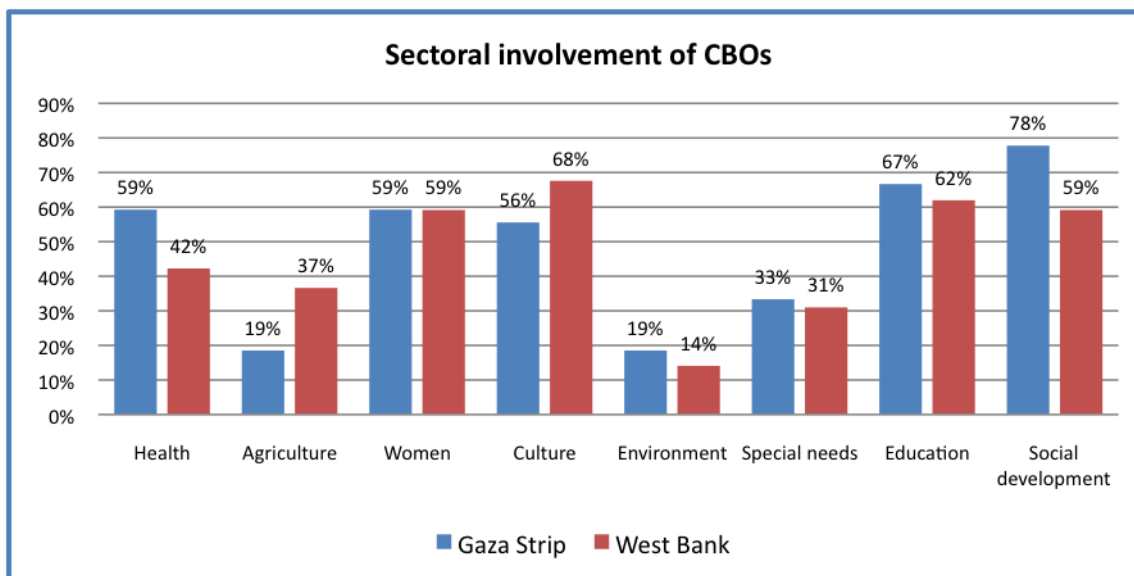
As it can be expected, in many cases the CBOs engaged in women's issues also provide services for children. Those working on education engage in youth related activities, too.

<div align="right">**Emerging needs**</div>

In order to indentify the emerging needs for CBOs, we have to take into consideration the CBOs self-perceived strengths, weaknesses, advantages and obstacles/threats. These elements should then be interpreted considering the context and the "factual" elements emerging through the general analysis of organizations.

CBOs Strengths and Weaknesses				
	Strengths	**Weaknesses**	**Advantages**	**Obstacles**
West Bank	Experience	Lack of permanent funding and dependency on external funding	Relevance of activities based on local demands	Israeli occupation and limited mobility
	Connection with communities at local level	Lack or inadequacy of infrastructure (offices, equipment, etc.)	Location close to beneficiaries	Political orientation of funds
	Internal governance and leadership	Fluctuating commitment of members in project implementation	In-kind resources are available for CBOs within their closest local authorities	Lack of support and competition by the public authorities
	Strong relations with local authorities and good level of cooperation	Limited and insufficient resources under local authorities control		Internal political fragmentation and division
	Cooperation and networking with other organisations, NGOs and international	Volunteers' lack of capacity		Limited linkages with donors

	organisations		
Gaza	Internal governance and leadership	Lack of permanent funding and dependency on external funding	Relevance of activities based on local demands	Israeli blockade
	Experience	Lack of permanent staff		Political uncertainty
	Connection with communities at local level	Inadequacy of infrastructure and equipment		Political conflicts and the closure of organisations
	Cooperation and networking with other organisations, NGOs and international organisations	Lack of professional capacities		Little attention given to smaller organisations
	Flexibility	Dependency on external actors, including both donors and users		Concurrence of INGO engaged in direct implementation

Despite the differences among geographic areas, both positive and negative elements are similar and somehow reflect the difficulties organisations face when looking at themselves as "project making bodies" rather than citizen's organisations. The main differences concern the importance given in the Gaza strip to the political situation, including both the political divide within the oPt and the Israeli blockade, and to the relationships with international NGOs, that are both an important partner and a competitor as well as the "dependency" on external actors.

Considering all this, probably, when thinking about the main needs of CBOs the most important seems to be that of reinforcing themselves in their nature as "citizens' organisations" and avoiding their transformation to NGOs. Such a transformation in the nature of CBOs risks indeed producing several effects. Some of these are:

- The further **reduction of the possibilities for communities to have their voice heard** by external actors (including public authorities, donors, the NGOs, etc.). This widens the gap existing among citizens and "service deliverers."

- The **increase of dependency of communities** on external actors and resources, because of the elimination of resources at the grassroots level and their "transfer" to a higher one.

- The **reduction of local absorption capacity** through the elimination of local actors that due to their link with the community can mediate the intervention of external actors – such as public authorities and NGOs – that when directly intervene always risk to produce negative impact such as the creation of conflicts, the strengthening of client-patron relationships, etc.

- The **increase of competition for resources** through the "proliferation" of NGOs that look for resources necessary to maintain the "organizations" rather than at impacting the communities to which they originally belong.

- The **decrease of quality of projects and local development interventions**, since the new (local) organizations seldom have professional capacities existing in larger/more experienced NGOs and since these latter would not be able to find at the local level the needed "local capacities."

- An **increase of conflicts** within civil society, linked to the lack of recognition among organizations. New, local NGOs would easily not recognize the legitimacy of older (national) NGOs to intervene at the local level. Also, the latter would not easily accept a peer relationship with organizations not having the same capacities and resources (and de facto such a relationship would be a false one, biased as it is by the older and larger organizations).

Considering all this, the intervention for strengthening CBOs would have to focus on the following capacity building needs.

Capacity Building Needs for 1st Level Organisations		
	West Bank	**Gaza Strip**
Individual capacities	Needs analysis	Needs assessment and analysis
	Project management	Project management
	Policy analysis and monitoring	Policy analysis and monitoring
	Construction of a recognized volunteer profile	Construction of a recognized volunteer profile
Organisation capacities	Definition and strengthening of the organisation's identity	Definition and strengthening of the organisation identity
	Management of relations and negotiation with local authorities	Management of relations and negotiation with local authorities
	Management and raising of local resources	Management and raising of local resources
	Monitoring of services and processes in the communities	Monitoring of services and processes at the grassroots level
Needs linked to the context / Institutional environment	Recognition of local CBOs as actors and not as simple beneficiaries or project implementing agencies	Recognition of local CBOs as actors and not as simple beneficiaries or project implementing agencies
	Strengthening and reconstruction of CBO relationships with communities	Constructing local dialogue space for facilitating interaction between CBOs and PNGOs/INGOs and the PA
	Supporting the recognition of CBOs at local level by local authorities without passing for the registration process	Supporting the recognition of CBOs at the local level by local authorities without passing for the registration process
	Construction of space for dialogue on development policy at community/local level involving CBOs and local authorities	Construction of space for dialogue on development policy at community/local level involving CBOs and local authorities

East Jerusalem represents in this framework a special case in which the following capacity building needs emerge:

Capacity Building Needs for 1st Level Organisations	
	East Jerusalem
Individual capacities	Needs analysis
	Project management
	Policy analysis and monitoring
	Hebrew language
Organisation capacities	Definition and strengthening of the organisation identity
	Management of relations and negotiation with local authorities
	Management and raising of local resources
	Monitoring of services and processes in the communities
	Advocacy and campaigning
Needs linked to the context / institutional environment	Strengthening and reconstruction of CBO relationships with communities
	Form legal umbrella to facilitate and coordinate legal issues allowing CBOs to act formally and legally.
	High level of policy analysis information and services to be disseminated among activists and CBOs.

5.2. Second level organisations

Many typologies have been built about civil society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.[30] Mainly, they tend to distinguish among "NGOs" (including all citizen's associations), professional organizations and trade unions (workers trade unions, professional associations, chambers of commerce, etc.), political parties and social movements. In this section of the report, the attention was focused only on **a group of citizens organizations**, including those characterised by being permanent, having a formal status (which in the Palestinian situation is represented by registration) and a structured organization, supporting a group of beneficiaries that is larger than and different from "organisation members."

Within these limits, it is possible to identify the following groups of organizations concretely:

- **charitable and welfare organisations** (these organizations are not simply "self-help" groups or zakat committees);
- **service-provision associations and NGOs having a professional capacity**, focusing on health care, child- care, education, etc.;
- **development NGOs and research organisations**, that differs from the previous ones because they operate more clearly within "developmental" frameworks; this group often includes organisations that have no grassroots linkages (but are sometimes linked to universities);
- **human rights and democracy associations**;
- **special issue and interest group organisations**; focusing on women's rights, youth and children's rights, detainee rights, land confiscation, and social and economic rights;
- **cultural Organizations** (music, theatre, lectures, film, poetry, readings, exhibitions, art schools, etc.).

Taking into account the survey carried out in 2007 by MAS[31], this whole set of organizations can be estimated at about 50 to 60% of the about 1,500 registered organizations. Of this total number, about 19.2% is composed of sports and youth clubs and 52% is composed of charitable societies. From these two categories of organizations only a few can be identified as "2nd level organizations."

Mission and action relevance and coherence

In the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, 2nd level organisations are engaged in all sectors, from scientific and technological research to education (particularly focusing on special education or on higher – graduate and post graduate education) to health, agriculture, water and environment, human rights and democracy, gender, youth-related issues, peace building, etc. Main sector articulation of Palestinian NGOs may be recognized as follows:

- **Agricultural**, including a small number of large organisations, like PARC providing research and extension services, or the Palestinian Farmers Union, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees and the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees (aggregating a large number of local committees and cooperatives); in recent years some new, smaller organisations focusing on agriculture emerged, specialising in organic agriculture or on specific crops and other "development organisations" like MAAN are intervening in the sector (for instance fostering the adoption of innovative agricultural practices – as fish ponds – in the context of relief activities).
- **Children Care, Development and Protection**, including organisations working on Education (e.g. Al Muntada – Young Scientists' Club), organisations supporting mother and child (ECRC,

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[30] Source: "Civil Society in Palestine, a Literature Review" by Dr. Jamil Hilal.
[31] MAS, *Mapping of Non Governmental Organizations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, Ramallah, 2007

Mother Guidance & Child Care Society), organisations working on "special needs" (i.e. the Arab society for Orphans or the Care for Children with Special Needs Society) and organisations working on children's rights protection (e.g. Defence for Children International – Palestine).

- **Cultural,** which include a number of organisations fostering art and culture, with a focus on the promotion and maintenance of the Palestinian cultural identity, on peace culture and on cultural dialogue. In this group organisations such as the Khalil Sakakini Centre or the Sabreen Association have found their space.

- **Educational**, which include both organisations that directly deliver education services (such as the "Al-Quds Open University" or the many smaller NGOs managing schools and training courses, particularly focusing on "community education") and organisations working on the innovation and improvement of public education (e.g. the Teacher Creativity Centre or Alwarid).

- **Health**, in which most organisations have been involved for years in providing primary health care to the Palestinian population and in recent times has been specialising in the provision of care activities to special groups or in remote areas. Organisations include for instance the Health Work Committees (HWC) and the Union of Health Care Committees (UHCC), and more specialised organisations such as the "Gaza Mental Health Programme" or many rehabilitation and "community rehabilitation" organisations.

- **Social Assistance and Development**, in which organisations are engaged in supporting disadvantaged groups or in mitigating emerging social problems (organisations in this sector include ATTA working with the elderly, the PFPPA working on family planning, the Palestinian Counselling Centre or the Centre for Community Service – Jerusalem or MA'AN).

- **Human Rights, Democracy and Governance**, includes a large number of organisations working both on legal defence (Addameer, Jerusalem Legal Aid, Al Haq), on advocacy activities (Al Haq, Hurryyat, MIFTAH, etc.) and on research and training initiatives (Muwatin, BADIL, MUSAWA).

- **Environmental**, mainly includes research institutes, such as ARIJ (Applied Research Institute), Land Research Centre or the Palestinian Hydrology Group; often the organisations engaged in this sector work with those engaged in agriculture.

- **Women**, includes a relatively large number of organisations – ranging from feminist to Muslim women's organisations are involved in some main kinds of activities: advocacy of women's rights; education and empowerment of women and of women's CBOs; legal defence and protection of women.

- **Youth,** includes organisations involved in organising Youth and in advocating the recognition of youth as an actor in Palestinian society; in this framework both are active "old" organisations such as the Palestinian Youth Union and "new" organisations such as PYALARA (focusing on Media) or Sharek (focusing on "participation" and integration of Youth in social and political life, as its name indicates).

- **Peace Building,** more than a specific sector, this an area of engagement with organisations often involved in other sectors.[32] This is the case for PANORAMA and PalVision, which are involved also in human rights and democracy and in youth initiatives, or of the Palestinian Hydrology Group, which mainly focuses on water resources.

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[32] "Peace building" activities and NGOs are currently under discussion in Palestinian civil society. Peace building and particularly "people to people" peace activities are often blamed of risking to "normalise" the situation linked to Israeli occupation or of producing a false reality, not recognizing the actual situation of the Palestinian territories that suffer from the occupation of main cities, the separation wall, the blockage of main roads and of the siege of the Gaza strip. Also see: Ophir A., Givoni M., Hanafi S., *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion. Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, Zone Books, New York, 2009.

If we look at most 2nd level organisations, an articulation of activities across different sectors is frequent, both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Those focusing on just one sector are few and mostly refer to special intervention areas, such as health and rehabilitation.

Core Sectors for 2nd level Organisations
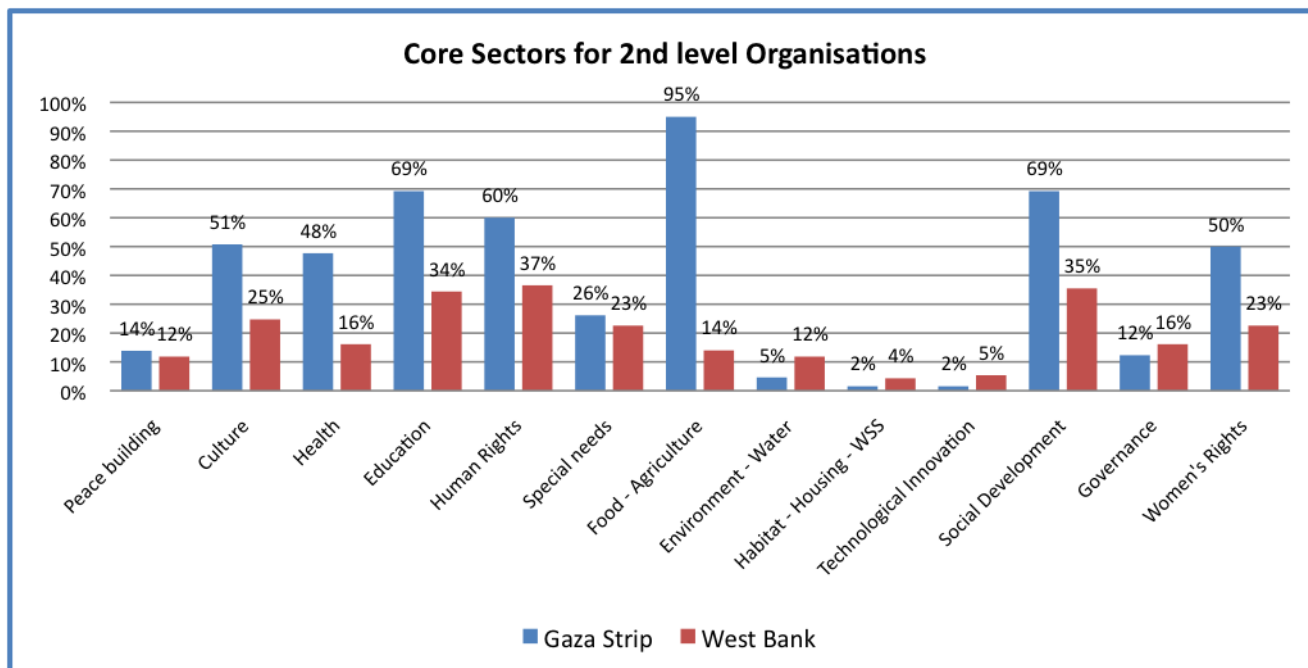
In regards to **sector specialisation,** a difference emerges among the geographical areas of the oPt. While in the West Bank the 2nd level organisations tend to maintain their specialisation fields, in East Jerusalem and in Gaza their tendency is to intervene in an integrated manner, focusing on more than one sector. Particularly, this is linked to "relief" activities in the Gaza Strip and to interventions concerning "urban condition" in East Jerusalem, where the initiatives on urban environment, social services and legal protection of human rights often merge.

The integration and flexibility of actions is to be considered in this framework as a coping strategy for increasing the relevance of NGO activities in front of local demands.

 "**Community Demands**" are a main element in the identification of 2nd Level Organisation activities. They constitute a basis for project identification for about 57% of organisations in the West Bank and for about 48% of organisations in the Gaza Strip.

Another diffused measure for project formulation is represented by **diagnostic studies** that are used by 66% of the organisations in the West Bank and 70% of those in the Gaza Strip.

However, the relevance of activities and their coherence with organisations' mission is somehow reduced. Most organisations discussed in meetings, focus groups and literature, need to adhere to donors' agendas. **60% of organisations in the Gaza Strip and about 57% of organisations in the West Bank consider a key reference in the formulation of their projects the existing funding opportunities**.

Main Sources in Project Identification and Formulation
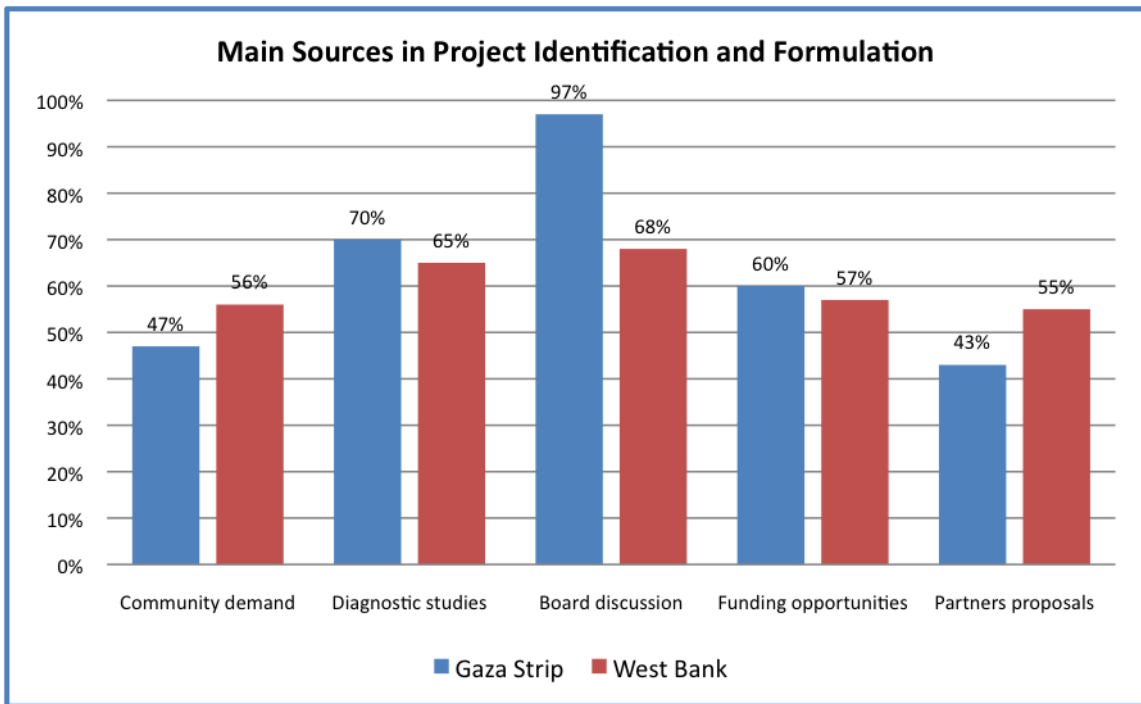
Relevance of activities is assured also by the interaction of different modalities for project identification. Both in Gaza and the West Bank, about 60% of organisations use at least three modalities for project identification. Those basing project identification are just about 11% of the total.
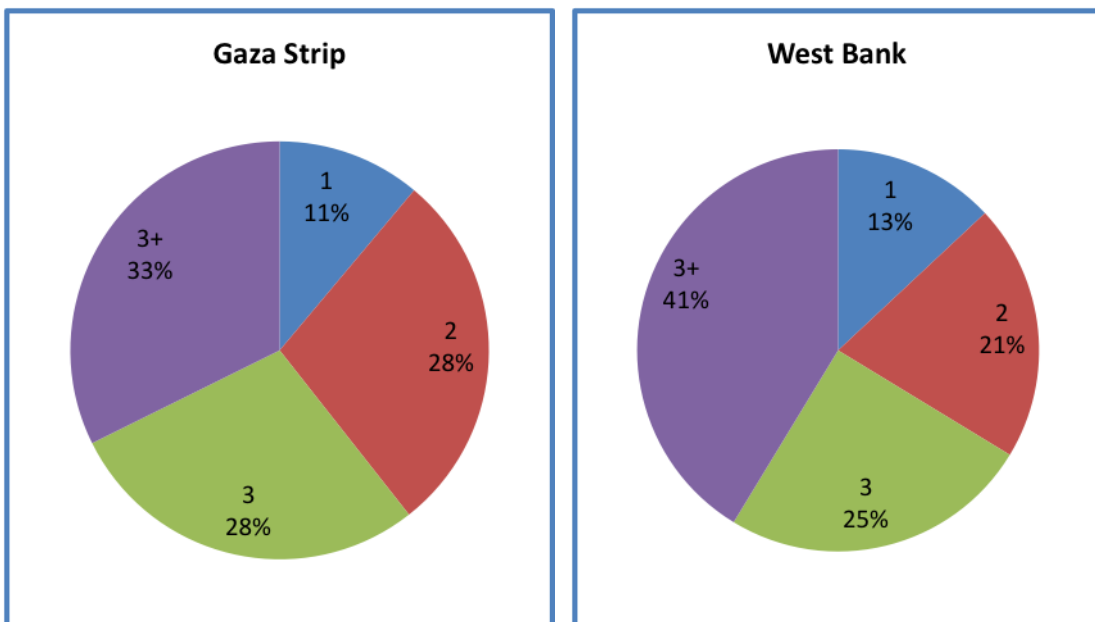
When looking at the types of activities carried out, it emerges that 2nd level organisations mainly play the role of "service providers." As it appears in the following table, almost **all organisations carry out "service delivery" activities, but a smaller percentage are involved in advocacy activities, policy monitoring or in the work of local policy dialogue or governance bodies**.

Main Types of Activities
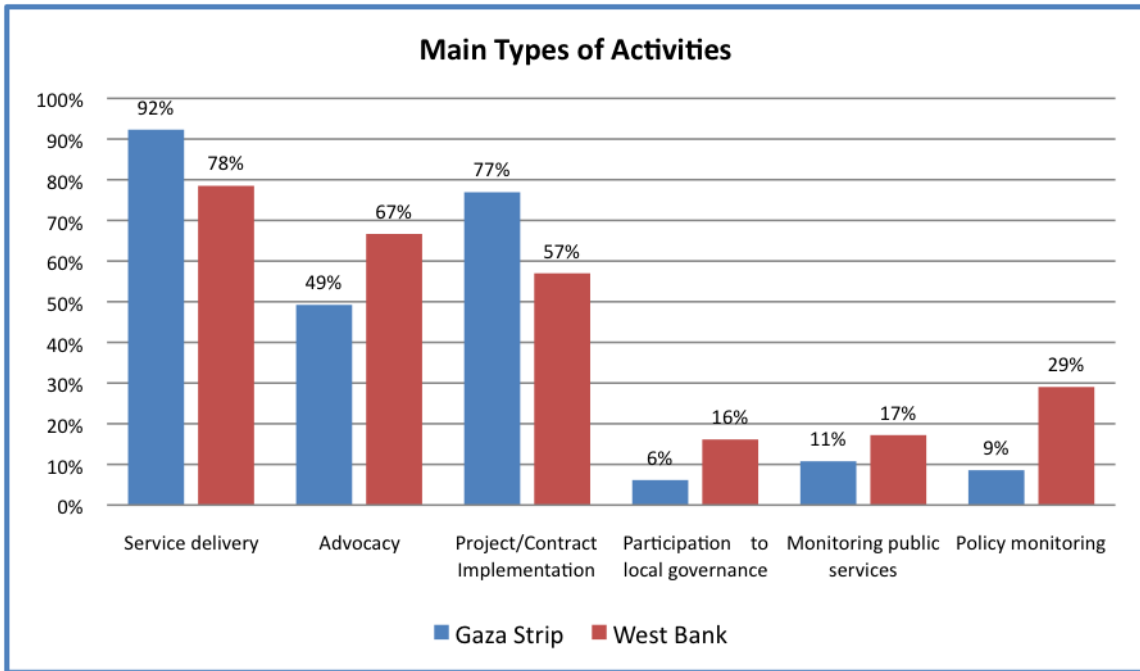
It is noticed that a relatively large share of organisations are engaged both in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip in carrying out "**advocacy**" activities. However, these activities mainly include the participation in national and international campaigns against the Israeli occupation, the participation in local communication and awareness raising campaigns (on gender, people with disabilities, environment and water, etc.) or the claim for services on special needs (e.g. rehabilitation care). Advocacy is therefore often to be considered as another means to deliver services, through the performance of communication. Another element to be recalled is that over 70% of organisations carry out their activities in force of "**contracts**" and "**project funding agreements**" with other bodies. This further reduces the space for autonomous intervention in policy dialogue.

In addition to the **focus on service delivery**, a further element that reduces the policy role of civil society organisation is the difficulty they experience in implementing strategic plans and in introducing long-term plans in short-term programming. While almost all organisations define "long-term plans" and have strategic plans, less than 10% have short-term programming and monitor the strategy implementation (indeed, the stronger NGOs practice these activities). In Gaza particularly, the planning process is jeopardized by the permanent crisis, the emergency situation, and by the fact that activities (also when continuous service provision) are only "project based" and addressed at satisfying immediate needs.

Institutional dynamics

2nd level organizations show in most cases long-term permanence. In the West Bank **about 50% of organizations were created before 1994** (some of them were in the past registered with Israeli authorities; some organisations are still based or working in East Jerusalem). Those created from the year 2000 to 2007 consist about the 30% in the West Bank, and those created after 2007 are a small minority, about 4%.

In the Gaza Strip, 2nd level organizations are younger and about 40% were created between the years 2000 and 2007, those created after 2007 are the 7% and **those created before 2000 consist of about 50%.**

The presence of a large number of organisations with a long history implies the emergence of a **generational issue.** In most organisations the founders are still active and still play a leadership role. As a consequence, the change of (actual) leadership is difficult, so that often younger professionals tend to create new organisations (producing a proliferation of new NGOs) or tend to follow new emerging professional opportunities, including those in other NGOs and in international NGOs. This produces a high staff turnover and a low capacity to retain staff in Palestinian CSOs.

Related to this issue, both from the interviews and from the documentary analysis[33], a tendency to centralise power was observed. In many organisations a small group of people actually influence decision-making. This is often due to the presence and permanence in the organisation of the original leaders and founders. This tendency is further reinforced by the fact that the "founders" and leaders are the ones with longer experience, maintaining the public relations and holding the greater access to donors.

This tendency is also reinforced by the fact that most organisations do not have a large membership basis and have a board that is made up of prestigious individuals, coming from the NGO sector, from the academic environment and (in some cases) from political parties[34]. This fact results in practice to double centralisation of authority and decision-making. Not only few people participate in decision making in each single organisation, but in general few people participate in the setting of decisions and the agenda.

Such a generational issue seems to be scarcely impacted by the fact that all NGOs have a formal status and an institutional structure that is "formally" regularly working (almost 95% of the consulted organizations declared to have functional institutional bodies, such as assemblies or boards of directors). In many cases – particularly in Gaza – organisations have highlighted the fact that rules, procedures and administrative and membership criteria are not responsive to the ongoing progress of the organisations activities anymore.

<div align="right">

Organisational consistency

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As easily expected, organisational consistency is not uniform in these second level organisations. A number of NGOs – particularly the key ones and the oldest ones – can be considered as large pools of resources, including both professional capacities and financial resources (among older NGOs the availability of an endowment producing a constant flow of financial resources is not rare, also even if normally the resources produced in such a way are not enough for sustaining the organisations activities), many NGOs are also told to be "one man" organisations, "one project" organisations or "family businesses."

This last point seems particularly to be the case of NGOs created after 1994. A feature of these organisations has been recognized by most consulted informants in their lack of participation in coalitions and umbrella organisations. It is to be pointed out that these organisations are very visible in the public debate, but are not so visible in the consultation activities nor in the field.

While many organisations registered themselves in networks and data bases as the one established by NDC (that is often viewed by NGOs as a portal for accessing funds), these organisations tend not to participate in activities that are not immediately linked to funding. It is the case, for instance, of the same distribution of the questionnaire carried out for this mapping exercise, so that this group of organisations are underrepresented.

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[33] Hanafi S., Tabar L., *The emergence of a Palestinian Globalized Elite. Donors, International Organizations and Local NGOs*, Institute of Jerusalem Studies – Muwatin, 2005.
[34] This is due, in some cases, to long term relationships existing between parties and NGOs: some NGOs were created as "party social organizations."

As a fact, most organisations that participated in the consultation showed good organisational consistency, from different points of view:

- the majority of organisations existed for a long period of time (those created after 2006 are less than 1 % in the Gaza Strip and 4% in the West Bank and East Jerusalem[35]);

- almost all of them (100% in the Gaza Strip, 90% in the West Bank) have a complex "organisational culture" represented by a set of cultural and ideological references and by a set of principles guiding their actions and establishment of objectives; such a culture seems mostly to be coherent with organisations' mandates and activities [36] ;

- the great majority of organisations (72% in the Gaza Strip, 74% in the West Bank) have a long-term or strategic plan;

- all organisations, in both the considered areas, maintain at least one office and have permanent staff (organisations with 10 to 30 paid workers consist of 23% in the Gaza Strip and the 35 % in the West Bank);

- most organisations participate in networks and coalitions (74% in the Gaza Strip; 76 % in the West Bank).

<div align="right">**Accountability and transparency**</div>

All CSOs are reporting their financial statements and audited reports annually. The majority have reports addressing the organisational activities and funding. They regularly report donor reporting and disseminate information to donor and related officials. Moreover, when looking at the best-known organisations, the reported strength was often the "accountability" and the trust relations with donors and beneficiaries.

Nevertheless, for most organisations the publication and disclosure of reports and information to the general public appears to be poor. This partly explains why since the beginning of 2000s, Palestinian NGOs and charities were heavily criticized for not being accountable and transparent. According to recent AMAN studies, the most common opinion in Palestinian population is that NGOs are corrupt and unaccountable, and the misuse of funds is among the most common reason/s for the closure of NGOs and charities by the Palestinian National Authority.

In addition to the poor capacity to disclose information and reports, different elements contribute to this situation:

- the **small membership** (among the organisations responding to the questionnaire those with more than 20 members are below the 10 %);

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[35] The difference between the percentage of new organizations in Gaza Strip and Ramallah can be explained by two main reasons. The first is access to funds: in Gaza most available resources are aimed at "humanitarian" aid and often are channelled through INGO, NGOs and IO that prefer to partner with community-based grassroots organization and do not ask them to officially register, and the possibility for these organizations to extend their range of action and became autonomous is very low because of the existing restrictions. In the West Bank, more often local organizations tend to "grow up" assuming the shape and functions of an NGO and extending their range of action to wider geographical areas. The second is the bureaucratic process related to registration that despite the harshening of controls on organisations in the current political conditions seems to be easier in the West Bank.

[36] The great majority of 2nd level organisations refer to secular principles and cultures. This may have different reasons, including: the diffusion of a mainstream "civil society" culture; the fact that donors are normally considered to be suspicious about faith based organisations, so that religious motivations are underrepresented when presenting the organisations; the political origin of a number of CSOs in Palestine and their reference to a "national" rather than to a "religious" identity; the fact that a gap exists among "civil society" and the "religious organisations", which are in some cases directly affiliated to political parties (e.g. Hamas) or in other cases directly linked with religious institutions (the *waqf*) and tend not to participate in the many spaces (discussion fora, journals, networks, seminars and workshops, training activities, etc.) in which the "Civil Society Community" concretizes its existence.

- the **unclear constituency** (few organisations are linked to specific beneficiaries or social groups, many function as a "shop" providing professional services);

- the **availability of a great quantity of resources** (according to MAS estimations annual funding for Palestinian CSOs is around 210 Million Euros) coming from external donors, in ways that are not always transparent for local actors;

- the **increase of funds for relief activities**, which implicate fast delivery, limited controls and evaluation activities, frequent conflicts between stakeholders (in many cases the targeting of resources is a reason of conflict between the local authorities and the service provider or the hostility/lack of trust of those that are not targeted), etc.;

- the lack of publicity and visibility of activities and their impact;

- the increased presence of **international NGOs**, which impacted the labour market for NGO professionals, draining qualified resources from local organisations and diffusing higher expectations concerning fees and the image of rich NGO professionals.

The increase in accountability and transparency is a main focus of the programme of **NGO Development Centre** (World Bank, PNGO IV)**.** This programme will be aimed at increasing the application of the NGO Code of Conduct. A main tool used for this aim will be the establishment of a **"rating system" among NGOs, rewarding their transparency and accountability**. However, the establishment and application of such a rating system will imply the emergence of some problems regarding the legitimacy of the actor that will be charged of the evaluation and rating of NGOs.

Funding

Funding is identified by most organisations as a problem, both because of the lack of "core funds" and because of the dependency of funding from projects. Some organisations do have an endowment that allows them to have at least a basis of funds not dependent on projects (e.g. PARC, the Welfare Alliance).

Nevertheless, looking at the organisations' budget, most of them declare it is **stable** in time and about **25% of Second level organizations in the West Bank** declare that their budget increased in the last years.

Concerning funding sources, about 60% of organisations rely on a plurality of funding (more than three external sources). Nevertheless, about 13% depend only on one type of funding source, and about 30% depend on only two funding sources: these are principally international NGO and the international organisations.

Funding sources Gaza Strip

- 1: 20%
- 2: 29%
- 3+: 51%

Funding sources West Bank

- 1: 13%
- 2: 30%
- 3+: 57%
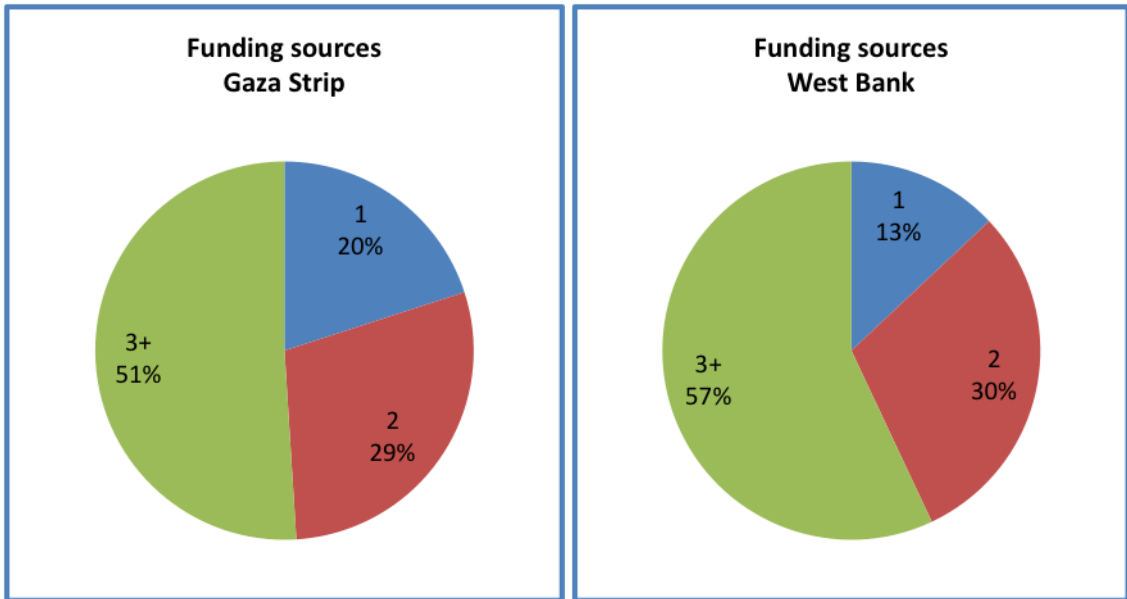
Many organisations also receive **member contributions.** When providing services to the public, they also receive **recovery funds from service delivery** (including services not related to the core activities of organisations, such as renting equipment or hall); none of these sources however constitute an important part of organisations' budgets (in Gaza for instance, organisations declared that these two sources cover less than 10% of costs of the organisations functioning, while 80 to 85% of resources needed for the functioning of organisations depended on external donors).

Organisations using fund recovery from service delivery and member contributions

	Fund recovery from service delivery	Members' contributions
Gaza Strip	62%	40%
West Bank	49%	60%
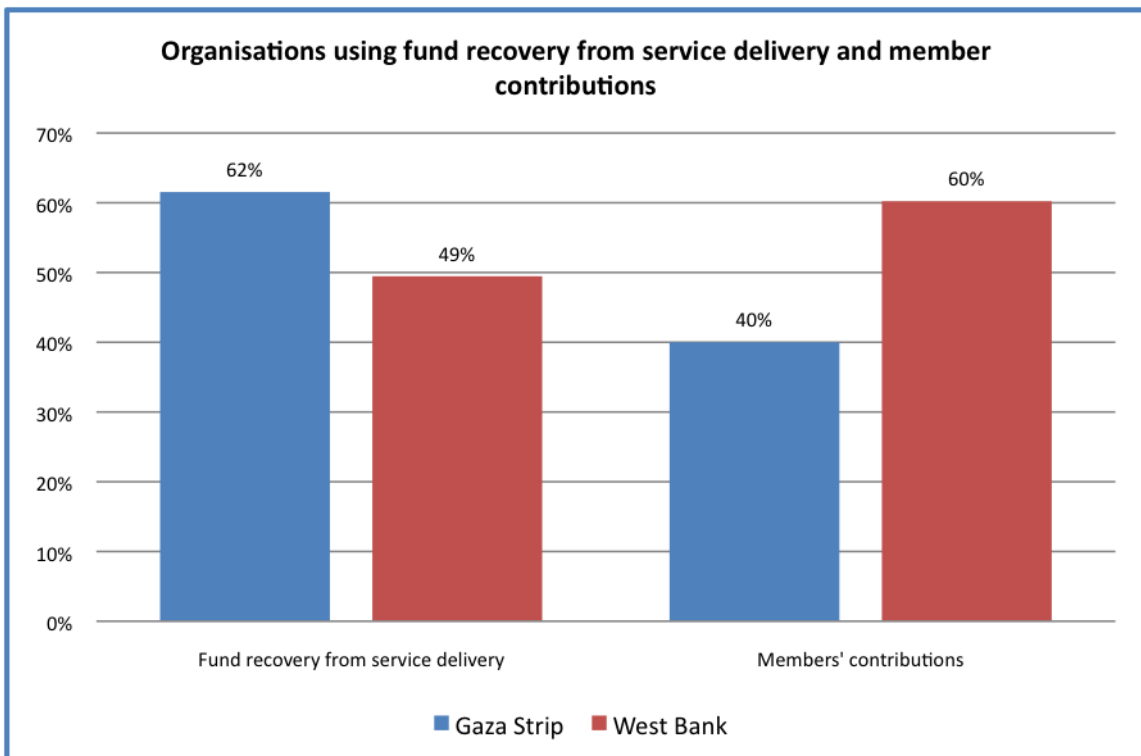
Main donors in the West Bank

The donors that 2nd level organizations more frequently refer for project funding in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are:

- NGO Development Centre (that channels funds from many international donors);
- Welfare Association;
- UNDP and the UN Agencies (UNDEF, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO, etc.);
- USAID (directly and through intermediary NGOs);
- European Union;
- Arab and Islamic organizations (particularly on relief activities)

Other funding sources include the bilateral agencies of European countries (Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Finland, France, Spain, Italy), the European NGOs (e.g.. Save the Children, Diakonia, IEPALA, Kvinna till Kvinna, ICCO, etc.) and the Swiss and Norwegian Cooperation and NGOs (e.g. Norwegian People's Aid).

Main donors in the Gaza Strip

The donors that 2nd level organizations more frequently refer for project funding in the Gaza Strip are:

- UNDP and the UN Agencies (UNRWA, UNDEF, UNICEF, UNIFEM, etc.);
- Local public authorities
- Islamic Relief
- NGO Development Centre;
- Arab and Islamic development funds;
- USAID (directly and through intermediary NGOs);
- European Union, with a large presence of ECHO
- European Bilateral Agencies (often through European NGOs)
- European and International NGOs (funds from campaigns)

Other funding sources include the local authorities of some European countries, the bilateral agencies of many non-European countries and private sponsors. While many funding sources are similar, in Gaza a larger percentage of funds are destined for "relief" activities, including food aid and the "job creation" initiatives aimed at involving people in paid communal activities. The lack of funding for "development" and organisational development initiatives was claimed in individual meetings, focus groups and questionnaires as a main issue for the Gaza organisations.

Partnerships

In the West Bank and Jerusalem, 75% of 2nd level organisations participate in partnerships and coalitions. Only about 23% declare not to have linkages with networks or coalitions. In the Gaza Strip, the participation in networks and coalitions is even higher; 84% of organisations are taking part in one or more partnership.

Over **77% of organisations** have as main partners international NGOs. However, about 60% of organisations maintain a permanent relationship with more than two types of partners and the organisations only maintaining links with INGO are a small minority (less than 5 %).

In the West Bank, about 63% of 2nd level organisations **support smaller NGOs and CBOs** and just few organisations – about 11% are not providing any support to smaller NGOs and CBOs (mainly these organisation are involved in very specific cultural activities or in the direct provision of services to the public, as in the case of some charitable organisations). In **the Gaza Strip the percentage of NGOs supporting smaller NGOs and CBOs decreases** to less than 30%, while the 36% formally declare that they do not provide support to other NGOs.

This most significant difference between Gaza and West Bank 2nd level organisations may be mainly attributed to their nature and activities. In the West Bank an important share of organisations consists of:

- national organisations and of organisations based on the aggregation of smaller groups (e.g. PARC, the Palestinian Farmer Union, Sharek, AMAN, Ma'an);

- organisations that have as a clear mandate of providing support and resources to other organisations (as in the very different cases of Al Qattan Foundation, of the NDC or of the Welfare Association);

- organisations that are based in urban areas (i.e. primarily Ramallah and the heads of governorates and work "through" local organisations, that need to be supported.

In the Gaza Strip, on the contrary:

- an important percentage of **organisations are local** or are local branches of national organisations (these local branches are often increasing their autonomy because of the closure of the Gaza Strip and of the political "division");

- many organisations are **directly involved in service delivery**;

- in many cases, moreover service delivery in the Gaza Strip is related to relief operations, so that actors involved at the very community level are assuming the role and shape of "**beneficiary committees**" supporting aid distribution more than the role of local partners;

- smaller organisations are often able to **directly access international donors and NGOs** because of their local presence, so they refer for support directly to them, skipping the intermediation of national or larger organisations (e.g. women's organisations with UNIFEM, UNICEF and UNRWA).

However, in the Gaza Strip there are also examples of larger organisations empowering local and smaller CBOs and examples of **partnerships in which the autonomous statute and the capacity of local smaller CBOs are recognised** exist. Examples can be identified as the collaboration of the Gaza Mental Health Programme with local committees, the experience of "community based rehabilitation" initiatives, those of women's organisations, and the collaboration of small local agricultural cooperatives with national organisations.

Despite the orientation to collaborate with smaller organisations that emerge among the largest ones, particularly in the West Bank a phenomenon clearly emerges that of the **lack of trust of older and greater NGOs in the new emerging ones**. New NGOs are frequently described as "one man" organisations or initiatives and are accepted with difficulty both in the larger NGO networks (PNGO has a closed membership, applicants should be accepted by the existing members – now about 90 organisations are involved in PNGO activities, mainly sharing the same general features) and in specialised networks and coalitions (such as the coalition of human rights organisations, in which less than 10 organisations participate).

In addition to partnerships between organisations that are mainly focused on projects, most organisations participate in **coalitions and networks**. These include:

- local coalitions (such as the Coalition for Jerusalem and the local coalitions referring to other geographical areas as the "Union of Tulkarem Institutions");

- thematic coalitions and coordination bodies (such as the Union of Local Committees for rehabilitation, PENGON, the youth NGO networks, human rights and women's organisations' networks);

- issue or campaign based coalitions (e.g. the "Stop the Wall Campaign" or the Boycott Campaign, Violence against Women Forum, Establishment of Abortion Coalition; the Coalition for Fostering Legal Reforms on Penal Code and Family Law);

- international networks, both based on geographic and cultural areas (i.e. EuroMed Forum, Union for the Mediterranean, or the "Arab NGOs Network") or on themes (i.e. Habitat International Coalition, etc.);
- networks related to donors or projects (i.e. Anna Lindh Foundation Palestinian National Network, the Humanitarian Country Team within OCHA, the NDC network, etc.);
- the national platforms, such as PNGO (PNGO participation is not a very important phenomenon in the West Bank, because if closed to a limited number of NGOs, it is very important in the Gaza Strip, where almost 65% of NGOs take part in this network), the Union of Charitable Societies and the Union of Palestinian Civil Societies.

<div align="right">**Sector specificities**</div>

Agriculture and Environment

Within this sector, a clear leadership emerges of few large organisations at the national level, such as **PARC**, the **Union of Agricultural Committees (UAWC)**, the **Land Research Centre** and the **Palestinian Hydrology Group**. According to a MAS 2007 survey and 2009 study that tracked the external aid to Palestinian NGOs, most funds are channelled through only four organisations. Some of the larger organisations, such as PARC and UAWC, have a nationwide network of smaller organisations through which final beneficiaries are targeted.

In addition to the large national organisations, smaller organisations are emerging as an active actor for innovation and the construction of food security conditions. These include cooperatives focusing on biological and organic agriculture, on oil production, etc. In many cases, these smaller organisations are supported by academic institutions (i.e. the **Community Development Centre at Bethlehem University**) or are involved in international technical and scientific networks. Collaborations among these groups and the national organisations often exist.

Within this sector a growingly important action is concerning the mitigation of the effects of the "Separation Wall" and the actions against the wall. Actors engaged in agriculture and environment are involved in **all geographic areas of the oPt**, in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

Good governance

Good governance and the better functioning of the Palestinian National Authority and local authorities is a relatively small sector, mainly involving national organisations and their local branches. Leading organisations include: **AMAN** Coalition, the **BISAN** Centre for Research and Development, **Muwatin** (Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy), **PASSIA** (Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs). These organisations work in very different ways, while AMAN is directly involved in monitoring public services and public bodies and in promoting campaigns for transparency and accountability, the others are more often engaged in **policy research** and in activities for directly influencing policy makers. A focus on the reform and management of judiciary system is characterising **MUSAWA** (Palestinian Centre for the Independence of Judiciary and Legal Profession).

The organisations engaged in good governance are mainly based in Ramallah and in general this sector is relatively weak in the Gaza strip, where only the AMAN Coalition works.

Human Rights

The conflict situation, the many violations of human rights linked to Israeli occupation of the oPt and to the maintenance of a permanent political emergency situation in the West Bank and Gaza made human rights a field of action for most organisations. Specialised organisations are active in this field but so are most of the other ones. For organisations working on the agriculture and

environment, as well as for those working on child development or on health, human rights monitoring, advocacy and fostering is a central theme of action.

A more focused action on human rights is carried out by many organisations on the whole Palestinian Territory. Among specialised organisations, **Al-Haq Institute** plays a leading role. Other key organisations include: BADIL (Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights), MIFTAH, Addameer Prisoner's Support and Human Rights Association, Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Centre, Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights, and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights in Gaza.

Within this sector, organisations working on specific areas, like gender and women's rights (such as the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling) and those working on workers' rights (such as the Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre), are also to be mentioned.

Another important actor in this sector is the Institute of Law of Birzeit University[37], which provides research and training support to human rights organisations.

Children and Youth

Children and youth has been in the last decade a growing sector in the oPt civil society.

Out of the many NGOs and charitable societies involved in the provision of child care activities and services (that absorb an important share of external aid to the oPt), some organisations are assuming a key role because of the innovativeness and the policy impact of their work. These are: **Sharek Youth Forum**; **PYALARA**; and **Defence for Children International – Palestine section**.

Health

Health service provision has been for a long time a most important area for civil society organisations in the oPt. However, after the creation of the National Palestinian Authority many health centres and hospitals previously managed by NGOs and charitable societies were transferred to the public authorities (according to MAS, the transfer of many health activities to the PNA produced a sensible reduction in the number of NGOs after 1994).

Key civil society actors in this sector include: the Health Work Committees (HWC), the Union of Health Care Committees (UHCC), the Palestinian Counselling Centre (PCC) – which are directly involved in the management of care centres; the Health, Development, Information and Policy Institute (HDIP) – mainly working as a resource centre; and the Gaza Mental Health Programme – working as a care and innovation centre in the Gaza Strip, mainly with a focus on community-based care and on the health – rights relationship.

Many other organisations exist focusing on special groups and on rehabilitation services. These many organisations tend to complement the health care activity managed by public authorities. Among care providers, informal coordination often exists at the local level on targeting beneficiaries and on care delivery.

Women's rights

As discussed, women's rights and gender issues are the focus of a number of organisations that increased in the last decade. Key organisations in this sector continue to be the oldest, often having a feminist perspective. These organisations are better able to link the provision of services for protecting and supporting women with policy work, focusing on the status of women in the Palestinian society and in the family[38].

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[37] http://lawcenter.birzeit.edu/iol/en/index.php
[38] *Palestinian women organizing in Jerusalem*, UNDP – PAPP / Kvinna till Kvinna, 2010.

Key organisations include the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling, the Palestinian Working Women Society for Development, SAWA, Union of Palestinian Women Committees. Apart from campaigns on specific issues (the family law) women's organisations tend not to organise a permanent coalition or coordination.

<u>Peace building</u>

Since the beginning of the 1990s peace building has been an important focus of international donors in the oPt. This implied the development of a specific group of organisations within Palestinian civil society, as well as a wide debate on the effectiveness of peace building activities. Particularly the initiatives working on "people to people" peace building have been criticized and blamed for "normalizing" the current situation of occupation and a special principle was included in the "Code of Conduct of Palestinian NGOs" against the participation in initiatives for "normalisation." Despite the vivid discussion on peace building, some of the main organisations involved in peace activities are engaged in the mainstream association of Palestinian NGOs, including **Panorama Centre for the Dissemination for Democracy and Community Development** that in cooperation with the Israeli **Peres Centre for Peace** has assumed the leadership of the **Palestinian Israeli Peace NGO Forum**[39].

Palestinian NGOs involved in the Forum include: Al-Quds Association for Dialogue and Democracy; Al Tareeq, the Youth Forum for Development, the Centre for Applied Research in Education, FOEME - Friends of the Earth Middle East[40], International Peace and Cooperation Centre (IPPC), The Jerusalem Centre for Women, PPC Vision, Shorouq Charitable Society for Women, Centre for Democracy and Community Development, Water and Environmental Development Organization (WEDO).

An important element regarding the Palestinian NGOs involved in the Palestinian Israeli Peace NGO Forum is the relatively short duration. All of them save a few were established after 2004. The recent foundation of most of these organizations is a further element of potential conflict with the larger national organizations, which were mostly created as part of the resistance movement for the liberation of Palestine. Most of these latter organizations may have occasional collaboration with Israeli organizations – particularly in advocating human rights or in the legal protection of Palestinian citizens in Israeli courts – but refuse to have permanent partnerships with them.

Emerging needs

Asked **about their strengths**, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, 2nd level organisations reported the following.

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Advantages	Obstacles
WEST BANK AND EAST JERUSALEM	Effective leadership	Project focus	Relevancy of service activities	Absence of government support / hostility of government to non affiliated organisations
	Access to information	Inability to respond to the demands	Networking and coordination	Difficulty in finding qualified professionals
	Knowledge	Lack of "core funding" and the dependency on	"Global support" available for supporting causes -	Spread of a culture of dependency - expectations by

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[39] http://www.peacengo.org/history.asp

[40] This organization based in Bethlehem is not part of the PENGON (Palestinian Environmental NGO Network) which is associated with Friends of the Earth International. FOEME is blamed for the collaboration with Israeli NGOs.

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Advantages	Obstacles
		donors	International support to oPt	partnerorganisations
	Experience	Gap among plans and actual activities	Availability of knowledge resources for capacity building	Little societal and private sector support
	Neutrality	Lack of evaluation and capitalization of experience		Reduced mobility because of the Israeli occupation
	Good relations with local institutions	Inadequate communication		Political situation and instability
	Ability to network with national and international NGOs	Weak knowledge and information management		Changes in donor policies and procedures
	Professional staff	Internal democracy		Cultural resistances to change
		One man show, or one group show		Competition with public bodies and the other CSOs
		Unclear mandate and specialization area		Politicisation of society and affiliation processes
		Duplication and tendency to replicate activities as long as there is funding available		Lack of trust of old and greater NGOs towards the new emerging NGOs
GAZA STRIP	Capacity to represent local actors and community trust	Limited resources in front of the needs	Available human resources at community level	Political divides
	Services responding to local needs	Dependency of most organisations on projects	Existence and diffusion of local committees	Closure of Gaza Strip
	Availability of qualified staff and experience of most organisations	Weak donor relationship of many, particularly smaller organisations	Presence of forms of coordination and cooperation at sector level	Competition with new established NGOs
		Unbalanced distribution of skills among organisations, particularly for policy analysis, project design, advocacy, training	Presence of international organisations	Poor communication between Gaza and West Bank/ geographical divide
	Networking/ partnership with INGO	Weak administration of resources by most organisations		Lack of benchmarking
	Coordination	Dependency on volunteers and temporary staff: excessive staff turn over		Restriction imposed by local authorities / local authorities interventions and pressure
	Geographical coverage	Weak Monitoring & Evaluation in most projects		Limited access to information on donors

	Strengths	Weaknesses	Advantages	Obstacles
	Independence	Weak communication capacities and little capacity to involve media		Limits imposed on women staff
		Inadequacy of equipment for many organisations		Dependency on relief services/ limited resources for long term activities
		Inadequacy of procedures and management systems in most organisations		Limited resources for organisation development / knowledge management
				Donor procedures / lack of common standards
				Presence of unreliable organisations & implementing agencies

Capacity building needs for 2nd level organisations

Capacity building has been a main focus of attention for the donors – and particularly for the World Bank – during the last decade. The efforts for strengthening Palestinian NGOs have been centred on two main areas:

- transparency and governance (it is in this framework that the NGO Code of Conduct was formulated);
- service delivery and project implementation (it is in this framework that NDC identified needs concerning project management, proposal writing, project/programme design).

Both of these two areas continue to be relevant in order to increase the capacity of 2nd level organisations to provide services to the Palestinian population, particularly when considering the emergence of large groups of **special needs people** – such as people with disabilities or the victims of the specific processes linked to Israeli occupation (the closure of space in the West Bank, the multiple social exclusion processes in East Jerusalem, the blockage of Gaza) – that the public authorities are unable to serve, and when considering the fact that a State is still in an early building stage should need to concentrate on **priority public services**, leaving some work to other actors (e.g. for instance in the education sector, concentrating on primary and secondary education, leaving "pre-school" activities and "open university" initiatives to other actors, or – in the health sector – leaving "community based rehabilitation" and "primary health care" to local non state actors).

A prevalent focus on the service delivery is also shared by the 2nd level organisations when they identify their capacity building needs. Both in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, organisations main self-detected needs concern: **fund raising**, **project design and project management, monitoring and evaluation**, and then - in a different way in the two geographical areas: **training and capacity building, human resource management, external communication, strategic planning**. Few organisations identify needs regarding the capacities for advocacy, because policy analysis as well as a limited number is interested in volunteers' and activists' management.

Training and Capacity Building Needs Identified by 2nd Level Organizations (%)		
	Gaza	West Bank
Fund raising	77	72
Project Management/Project Design	68	50
External Communication	51	45
Monitoring and Evaluation	38	49
Training and Capacity Building	52	33
Strategic Planning	49	32
Organisation Management/ Leadership	41	26
Human Resource Management	24	36
Financial Management	35	22
Advocacy	17	32
Policy Analysis	21	27
Activists/Volunteers Management	18	24

The extensive experience of NGOs and charity organisations in providing services and in substituting the "State" since the early decades of XX century, together with strong linkages with academic institutions, contributed to pooling important capacities and knowledge within Palestinian civil society to fulfil these roles. As a matter of fact, a large share of social services are provided in the oPt by NGOs (according to estimates more than 90% of services to groups such as people with disabilities, women, children). However, the role of service provider is just one of the roles that 2nd level civil society organisations should play.

Other roles of civil society organisations linked to their specific linkage with "citizens" and "communities" concern governance, advocacy, policy making, and policy or public service monitoring. It is particularly in these roles that civil society organisations can assume the status and function of a **policy actor**, capable to represent and to bring to attention the specific perspectives of those parts and spheres of society that are only partially represented in political institutions.

As presented above, many 2nd level organisations carry out advocacy activities, and fewer participate in other policy functions related to the representation of citizens in front of public actors. In a large part of the oPt, spaces for participatory governance do not exist[41]. Moreover, an in-depth analysis of advocacy activities shows that very often they concern the issues linked with Israeli occupation (e.g. the violation of human rights, the degradation of land resources or the conflicts on space) and the Palestinian cause in front of the international community, while to a lesser extent they regard the functioning of local authorities and more in general local governance and development policies.

Moreover, despite the fact that the word "governance" often appears in international initiatives on civil society in the oPt, in the last decade, the emerging needs related to the siege of Gaza, to the setting of the Separation Wall and to the pressure over the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem, further contributed to maintaining the attention of CSOs and of donors focused on service (mainly relief) delivery and away from "governance."

Considering all this, emerging needs may be identified particularly regarding this last area of intervention.

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[41] As seen, this is true for East Jerusalem in which a gap exists between the "municipality" and the Palestinian community and no other Palestinian institutions exist and are recognized at a local/neighborhood level, but this is also true in many urban and rural areas bunder the Palestinian National Authorities and in the area of Gaza Strip.

Capacity Building Needs for 2st level Organisations			
	West Bank	**Gaza Strip**	**East Jerusalem**
Individual capacities	Project design and management	Project design and management	Policy Analysis
	Fund raising	Fund raising	Civil society and governance
	Policy analysis	Policy analysis	
	Civil society and governance	Civil society and governance	Policy and public service monitoring
Organisation capacities	Organisational governance	Organisational governance	Participation in Local governance
	Recognition and support to CBOs	Support to CBOs	Support to CBOs
	Communication and transparency	Policy and public service monitoring	Partnership negotiation and management
	Local governance	Local governance	Management of relationships with public authorities
	Policy and public service monitoring	Partnership negotiation and management	
	Targeting and coordination of service provision	Management of relationships with public authorities	
	Partnership negotiation and management		
	Management of relationships with public authorities		
Needs linked to the context/ Institutional environment	Creation of space for policy dialogue at national level	Creation of space for policy dialogue at national level	Creation of space for policy dialogue at local level
	Recognition of the CS role by public authorities	Recognition of the CS role by public authorities	Policy setting on the relationships with Israeli authorities
	Strengthening and "opening" networks and coalitions		Recognition of the CS role by public authorities
	Recognition of new CSOs by older CSOs		

5.3. Third level organisations

Activities involving groups of organisations are frequent in Palestinian Civil Society. Lobbying and advocacy activities both for sustaining the national Palestinian cause and for supporting the causes of a variety of social groups often are carried out through the **mobilization of many organisations together**. Examples of mobilization include the Campaign for the Right to Enter the Occupied Palestinian Territory[42]; the Civic Coalition for Defending the Palestinians' Rights in Jerusalem[43]; the Campaign for boycotts, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel[44]; the Grassroots and the Palestinian anti-apartheid Wall Campaign - Stop the Wall[45]. Campaigns were also launched focusing on domestic issues, particularly for the advancement of women's rights (i.e. in the framework of drafting laws concerning personal status, the family and the access to health services) and for

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[42] http://www.righttoenter.ps/index.php

[43] http://www.civiccoalition-jerusalem.org/ccdprj.ps/new2/index.php

[44] http://www.bdsmovement.net/

[45] http://www.stopthewall.org/

promoting the recognition of groups with special needs (i.e. people with disabilities) or the recognition of children's and youth rights.

Moreover, at local level, service provider organisations often create formal and informal coordination bodies for improving the targeting of relief and field activities.

In a more limited number of cases, permanent coalitions or platforms are created with a thematic or geographic focus. Examples of these last groups of platforms include:

- the **Palestinian Network for Children Rights** (PNCR)[46], which collects 45 organisations (both NGOs and CBOs) and acts as a coordinator with international organisations;
- the **Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON)** which aggregates 14 environmental organisations, and it is registered as an NGO[47];
- the **Coalition of Human Rights Organisations**, which aggregate about 12 organisations engaged in the defence of human rights, and has an informal nature, not being registered;
- the **Gaza branch of the Palestinian NGO Network**, which is under the "umbrella" of the national NGO network but is autonomous, has a different membership and constituency, and manages own programme of activities[48];
- the (already considered) **Palestinian-Israeli Forum of Peace NGOs**, which was created as a project with a special fund provided by the EC[49].

Mission and action relevance and coherence

Mission and action relevance and coherence are a main feature of 3rd level organizations in the oPt. Indeed, because these organisations are often created for coordinating a specific action or for being a discussion forum on a special issue, the mandate and scope of these organisations are in most cases well defined and delimitated. Moreover, the fact that in many cases these organizations maintain a completely or partially informal status (legalized organisations as PENGON are an exception) forces them to maintain their original focus. When the scope of action changes or does not respond to the needs and expectations of members anymore, these organisations dissolve.

The institutional dynamics and organisational consistency

The same reasons that facilitate these organisations maintaining their relevance and focus are also a factor of fragility from the institutional and organisational perspectives.

While **legalised networks present a clear and stable institutional setting**, with proper institutional arrangements and regulations[50], organisational **consistency is a main issue for most 3rd level organisations**. Often they are dependent on the goodwill of an organisation assuming the weight of organisational functions, but also assuming the leadership of the network or coalition. Among the phenomena that were reported by consulted organisations, the following can be mentioned:

- in some cases, the network/umbrella organisation coordinator is one of the organisations, thus if formally he/she is accountable to the whole network, he/she is actually accountable to only one organisation;

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[46] http://www.pncr.org/arabic/home.asp

[47] http://www.pengon.org/

[48] http://pngoportal.org/arab/

[4949] Badioli F., Said N., Zemach M., *Evaluation of the EU Partnership for Peace Programme*, EU – SOGES, 2010

[50] As some organisations reported, the registration of "collective" organisations proved sometimes to be more difficult than the registration of "normal" NGOs, mainly because of the insistence of the Ministry of Interior on formal institutional arrangements.

- in some cases, the organisational work is covered by only one member organisations, normally those promoting the network; if the organisation policy changes then the dissolution of the network is a likely event;

- sometimes a rotation arrangement is foreseen among the member organisations for the management and running of the network secretariat, but in fact, such a rotation often proves to be difficult or impossible, because of the accumulation of knowledge and experience in only one organisation or because the other organisations do not have the capacity or willingness to maintain the secretariat;

- in most cases, the coalitions and networks do not have an autonomous office or equipment, also for this reason they depend on the goodwill, interest or capacity of member organisations;

- weakness of umbrella organisational and institutional arrangement is often linked to the reluctance of member organisations, which perceive the networks as possible competitors in fund raising;

- competition among member organisations is also a factor for avoiding establishing stronger platforms, that would facilitate the sharing and circulation of knowledge and information and would produce a "too close" collaboration among different organisations.

Funding

Funding is problematic for 3rd level organisations. The few ones – as PENGON – that are able to access funding sources in an autonomous way often risk entering into collision with member organisations. This can occur when funding is linked not to "networking activities," but to project implementation and service delivery: many projects and services that are provided by the network (information dissemination, awareness campaigns, training, etc.) may also be provided by member organisations. This creates a delicate balance situation particularly when a "leader organisation" exists.

In most cases, 3rd level organisations do not have direct access to funding sources and are sustained by the resources of the member organisations. The consequence of this is often a lack of resources for implementing activities other than simple coordination. Local or thematic coordination carrying out other functions are very rare. An example is the Gaza branch of PNGO which carries out both advocacy activities for defending civil society organisations from the excessive interference of political authorities, intermediate access to donors for smaller member organisations and also carries out training activities. However, this happens also because of the special situation of CSOs in Gaza.

Accountability and transparency

Accountability and transparency are another weakness of 3rd level organisations. The more structured ones, such as PENGON, were blamed for having deficiencies in the administrative system, in the governance and in the sustainability[51]. Recently misuse of funds was the reason for closing a local Union of Charitable Organisations[52].

In informal 3rd level organisations, accountability and transparency are even fewer, influencing the actual engagement of member organisations. It is also on the basis of the detection of this area of capacity building needs that NDC programmes include a special set of activities regarding the reinforcement of "sector" institutions, such as networks and platforms.

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[51] NDC, Supporting Palestinian Umbrella NGO networks and thematic networks.
[52] Meetings with stakeholders in April 2010.

Capacity building needs identified by NDC for networks and umbrella organisations
- Communication (websites) - Program management (appointing coordinators) - Strategic planning - Providing support and capacity building to network members - Administrative systems - Internal governance - Economic sustainability

Capacity building needs

3rd level organisations identify **Fund Raising, External Communication, Activists and Volunteers Management and Financial Management** as priority areas for capacity building. When considering the obstacles, facilitations and their strengths and weaknesses, the 3rd level organisations mainly refer to **internal** factors. The differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip do not seem to influence the capacity building needs of these organisations in a significant manner.

Capacity Building Needs for 3rd Level Organisations	
Individual capacities	Project design and management
	Fund raising
	Policy analysis
	Civil society and governance
Organisation capacities	Organisational governance particularly considering the relation with member organisations
	Volunteers and activist management
	Communication and transparency
	Support to member organisations
	Partnership negotiation and management
	Management of relationships with public authorities
	Analysis of constituency needs
Needs linked to the context / Institutional environment	Creation of space for policy dialogue at local level
	Enlargement of network /platform constituency
	Recognition by public authorities

5.4. Fourth level organisations

Few general umbrella organisations exist in the oPt. These are:

- the Palestinian Non-Governmental Organizations Network (including a main general branch in the West Bank and another one in the Gaza Strip that was considered among 3rd level organisations) – PNGO;
- the Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies;
- General Palestinian Union for NGOs in Gaza;
- the Palestinian National Institute of NGOs (PNIN).

These organizations involve only a part of civil society organisations in the oPt with less than 1000 on a total number of active organisations (1st and 2nd level) that is over 1450. Particularly the PNGO, which is normally considered as the most important umbrella organization, has less than 100 members (membership is not open; new members must be admitted by the current one and must be in compliance with statutes and principles of the network). The General Union of Charitable Societies is the most extensive network with about 500 members (including many community based organizations).

While the General Union of Charitable Societies mainly includes organisations involved in social assistance activities (child care, rehabilitation and care for people with disabilities, relief for the poor, etc.), the member institutions in the PNGO come from different sectors and very often play a key role at sector level.

From the institutional point of view and from the perspective of transparency and accountability, the general umbrella organisations seem to be in compliance not only with the "Associations' Law" (in fact, they are more often scrutinized than other NGOs), but also with the "NGOs' Code of Conduct."

Despite the fact that both the main network collects a large pool of resources in terms of knowledge, capacity and even financial resources, they are actually suffering from lack of resources (they particularly lack adequate permanent staff) and of lack of engagement in member organisations in fostering a stronger role for umbrella organisations. While sectoral coordination exists and is often the space for initiatives, coordination and information sharing, such a role is scarcely played by general umbrella organisations.

The General Union of Charitable Society is currently assuming a main role of diffusing – together with NDC – the "NGO Code of Conduct." The PNGO in the West Bank is coordinating the advocacy activities of member organisations on matters of general interest for NGOs, such as the revision of the "Law of the Association" and the actual affirmation of the freedom of association, defending the organisations from the interference of political parties.

None of the general umbrella organisations are currently involved in special projects. Their capacity to convene member associations and to mobilise their resources appear somehow limited. Moreover, the general umbrella scarcely manages information and knowledge circulation among member organisations.

Capacity building needs

Immediate capacity building needs are recognized by general umbrella organisations as mainly related to **fund raising, policy analysis and the management of volunteers** and activists (this point is particularly important because of the lack of permanent staff).

Obstacles met by umbrella organisations mainly consist of:
- lack of resources for network development;
- lack of adequate engagement of member organisations;
- the political division between Gaza and the West Bank and the necessity to deal with political interferences in civil society life;
- the difficulties linked to the closures in the West Bank and East Jerusalem;
- the unclear relationship with donors, that sometimes establish their own (artificial) network[53] and in other cases prefer not to have relationships with umbrella organisations;
- the difficulty in providing support to member organisations without taking their place and entering in competition with them;

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[53] Among the consulted organisations many recognize the Masader Portal (www.masader.ps) established in the framework of NDC activities for supporting civil society development as a network or consider NDC as the general network of Palestinian NGOs. Actually NDC, even if it is registered as an NGO and has an assembly and a board in which the representatives of the civil society networks are involved, it is not properly a civil society organisation: it was created as a result of the World Bank funded "Palestinian NGO Project" and it continues to play a role of intermediation among the donors – to which it is accountable - and civil society organisations.

- the difficulty in creating unity of voice, message, priorities and needs emerging in the sectoral networks and platforms;
- the high competition among NGOs that limit their cooperation within the framework of general umbrella organisations.

On this basis, the following needs may be identified.

Capacity Building Needs for 4th Level Organisations	
Individual capacities	Project design and management
	Fund raising
	Policy analysis
	Civil society and governance
Organisation capacities	Organisational governance particularly considering the relation with member organisations
	Volunteers and activist management
	Policy and agenda setting
	Communication and transparency
	Support to member organisations
	Partnership negotiation and management
	Management of relationships with public authorities and with donors
	Analysis of constituency needs
Needs linked to the context / Institutional environment	Creation of space for policy dialogue at local level
	Enlargement of network /platform constituency
	Recognition by public authorities

6. The Resources for Supporting CSOs

6.1. The EU

The European Commission supports civil society organisations mainly through the "thematic programmes", including:

- the European Initiative for Democracy of Human Rights;
- the "Investing in People Programme" (health, knowledge and skills, culture, employment & social cohesion, gender equality, youth and children);
- Environment and Sustainable Environmental Management Programme (including Energy)
- Non state Actors and Local Authorities in Development;
- Food Security;
- Migration and Asylum.

Moreover, within the framework of regional cooperation the Partnership for Peace Programme was launched involving a number of CSO from the oPt.

Out of initiatives concerning **peace building and human rights,** which focus on the creation of "coalitions" among the organisations, most of the activities supported by the EU concern the provision of services and support to the population in different fields. Nevertheless the European Union was recently involved in the introduction of some important innovations, namely:

- The launch of **structured dialogue with CSOs** in the framework of regional ENP Initiative;
- the start of **consultation of local CSOs** on EU programmes (two consultation meetings were organised, in Ramallah and in Gaza);

- the adoption of **"sub-granting" mechanisms** within the projects, which allow small organisations to receive funds that other wise would be used and managed only by large civil society organisations (the well structured and experienced NGOs which normally access EU funds).

A further innovation context for EU support to civil society in the oPt is represented by the **"Non State Actors and Local Authorities in Development"** Programme: three calls for proposals were launched under the programme in the oPt, one in 2008 (2.4 million Euros), one in 2009 (4.8 million Euros) and one in 2011 (2.4. million Euros, plus another 2.4 million Euros under approval), 18 projects funded through the initiative are currently implemented in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip, involving European and Palestinian organisations.

Palestinian CSOs in the "the Non State Actors and Local Authorities in Development Programme"		
Palestinian Centre for Democracy and Conflict Resolution	Gaza	Literacy for children
Sharek Youth Forum	Ramallah	Vocational training
Right to Live Society	Gaza	Essential services for people with Down's Syndrome and Autism
Palestinian Paralympic Committees	Ramallah	Sport for youth with disabilities
PYALARA	Ramallah	Children as social actors
Al Najida Social Association	Gaza	Food plant
Human Supporters Association	Nablus	Children, youth and women's rights
Palestinian Youth Union	West Bank	Community centres for youth and women's empowerment
Palestinian National Theatre	East Jerusalem and West Bank Refugee Camps	Places and space for socio-educative support to youth and children
Economic and Social Development Centre	Salfit and Qualqilya	Strengthening of 15 cooperatives
Palestinian Vision	West Bank	Community change and governance
Ansar Centre for Children		
Women's Study Centre		
Miftah		
Arab Studies Society	Shufat Refugee Camp	Play and work to avoid isolation
Save Youth Future Society		Palestinian youth advocacy and vocational training
Palestinian Information & Technology Association		
Al-Quds Association for Almawassi Development	Gaza Strip	Reinforcing 5 women CBOs
Al-Nassir Charity Association		
Hopefulness Candles Ass.		
South Association for Women Health		
Bunian Association		
Renascence Association for Rural Development		
Aftaluna Society for Deaf Children	Gaza Strip	Services for the rights and needs of deaf children
Palestinian Red Crescent	West Bank: Jericho and Jerusalem	Access to rehabilitation for persons with disabilities
Remedial Education Centre	Gaza	Inclusion of children with special needs in primary schools

6.2. European donors

Austrian Cooperation

The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) mainly intervenes in support to the Palestinian CSOs through the Welfare Association (WA). A programme was established with the name "Support to Community Services through Local NGOs in the oPt." Through this programme, 21 organisations were funded with the first funds provided to the Programme (400.000 Euro), mainly focusing on CBOs, both in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Qalqilya, Nablus, Hebron, Gaza, Jerusalem, Ramallah, Jenin/Tubas). In addition to providing funds for project implementation, the WA provided training and technical assistance[54] to the involved CBOs and NGOs. The program and the CBO projects were mainly supporting the provision of services for women, young people, persons with disabilities and children.

Belgian Cooperation

Belgian Technical Cooperation support to CSOs in the oPt is channelled through:

- Belgian NGOs, such as 11.11.11 and Broederlijk Delen, supporting the strategic development plan of local NGOs;
- Belgian NGOs involved in humanitarian aid;
- small-scale developmental projects by the local people who are in direct need through the Micro Intervention Programme (MIP), which focuses on vulnerable and marginalized groups; income generating and gender oriented initiatives; the education sector and local socio-economic development;
- direct funds to Palestinian NGOs for project implementation (3 to 6 NGOs are funded every year).

British Cooperation

DFID has been engaged for over 16 years in the oPt, with the aim to support the creation and development of the state. Coherently with this aim, about 67% of DFID funds were focused on governance, while the second major share of funds support humanitarian assistance. In this framework, the most important programmes supporting civil society in the oPt comprise:

- the initiatives against corruption and for good governance, through **Transparency International**;
- the initiative on Civil Society Engagement to Make Governance and Transparency Work for Poor and Vulnerable Communities through **Tiri**, in cooperation with the Birzeit University and the AMAN Coalition for Integrity and Accountability;
- the **Ma'an Network**: a non-profit media organization founded in 2002 to strengthen independent Palestinian media, build links between local, regional and international media, and consolidate freedom of expression and media pluralism as keys to promoting democracy and human rights in the oPt[55];
- the initiative Search for Common Ground (SFCG)[56],Football-based Media to strengthen Good Governance and Transparency.

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[54] Support particularly in modifying and finalizing the proposals, writing, budgeting, report-writing, and using the purchasing and procurement procedures as required by the WA (Partners in Creative Solution, *Support for Community Services Through Local NGOs in the OPT. External Evaluation Report,* ADA – WA, March 2008

[55] http://www.maannet.org/

[56] Founded in 1982, Search for Common Ground works to transform the way the world deals with conflict - away from adversarial approaches and towards collaborative problem-solving. We use a multi-faceted approach, employing media initiatives and working with local partners in government and civil society, to find culturally

Danish Cooperation adopted in the oPt three main focuses: peace building; state building and improved livelihood. The Danish initiative include:

- support to Palestinian civil society in East Jerusalem;
- support to the **Human Rights/Good Governance NGO Secretariat** jointly with Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland, and the **NDC – NGO Development Centre**.
- **support to culture and art**, considered as a tool for development and peace building and as a way to overcome the isolation and closure situation that characterise the oPt, through NGO projects (e.g. "Women's Film Festival" organised by the NGO "Shashat" in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus, Jerusalem); "Sabreen Production" initiatives for the Palestinian participation in the Eurovision Song Contest; Yabous Cultural Centre in East Jerusalem and Ashtar Theatre in Ramallah.

Finnish Cooperation

The Finnish Cooperation is mainly supporting the Palestinian CSOs through the Fund for Local Cooperation (LFC). In this framework, initiatives are funded concerning: **culture, governance, human rights, gender, peace building and health**. Funds are provided in a direct way to Palestinian NGOs (e.g. International Centre of Bethlehem (ICB); Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information (IPCRI); Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL), Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR); Data – Applied Studies and Research Institution Society, The Elderly Supportive Community Services Society (ESCS).

French Cooperation

The French Cooperation activity focusing on civil society organisations is based on different mechanisms, managed by the French Consulate and by the Agence Française de Développement. Since 2007 a funding mechanism was set, called **Social and Development Fund (FSD).** The fund is based on co-funding (up to 70%) from Palestinian NGOs and local authority initiatives. At the end of 2010, 18 projects were funded focusing on different sectors, such as:

- Agriculture and water;
- Capacity building for CBOs and women's organizations;
- Childhood protection and youth (focusing on health);
- Culture;
- Economic development (promotion of income generating activities);
- Social development (focusing on health);
- Media (focusing on vocational training).

The funding mechanism is based on open call for proposals. The focus is currently on the provision of **service delivery**. The sustainability of initiatives through:

a) the limitation of funding duration;

b) the fact that one project or "idea" cannot receive funds a second time;

c) the co-funding approach (maximum funding amounts to 70% of the total budget, while another 20% must be provided by other donors).

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appropriate means to strengthen societies' capacity to deal with conflicts constructively: to understand the differences and act on the commonalities (http://www.sfcg.org/)

The 18 funded projects were carried out by 22 CSOs (including NGOs and CBOs[57]) and one municipality. Funded initiatives were spread across the West Bank i.e. Jenin, Jericho, Hebron, Nablus, Bethlehem, Ramallah, East Jerusalem (one project) and Gaza (four projects). The **2011 call for proposals** targets four priority areas: the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem as well as locations in Area C, enclosed by or bordering the wall, and refugee camps.

Out of FSD, French Cooperation provides **smaller grants to CSOs**, focusing on culture (visual art, cinema, etc.), humanitarian and social activities (education, women's rights, health, etc.), and university-related activities (i.e. Franco- Palestinian research and networks).

Further support is provided to civil society development through the **NDC – NGO Development Centre** (with the World Bank, France is the main donor for the PNGO IV programme starting in 2011).

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German Cooperation

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GTZ[58] - DED since 2005 has been involved in supporting civil society organisations. DED focuses on **CBOs in marginalized areas in the Northern and Southern West Bank**, with the aim to empower groups to act according to their needs. Support was provided to strengthening **Women and Youth CBO networks**. Initiatives were carried out in Salfeet, Nablus, Tubas, Qalqilya, Tulkarem, Jenin, Hebron, Yatta and Dura.

From 2009 to 2012, GTZ launched a programme addressing reinforcing local authority's capacity to provide services and respond to local demands. Strategic development and investment plans were elaborated in eight local authorities, actively involving local NGOs, private sector associations and CBOs (particularly women's organisations).

To foster the organisations' development, the German cooperation provides support for a **duration of up to six years**.

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Italian Cooperation

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The Italian Cooperation support to civil society organisations is mainly channelled through **Italian NGOs** that serve as mentors to local organizations, both NGOs and CBOs. However, they maintain the full responsibility for the projects. In many cases the distance between "mentoring" and direct action by the involved international (Italian) NGOs is not clearly defined.

Project duration is variable between 12 and 36 months. The funding of the Italian Cooperation cannot be over 70% of the total cost of projects. About 24 Italian NGOs are involved in these activities[59], focusing both on development initiatives (about 1/3) and for emergency aid (particularly in the Gaza Strip).

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[57] Organisations involved in the implementation of FSD projects include: Greenhouse Farmers Association, PSRS, Darna, Aseeia Cooperative society, SUNBULA, Guidance and Training Centre, TAM Women, Media and Development, Palestinian Child Club, Multipurpose Community Centre, Palestinian Consultative Staff, Palestinian Farmers Union (twp projects), Union of Agricultural Work Committees, Palestine Avenir for Childhood Foundation, Palestinian Society for Care and Development, The Centre for Jerusalem Studies, Theatre Day Production, Burj Al Luq Luq Social Centre, Rehabilitation and Development Association for Wall Villages in Western Jenin (Riyada, *FSD – French Funding Mechanism for Palestinian Civil Society Support*, Consulat Général de France à Jérusalem, 2010)

[58] http://www.gtz.de/en/weltweit/maghreb-naher-osten/palaestinensische-gebiete/20750.htm

[59] The following Italian NGOs are engaged in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip: Acs**,** Aispo**,** Arcs**,** Avsi**,** Ats**,** Cesvi**,** Cic**,** Cric**,** Ciss**,** Coopi**,** Cospe**,** Differenza Donna**,** DisVi**,** Educaid**,** Gvc**,** Ics**,** Nexus**,** Overseas**,** Oxfam Italia**,** Prosvil**,** Save the Children Italian**,** Terre des Homme**,** Vis**,** Vento di Terra.

Local civil society organizations are also involved in the programmes managed by the Italian Development Cooperation technical local office (education, health, women's empowerment, agriculture, governance and human rights).

Irish Cooperation

The Irish Cooperation to Palestinian civil society is mainly based on the provision of **core funds** to a limited number of CSOs. In selecting the beneficiary organisations, Ireland focuses on **human rights and governance**. The main targeted themes are Rule of the Law in the PA territories, women's rights, prisoners' rights, freedom of movement and planning rights in East Jerusalem. Funded organisations are based in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

Netherlands' Cooperation

The Netherlands' Cooperation supports CSOs through a variety of channels, comprising the direct funding of Palestinian NGOs, the provision of funds to Dutch and international NGOs (such as **War Child**) sustaining local NGOs and CBOS; and the participation in basket funds, such as the **HR/GG Secretariat. This secretariat** is run by NDC that channel the pooled funding to Israeli and Palestinian NGOs working to promote and protect Human Rights/Good Governance in the oPt, as "**core funding**" (28 organisations[60]) and through "**small grants**" (13 organisations)[61].

From the geographical point of view, funding was concentrated in Jerusalem (16 CSOs) and Ramallah (16), Gaza (5 CSOs), Nablus (2), Salfit, Bethlehem (1).

Directly funded NGOs comprise AMAN (on good governance and struggle against corruption), together with Norwegian Cooperation and Luxembourg; PARC (agriculture) and REEF (rural finance); GCMHP (mental health); TRC (rehabilitation of victims of torture); PAISSA (religious studies).

Spanish Cooperation

Spain's support to Palestinian CSOs is provided through project funding. Projects are selected in five sectors:

- Social services;
- Humanitarian aid;
- Peace building;
- Culture;
- Agriculture and water.

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[60] The core funding recipients are: Ramallah Centre for Human Rights Studies; B'tselem- The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories; Musawa (The Palestinian Centre for the Independence of Judiciary and the Legal Profession); Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy (PCPD); HaMoked: Centre for the Defence of The Individual; Women For Life; BADIL Resource Centre For Palestinian Residency Rights; The Arab Thought Forum; The Palestinian Working Women Society for Development; Adalah; Miftah; Jerusalem Legal Aid and Human Rights Centre; Public Committee Against Torture in Israel; Women's Studies Centre; Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling; Addameer; Jerusalem Centre for Women; ACRI - Association for Civil Rights in Israel; BIMKOM; Al-Haq; Kav La'Oved; Gisha; The Israeli Committee Against Houses Demolition; Defence of Children International- Palestine Section; Al-Dameer Association for Human Rights, Gaza; Al Mezan Centre for Human Rights; WAC - Women's Affairs Committee; and the Palestinian Centre for Human Rights (PCHR)

[61] Hurryyat: Centre for Defence of Liberties and Civil Rights; QADER for Community Development; Women And Family Affairs Centre (WAFAC); Human Rights and Democracy Media Centre "SHAMS"; Joint project with CARE Centre for Applied Research in Education, Shiraa and Mahawer; Young Artists Forum; All For Peace Palestinian-Israeli Radio Station; Al-Maqdese for Society Development (MSD); Rabbis for Human Rights; Applied Research Institute ARIJ; Al Quds University- Al Quds Human Rights Clinic (AQHRC); HADAF Centre For Human Rights ; and the Palestinian Commission for Refugees

Projects can be proposed both by local NGOs, universities, local authorities and public bodies (i.e. the Palestinian Water Authority). Often projects involve an international partner (INGO or international organisations). Among the peculiarities of Spanish Cooperation, the funding of "Coalition projects" is to be highlighted. In this framework, support was given to the **"East Jerusalem Covenant"** for the protection of the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem through the strengthening of Civil Society and to the "**PLATAFORMA 2015**" COVENANT for Peace Building and Human Rights Defence.

<div align="right">**Swedish Cooperation**</div>

In its strategy for the oPt, SIDA identifies two main priorities, to promote peace building and to promote a democratic Palestine in form of state building. Support to civil society is considered important for both priorities. The support is provided through project and programme funding, and it is often channelled through Swedish NGOs. Covered sectors include: health, community based rehabilitation, human rights (through NDC and through Swedish partners), culture and democracy; women, and media.

SIDA is among the organisations also providing "**core funding**" supporting the implementation of 3 – 5 year strategic plans. In this case, funds can be used by the beneficiary organisation in an independent way but according to the agreed framework.

Capacity development of local partner organisations is a priority in all sectors and it is fostered by giving preference to long-term partnerships with CSOs (a time span of 10 years is sometime considered).

The strategy for 2012 – 2015 will have a geographical focus on East Jerusalem, the "C Zone" and Gaza. The strategy will mainly address **reinforcing the role of civil society actors in contributing to democratization in a fragile state**[62]. The following priorities will be considered:

- Dissemination of knowledge on the democratic process;
- Advocacy (an Advocacy Fund is being considered);
- Better knowledge of Palestinian civil society;
- Enhancing policy dialogue between the CSOs and the PA.

SIDA support is provided directly or through intermediary organisations such as the NDC.

6.3. Other donors

The other main donors supporting civil society development include:

- The **World Bank** has focused its aid on the construction of the NGO Development Centre since 1997. Currently the fourth NGO Project (PNGO IV) is starting to focus on the establishment of a grant making mechanism including three main intervention areas: a) Grants to NGOs for service delivery; b) Sector development activities (regarding the dissemination and enforcement of the NGO "Code of Conduct", the information exchange and coordination among NGOs, and the implementation of studies); c) Project management and monitoring (actions for strengthening NDC).

- Among the main donors supporting CSOs in West Bank and Gaza, **USAID** support project implementation by local NGOs normally in partnership with international or US NGOs. Projects focus on **service provision**, but also include activities for capacity strengthening and raising awareness of governance issues (e.g. the Wadi Gada Project, involving a local NGO

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[62] Riyada Consulting, *Review of Swedish Support to Civil Society*, 2009

consortium in environmental campaigns; the "Shadow Local Youth Councils" projects, involving of a variety of NGOs and the CHF International[63]). It adopts a strong policy of not supporting organisations that are participating in initiatives against the Israeli occupation (as participating in the "Boycott Campaign").

- **Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDS)**. In addition to supporting the **Independent Commission for Human Rights and the HR/GG NGO Secretariat** that is managed by NDC, the Swiss Cooperation provides support to CSO micro-projects and projects, focusing on **economic development, good governance, youth activities and gender**.

- **Norwegian aid.** Peace-building and State-building are the main long-term goals of NORAD support to CSOs in the oPt. **Direct support** to Palestinian NGOs (70 NGOs and the Jerusalem Fund for Cultural Activities) and funding to **Norwegian organisations** (such as Norwac and NPA) to work with local NGOs are the main mechanisms.

- **Decentralized cooperation** of European regional and local authorities is an increasingly important source of funding for Palestinian CSOs, often through the intermediation of European NGOs. Decentralized cooperation funds are mainly supporting local projects and the initiatives of CBOs.

- **United Nations.** In 1980 **UNDP** launched the programme supporting Palestinian People (**PAP**). The programme includes grants for CSOs, both for service delivery and for capacity building. Funding provision to one NGO or to one project can be repeated, so that long-term partnerships are often established[64]. Most United Nations agencies sub-contract activities to NGOs and CBOs. Activities include relief and development projects. **UNRWA, WHO** and **UNICEF** are among the organisations more involved in supporting CSOs. It is however to be highlighted that more than "partners" in setting policies and agenda, CSOs are playing the role of executive agencies or even beneficiaries. Nevertheless, at least in some cases UNRWA, WHO and UNICEF activities provided a supportive environment for the development of local autonomous organisations (e.g. in the case of CBOs involved in community rehabilitation, health and education initiatives). Support to civil society development is also provided through regional initiatives, e.g. POGAR - Programme on Governance in the Arab Region[65].

6.4. International NGOs

The total number of international NGOs (INGOs) engaged in the oPt is not known as different numbers are sometimes suggested, from over 100 to over 200. Actually, the number of INGOs holding activities in the oPt greatly changes if only those having an office in the oPt are considered or if only those providing funds are included. About 80 INGOs have activities and provide funding and often long-term engagement in the oPt taking part in AIDA (Association of International Development Agencies). AIDA is a membership-based body having mainly coordination functions that was founded in 1995. AIDA is currently organised in subcommittees concerning the main intervention areas of INGOs in the oPt: Gaza Strip, advocacy, health, agriculture and education[66].

Through AIDA, often INGOs coordinate – at least formally – their actions among themselves and with Palestinian authorities and other actors engaged in the country, mainly through the participation in sector "clusters" hosted by ministries (i.e. Education Cluster). Moreover, AIDA

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[63] Young Women at the Forefront of Democracy in Palestine, CHF International, 2010 (http://www. Chfinternational.org)
[64] www.**undp**.ps/en/newsroom/publications/pdf/focus/04v2.pdf; see also: www.wildlife-pal.org; www.lrcj.org; www.arij.org; www.sharek.org, www.pcc-jer.org, www.qou.edu, www.aldameergaza.org; www.phg.org; www.resc.org.ps
[65] http://www.pogar.org/countries/theme.aspx?t=2&cid=14
[66] AIDA Association of International Development Agencies (http://www.aidajerusalem.org)

constitutes a forum for sharing practices and experiences and for discussing common positions and assuming a common voice. Finally, it has – or tries to have – a self-regulating role for member organisations (in such a context, for instance, a "Code of Conduct" was discussed concerning aid activities in the Gaza Strip).

INGOs adopt a great variety of roles, including:

- Advocating for the Palestinian cause at international level;
- Direct implementation of local development projects, relief activities and service delivery, often mobilizing or assuming local CSOs as implementing partners at local (village) level;
- provision of funds to Palestinian CSOs, including both project funding and core funding;
- project based partnerships with Palestinian CSOs, involving the direct intervention of international partners in the delivery of activities or services;
- the setting up of long-term, strategic partnerships, in which the international partners provide "core fund" and/or technical assistance to local partners based on "institutional development plans" or "strategic plans" ;
- promotion/participation in international or regional project based partnerships, using international funds and sometimes involving organisations from Israel and other neighbouring countries.

Direct involvement in activity implementation and the engagement (mainly with a leadership role) in project based partnerships and funding (sometimes channelling bilateral agencies funds) are the most diffused roles. Moreover, these roles became more diffused in recent years, because of the restrictions on movement for Palestinian NGOs and because, given the conditions set by some international donors, INGO can represent "safe" implementing agencies. Strategic partnerships are relatively few: two main groups of INGOs are involved in long-term partnerships: those having the traditional/main modus operandi (such as some organisations from Belgium and from Netherlands) and those having a long permanence in the oPt, that allows the setting of partnerships that are permanent even if they are project based.

In some cases, INGOs directly involved in activity implementation or in the management of short-term partnerships with local CSOs carry out a kind of bridging action, facilitating the access of local CSOs to knowledge and innovation, international networks and funding opportunities, and so on. Also, in some few cases, INGOs directly involved in the field play a "political role", protecting local CSOs from political risks and even – in some cases – "legitimating" and recognising first level organisations as relevant policy actors at the local level. However, these actions and roles seem to be scarcely recognised by local CSOs. When talking about INGOs, Palestinian CSOs refer at least partially to the conflict situation, mainly linked to:

- competition in fund raising (INGOs are blamed for having a greater capacity in project formulation and in administrative management, that results in unfair competition in the accessing international funding opportunities);
- orientation of INGOs to create "unbalanced" partnerships, in which local CSOs are mostly involved as providers of workforce (sometimes INGOs are even blamed for leaving just small percentages of received funds to local CSOs);
- competition in the recruitment of human resources (INGOs are blamed for offering better wages than those local CSOs can pay to key professionals);
- the orientation to impose agendas and approaches that are imported from abroad and often have little capacity to understand local conditions (particularly for "new coming" INGOs);
- the fact that very often local partners are maintained in a dependency situation (the INGOs are in fact the channel for accessing resources and local autonomous capacities and conditions to access resources are not developed).

The condition of INGOs in front of Palestinian CSOs (and particularly of small and medium CSOs) seems to be similar to that of Palestinian CSOs in front of Palestinian public opinion. Even if they provide services and resources, they have a negative image. Limited coordination exists among INGOs and local CSOs and – even if in certain sectors strong cooperation initiatives exist, as in the case of human rights or education – there is not a common umbrella.

6.5. Further resources

Not all resources for Palestinian civil society come from external donors.

The **Office of the President** of the PA provides support to CSOs in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Both the **Palestinian Authority** ministries and the **local government in Gaza** often fund CSOs, mainly using them as implementing agencies, but sometimes also supporting their autonomous activities (in this last case often the organisations supported are characterised by a kind of informal affiliation to parties or by the presence of personal links with government). In some cases, local authorities also provide resources for CSOs (however, these local authorities normally have little autonomy from the PA or the Hamas-ruled government in Gaza).

A more important role in supporting CSOs is played by universities - particularly **Birzeit University** (to which reference was already made), **Bethlehem University** (particularly through the Institute of Community Partnership[67]) and **Al-Quds University** (among other initiatives though the Community Action Centre, supporting CBOs in East Jerusalem[68]) – and by two main organisations, formally registered as NGOs but having special features. These are:

- the **Welfare Association**[69], which is a foundation registered in Switzerland channelling to Palestinian CSOs resources from the private sector and from the Palestinian communities abroad – funds from the Welfare Association are mainly addressed to support service delivery in a variety of sectors, including: education, culture and arts; economic development; health; agriculture and emergency; the WA also supports advocacy of Palestinian rights;

- the **NGO Development Centre**, which channels resources of international donors and fosters a wide range of capacity-building activities nationwide (see following box).

NDC – The NGO Development Centre

The NGO Development Centre (NDC) is a non-profit nongovernmental organization established in response to the need of having a sustainable Palestinian mechanism for providing support to the NGOs sector. Through providing technical and financial support, NDC works on developing the capacities of Palestinian NGOs in providing quality services, especially to the poor and the marginalized, on enhancing their self-reliance, and on empowering them to be more sustainable. At the same time, NDC contributes towards the development of the NGOs sector as a whole by facilitating the sharing and exchange of information and experience, by supporting research and policy development, and by strengthening NGOs relationships with development partners.

In the past years, NDC has received a total amount of 8 million Euros from the World Bank to implement a third phase of the **Palestinian NGO Project (PNGO III).** The funding was directed towards the NGO sector in the form of granting schemes and capacity building aimed at improving the effectiveness, self-reliance and sustainability of civil society over a period of three years (2007 – 2009). Moreover, since 2008, NDC managed the **Secretariat of Human Rights and Good Governance**, channelling the funds of some European donors to human rights organisations.

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[67] http://icp.bethlehem.edu
[68] http://www.guni-rmies.net/observatory/bp.php?id=202
[69] http://welfare-association.org/

> **Current activities** include the Phase II of the **Secretariat** of the Human Rights and Good Governance (2010 – 2013) with a total fund of about 12 Million Euros, and the management of the **Palestinian NGO Project - PNGO IV, with a fund of about 6 Million Euros from the World Bank** and the AFD, the French Development Agency.
>
> A further activity of NDC consists of the management of the **Palestinian NGO Portal (Masader)**. This is an internet portal aimed at serving and empowering the NGO sector in terms of assisting NGOs in overcoming geographic limitations and providing them with opportunities for communicating amongst each other and among other relevant parties.
>
> Source: http://www.ndc.ps/main.php?id=110

7. Operational Recommendations

As recalled in the first paragraph of this report, the Mapping Study on CSOs in the oPt has the specific objective to provide a comprehensive overview and to define recommendations for the possible intervention areas to be supported by EC in the forthcoming cooperation programmes. These recommendations constitute the subject of this chapter. Defined recommendations are based on the EC recognition of CSOs not only as service providers or implementers of EC strategies, but also as key political actors in the development processes. Such recognition implies that engaging in a structured dialogue with civil society becomes a specific priority for the EC, as a way to contribute towards making development strategies more effective and to promote democratisation.

7.1. A general strategy for supporting CSOs

Assuming the perspective of the general framework identified above, a general strategy for supporting CSOs in the oPt should adopt the **global objective** to strengthen the position of civil society in public debate and in the elaboration and implementation of development strategies, complimentarily with the Palestinian Authority's strategy and actions[70].

Based on the findings presented in the previous paragraphs, this global objective can be articulated in a set of specific strategies, mainly dealing with the need to reinforce CSOs participation in policy-making and governance both at the local and national level. As a matter of fact, currently CSOs are a main actor in the provision of services and in the provision of support to needy populations in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem, but they are not effectively engaged in the setting and monitoring of public policies and public services, both due to external factors – such as the reduction of policy dialogue space deriving from the intensification of internal political conflicts and by the harshening of Israeli occupation practices and because of internal weaknesses – such as the focus on services delivery, the limited "policy analysis" capacities and the limited engagement of organisations in development policy issues, the lack of recognition of the actors existing at the grassroots level, and the weakness of most networks and umbrella organisations.

Considering this, **three main strategies** may be identified, namely: supporting a shift from service provision to governance; supporting the integration of the CSO community and the matching of first and second level organizations; and supporting the opening of space for local agenda setting.

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[70] See the Terms of Reference of the Study, pag.4.

Supporting a shift from service provision to governance

As observed, the main focus of Palestinian CSOs appears to be service provision. Also, when dealing with issues having a strong embedded policy aspect, such as human rights and democracy, organisations often tend to work mainly by delivering services, in the term of legal defence and protection of people from rights violations and in the terms of "communication" and "advocacy campaigns." Few CSOs actively try to influence policy-making or to identify alternative or complementary policies in front of those set up by the national and local authorities. In other words, mostly CSOs tend not to actively participate in governance processes.

A shift towards a greater integration of service delivery activities with participation in governance at the local and at national level seems therefore to be an emerging need, involving a CSO's increased engagement in the policy setting process, in the monitoring of policy implementation and public service management, in the setting and functioning of local and national councils on development, and in supporting civic participation in decision making.

Supporting the integration of CSO community and the matching of first and second level organizations

The assumption of a greater role in governance is legitimate for the CSO only by their capacity to bring into the policy arena the perspectives emerging among social actors at the grassroots level. As a matter of fact, specialised NGOs are often consulted by policy makers, but always based on their technical competences, but they are not considered as legitimate representatives of Palestinian society. On the contrary, their linkage with people is often put into discussion.

Recovering a greater role in governance and policy dialogue would therefore strongly depend, on the one hand, on the capacity of CSO communities to achieve greater integration, constructing a shared vision of Palestinian society, and on the other hand, the possibility of having stronger collaboration of the CSOs at different levels and particularly a greater recognition of 1st level organisations by the 2nd level ones, not as simple beneficiaries but as active, autonomous actors.

Supporting the opening of space for local agenda setting

A third necessary strategy should focus on the building of space for local agenda setting and for policy dialogue. Indeed, having a greater engagement of CSOs in policy dialogue and governance – and having an integrated civil society able to represent the perspectives emerging at the grassroots level – would be without any use if space does not exist for policy dialogue and for setting local development agendas. In the current oPt setting, similar space is very scarce, because of the lack of trust and recognition among stakeholders, because of political conflicts and faction-based divides, because of the situation linked to Israeli occupation (particularly in East Jerusalem), because of the prevalence of international agendas and because of agendas focusing on international relations. The opening of space for policy dialogue and development agenda setting is in such a context strongly dependent on the capacity of external actors (such as donors and international partners) to adopt an active role for legitimating different stakeholders and for creating the conditions for their collaboration.

7.2. Objectives

The three strategies identified above may be concretized through the adoption of the following specific objectives, concerning: the diffusion of capacities for assuming a governance role by CSOs; the creation of space for "policy making from below"; the facilitation of policy dialogue and the improvement of local sustainable development initiatives.

Diffusion of the capacities for assuming a governance role

The first objective is centred on building CSO capacities for assuming a greater role in governance. With this aim capacities should be reinforced regarding three dimensions:

- the "individual dimension" of the skills and competences of civil society activists and professionals;
- the "organisational capacities" of CSOs, which are both necessary to make the most of competences and skills and to actually engage in policy making and governance;
- the "institutional" or "sector" conditions that can allow organisations to play new roles in policy making and governance.

There is not a unique set of capacities to be strengthened or a "one size fits all" recipe. As observed in the analysis presented in previous chapters, capacity building needs change according to the levels of organisations and according to the geographic areas. Moreover, the individual features of the single organisations should be taken into consideration in the design and implementation of capacity building initiatives.

Presence of space for policy making from below

A second objective to be achieved concerns the actual presence of space for "policy making from below". The current situation in the oPt is characterised by a centralization of power, decision making and policy making: policy making is mainly conducted within the PA in Ramallah and the local government in the Gaza Strip, while the space of East Jerusalem is characterised by the dependency from "occupant" authorities. In such a condition, a tiny space for CSO participation in policy dialogue and governance exists.

Measures should therefore be adopted for constructing new space, including the creation of steering committees for the Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation Programme in which CSOs are involved; the creation of public monitoring and evaluation committees for international funded programmes; the support to local authorities for creating local councils involving civil society and so on.

Facilitated policy dialogue

The third objective to be achieved focuses on a facilitated policy dialogue. As often observed, little trust exists among stakeholders in the oPt development policies. Policy dialogue can be an actual perspective only if external stakeholders play a facilitation role. Facilitated policy dialogue would therefore require:

- the pressure on stakeholders for mutual recognition;
- the creation of opportunities and occasions for policy dialogue;
- the direct engagement for facilitating the effective implementation of policy dialogue outcomes;
- the engagement in making visible policy dialogue processes and their outcomes.

A special initiative is needed in this framework regarding East Jerusalem, in which a specific role played by the EC can be that of creating space for negotiation between Palestinian and Israeli local authorities (indeed, for making these spaces functioning is a starting point should be the transparent relation and recognition of the existing conflict).

Increased impact and relevance of local sustainable development Initiatives

A greater engagement in governance and policy-making would not be legitimated for most CSOs if their participation in local sustainable development initiatives does not have an increased impact

and relevance. While in the oPt many CSOs are well recognized for their contribution to local development, in the case of many others this contribution is considered low, both because of their adherence to donor agendas rather than to local needs and because of their low project/programme design and implementation capacity.

Based on that, an increased impact and a greater relevance of local sustainable development initiatives by CSOs is recognised as another specific objective to be accomplished. Achieving this objective requires:

- to increase the **autonomy of CSOs** and their capacity to define strategies and to find resources without depending on external actors;
- to avoid the funding of projects aimed at short-term goals, preferring projects which are part of **programmes** with a focus on the management and support to long-term change and development processes;
- to harmonise **procedure and standards** among donors, increasing the focus on relevance of funded activities and reducing the effort required for formal and administrative tasks in proposal formulation.

7.3. The cooperation with stakeholders

Some pre-conditions emerge for the achievement of the above objectives. The construction of these conditions should be the object of specific actions carried out directly by donors and particularly by the EU.

- Recognizing CSOs as a partner rather than a beneficiary is the first condition. It requires that **consultation activities** should be continued and intensified, allowing more organisations to take part in them and allowing them to influence the setting of cooperation agendas. Moreover, it requires reinforcement in the already existing efforts to increase the access of smaller organisations to funds (e.g. through sub-granting and through the provision of small grants).
- Facilitating the interaction and cooperation among CSOs and the PA is the second condition. It requires the EU and other donors to **support CSOs in front of public authorities**, actively intervening to protect the autonomy of CSOs and to avoid the interference of public authorities in their life, functioning and projects.
- Pushing for more relevant supporting action by donors. In an environment as rich of donors and funding opportunities as the Palestinian one, the efforts of only one donor risks having little effectiveness in modifying prevalent conditions. A specific initiative should therefore be adopted by the EU for involving European member states and other donors in adopting coordinated strategies, particularly for promoting a greater CSOs local governance and policy involvement (for instance avoiding support to projects not including a fall-out on local governance).
- Pulling resources for overcoming project based support to CSOs. Short-term funding is among the major causes of the malfunctioning of Palestinian CSOs and of their increased engagement in service delivery. However, pulling resources from different donors for supporting long-term programmes and initiatives can allow overcoming the shortcoming of project-based support by individual donors. This would require greater coordination, a greater resource to co-funding initiatives, and the exploration of new funding approaches.

7.4. Making the most of available resources

CSOs in the oPt are the target of a large amount of international funds (about 210 million Euros per year, according to MAS estimates). However, funding is perceived as a main issue by most organisations. Based on this, an effort seems necessary to make the most of available resources.

EU can improve the use of its funding **not only fostering coordination** among donors, but also by adopting measures aimed at:

- increasing policy awareness of CSOs;

- promoting an increase of the strategic relevance of their activities;

- fostering the development of CSOs' roles and functions that are consistent with their nature and their levels;

- fostering "priority action" not only at each level of CSOs, but also focusing on sectors, according to existing opportunities and needs.

Indeed, these actions can involve widening the impact of CSO actions. In the following paragraphs, some concrete actions are suggested.

7.5. Opportunities and options

The different kinds of measures and initiatives considered above can find a concrete implementation in the following possible activities. As it will be clarified in the following paragraphs, some of these activities can be carried out in the framework of thematic programmes, while others can be promoted through the interaction and coordination among thematic and geographic programmes and through the coordination with other donor initiatives.

Support to first level organisations

Supporting first level organizations (CBOs, grassroots and self-help groups) should assume the main aim of allowing them to maintain their "grassroots" links and functions, while achieving greater capacities and sustainability. Maintaining grassroots links and functions is strongly connected with the possibility and capacity to play an active role in the management of local public services and development initiatives. This can be achieved, for instance, by:

- Supporting the creation of "**local funding schemes**" in which communities and their organised bodies are involved – without caring about pre-set agendas – in the identification and definition of priorities and in the selection of projects and activities to be funded[71];

- Creation of local (village or community level) **Monitoring & Evaluation Committees** for following up project activities carried out locally, both by Palestinian and international NGOs (for instance in the case of projects funded by the EC, or in those funded by other donors) or by public authorities (in the case of actions implemented in the framework of geographic cooperation programmes);

- Providing assistance to **local authorities in the setting-up and management of local committees for planning local development interventions**, so as to promote recognition of CBOs as policy actors to be involved in existing schemes and avoid consideration that they are just implementing actors or beneficiaries[72] (actions can include training and technical assistance, particularly on civil society consultation, on participatory budgeting, on strategic

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[71] As discussed in previous chapters, experiences of local management of funds and of locally based funding schemes have been experimented in the oPt by some small NGOs (e.g. Dalia Association).

[72] Experiences that can be considered as relevant examples and reference are those that GTZ is implementing in some Palestinian municipalities. An opportunity for scaling up these kinds of activities is offered by the Municipal Development and Lending Fund, that has been recently reformed and that is currently under implementation with the support of some European aid agencies and the World Bank. Currently MDLF is already interacting with civil society organisations. But CSOs, as well as the private sector, are mainly involved as service providers (both in delivering services to the public or in providing consulting services to MDLF and LGU) or as beneficiaries of MDLF funds.

planning – such an activity can be carried out in cooperation with the actions fostered by other donors for promoting NGO sector development[73]);

- **Cooperation with other European donors** to establish local committees for the follow up and monitoring of existing initiatives of local development and improvement of public services (including those supported by MDLF);

- Using thematic programmes (particularly NSA Programme) for launching **partnership initiatives** in which NGOs (both national and international) are engaged in long-term (programme based) actions for reinforcing CBOs capacities and involvement in monitoring public services and local resources (including water, housing and the environment) and for launching (institutional and sector) capacity-building initiatives along the lines presented in chapter 5;

- Using thematic programmes (including NSA, PtP, gender, etc.) for launching initiatives in which local first level CSOs are involved in the **setting and monitoring of quality standards for service provision** reflecting the needs, desires and expectations of their constituencies (this can be conducted regarding services delivered both by public authorities and by private providers/NGOs – areas in which participated standard setting and monitoring can be implemented include urban services, child care, health services, education;

- Particularly through thematic programmes, fostering the creation and development of **local coalitions for solving local problems**, in which first level CSOs are involved as "full capacity" actors together with NGOs and public authorities (special areas in which such kinds of actions can promoted are those in which the effectiveness of solutions depends on the participation of the various involved actors, such as the management of environmental resources and of public space).

- Promoting – both in the framework of thematic programmes and in the framework of geographic cooperation –the improvement of **knowledge and recognition of first level CSOs presence and roles** by public authorities and by NGOs; to this aim research studies (e.g. local or sector mapping studies) as well as seminars, publications and the use of media (i.e. production of documentaries, etc.) can be used.

Support to second level organisations

Support to second level organisations (particularly, NGOs and charitable societies) can be provided assuming two main orientations: **the increase of NGOs' proactivity in the policy arena** and the increase of the **attitude to recognize first level organizations as "policy actors."** This can be achieved, for instance, by:

- Promoting a greater involvement and a stronger role of NGOs in sector coordination:

- Setting priorities in the calls for projects of thematic programmes aimed at selecting projects which include policy development actions and which are part of long-term programmes;

- Promoting the launching of sub-granting and support schemes in which NGOs adopt the role of mentor of CBOs, rather than simply using their implementation capacities;

- Adoption of two-step procedures for project selection and provision of **support and funding for participatory formulation** to the projects that have been selected in the first step (project formulation is often based on previous studies and contacts with beneficiary communities, almost never on a real and effective consultation of local partners: a main obstacle for adopting such a modality of project formulation is the lack of resources for doing that);

- Introducing criteria to verify the **actual involvement of CBOs in project formulation**;

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[73] A specific reference can be the IV Palestinian NGO Project, funded by the World Bank and the French Cooperation and implemented by NDC.

- Introducing criteria to verify the fact that **long-term and "peer to peer" partnerships** are established (e.g. fund distribution among partners, programme governance systems, etc.)

- **Involving local NGOs** in the activities identified above for supporting first level organizations (thus creating consortiums among resource providers – such as research or capacity building specialized NGOs – and local NGOs that can be involved in the management of activities and in the delivery of long-term coaching and technical assistance to CBOs);

- Supporting the creation/development of **permanent local coalitions/partnerships and consultation spaces** in which local NGOs and "specialised NGOs" are involved together with CBOs and with local authorities, focusing on problem solutions or on policy monitoring (this kind of initiatives can be supported in the framework of NSA thematic programme);

- Fostering medium and **long-term institutional capacity building programmes** for NGOs, by giving preference to projects that are integrated in longer programmes (this would imply the definition of indicators for selection looking at the existence of longer capacity-building programmes) and through the coordination among donors for funding the different parts of only one long-term programme;

- Fostering the identification and implementation of initiatives responding to the priorities identified in Chapter 5.

Support to third and fourth level organisations

Third and fourth level CSOs (sector based platforms, coalitions, regional and local networks, general umbrella organisations, etc.) seem mainly to need support to achieve **higher participation by member organisations**, to be able to **perform permanent and continuous activities** and to have a **greater influence on policy making**, both at national and local levels. A major issue in this framework is to avoid the building of new (artificial or funding-based) networks, that are likely to disrupt the fragile existing networks and to produce conflict with the stronger ones. Instead, it would be possible to support already existing "structuration" processes by opening the space for a more active role for these organisations. Possible actions comprise:

- Promoting greater involvement and **a stronger role of NGO networks in sector coordination activities**, for instance, calling the representatives of sectoral platforms and network to assume an active role in the management of the existing "sector coordination groups" among development partners (assuming such a role can consist in taking the responsibility for the secretariat and for the setting of meeting agendas – however networks would need to have funding for playing such a role);

- Supporting **preparatory meetings among CSOs** for sector coordination groups, with the aim of producing a common voice and proactive participation; networks and platforms can be asked to prepare these meetings;

- Active involvement of sector and geographic platforms and networks in the preparation and organisation of the **structured consultation activities** that are already held by EU (this can allow for the organisation of local consultation in which local NGOs and CBOs participation can be facilitated);

- Provision of technical assistance and resources to platforms for launching and implementing **institutional development plans or for improving functioning and provision of "network" services** (i.e. knowledge management, production and dissemination; information activities; coordination and agenda setting; representation of member organisations, producing sector or geographically focused CSOs mapping, etc.) this can be conducted by increasing within the thematic programmes the specific actions aimed at supporting networking and platform development[74];

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[74] Activities focusing on network and platform development have been already supported by EC, in the framework of different programmes, for instance regarding gender and peace-building.

- Opening **space at national level and at local level in which CSOs networks can represent member organisations**, including monitoring and evaluation committees for projects and development initiatives (note those indicated above) and the creation of committees for the discussion and following up on EU geographic cooperation initiatives (such as the activities under PEGASE), including infrastructure;

- Supporting the **assumption of a guiding role of networks and platforms in the activities supporting CSOs development**; in this framework networks and platforms should be invited to act as a "leading" body and to leave implementation of activities to other specialised bodies; participation of networks and platforms should not be limited to the election of representatives in the boards leading the actions[75].

7.6. Priorities for sector based intervention

Based on the study findings, some priorities can be identified also regarding sector based intervention, as those included under the EU thematic programmes (NSA, EIDHR, PfP, IIP/Gender, Cultural Activities, East Jerusalem). These priorities are identified below.

Non State Actor (NSA) Programme

The NSA Programme can provide a **privileged space for promoting mutual recognition** among civil society organisations and other actors, including the public authorities and the political parties, as well as the private sector. Such recognition should regard both the different nature of the various actors, their functions and their autonomy and can be promoted through the production of knowledge (research), the sharing of knowledge and the promotion of common perspectives (conferences, workshops, etc.) and the construction of partnerships for policy setting or for solving local problems.

The NSA Programme can also offer an important opportunity for supporting the development and dissemination of a "public service culture." This can be done both among public officers and public bodies on the one side and among CSOs on the other. In this framework, priority is represented by:

- Initiatives based on people's participation to the setting and monitoring of quality standards for service delivery;

- initiatives based on people's participation in the monitoring of public services and public policies;

- initiatives based on formulating demands for services and policies through citizen involvement.

Finally, the NSA Programme represents a privileged space to promote and improve local democracy and participatory decision-making. Possible actions can involve the qualification of CSO participation in existing councils and participatory planning bodies (see previous information).

European Initiative for Human Rights and Democracy (EIHRD)

EIHRD has already been a space for supporting policy engagement of CSOs, particularly in advocacy activities. Priorities in this framework can be identified as regarding:

- Support to the structuration and strengthening of existing coordination and collaboration platforms;

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[75] A relevant example to be considered as an ineffective way of mobilising networks and platforms is the involvement of CSO networks in the directors' board of NDC: elected people when participating in NDC activities are not actually playing a representation role, but are expressing their personal capacities and knowledge (and most of them were selected because of their capacities and knowledge). Rather, having a (permanent) representative in boards, networks can be involved in having institutional representation and participation and in consultation activities.

- Support to advocacy for a more effective application of existing legislation on associations and CSOs and for the opening of space for public recognition of "unregistered" community based and grassroots organisations;
- Support to research & monitoring (which is already a major activity in the sector);
- Fostering of activities focusing on citizenship rights in daily life: transport, access to basic services, quality of education and health service delivery, the relationships among citizens and public bureaucracy, the relationships between citizens and security services, etc.

Partnership for Peace (PfP)

Under the Partnership for Peace Programme, a variety of initiatives have been carried out, including activities aimed at peace-building from below, activities aimed at creating and maintaining communication among communities in the oPt and Israel and activities aimed at networking among CSOs involved in peace initiatives at the regional level. PfP has sometimes been blamed by Palestinian CSOs for not taking fully in account the fact that the occupation situation implies that a "conflict" exist and cannot be denied or considered as a normal situation to deal with.

Based on previous experience and on the debate existing among Palestinian CSOs, the following priorities can be singled out:
- Support a public discussion on peace perspectives (including state-building) and on peace-building policies, so to increase the possibility to achieve a common position and voice among CSOs and to increase the possibility of CSOs defining a specific role;
- Support cooperation among Palestinian, Israeli and other regional NGOs for improving the citizen organisations capacity to face the threats produced by political divides and by the "political invasion" of civil society space (including the closing of CSOs both in the oPt and Israel);
- Support to local committees and initiatives for promoting the recognition of Palestinian CSOs and their role and autonomy by the occupying authorities;
- Support to CSO initiatives aimed at making conflict impact visible and at promoting local initiatives for solving and reducing them (i.e. on water resources and transports).

Investing in people/Gender

Under the umbrella of the "Investing in People" thematic programme, a main focus was assumed in the oPt on gender. As a fact, women's organisations constitute an important group within the Palestinian CSOs' community, however among women's organisations cooperation is scarce and it is mainly emerging in specific occasions (such as supporting law reforms). This appears currently as a major issue, both regarding the possibility to promote the diffusion and development of a culture that looks at gender relations according to an "equal opportunities approach" and that is recognising gender differences, and as regarding the possibility to assume – by women's CSOs themselves – a more "political" perspective, considering the gender issue not only as matter of individual rights (and as matter of protection of these rights) but also as a collective rights matter.

Based on that, two main priorities can be identified:
- Support to coalition-building and to setting permanent cooperation and coordination platforms;
- Support to the assumption of a policy focus, in which defence of women's rights is framed in a wider political and policy action.

Cultural activities are a main focus of activity of first level organisation and of a relatively small number of NGOs in the oPt. Very often, cultural activities are linked to specific strategies and sometimes it is not easy to identify a strategy of finding a way to mobilize and keep together groups of people. However, cultural activities represents both a main factor for setting up and maintaining a common identify and a main factor for producing social change, as in the case of many youth focusing initiatives.

No coordination or platforms seem to exist which focus on culture. Also in this case a main priority is that of sustaining coalition-building. Another emerging issue is that of sustaining access to culture and to opportunities in remote areas. The issue in this case is not so much that of "producing local cultural activities" (many CBOs are already involved in that), but in supporting a kind of "bridging" function cultural activities can play. This mainly implies to support the opening of opportunities for sharing production outcomes. This also implies providing smaller NGOs and CBOs with resources for actually participating in initiatives such as festivals, competitions and so on.

Sub-contracting schemes may prove to be a relevant tool in this framework.

East Jerusalem

As discussed in previous chapters, East Jerusalem represents many peculiarities. However the most important ones are: the disconnection from the rest of the oPt; the growing marginalisation, impoverishment and social crisis which determine a growing service and relief activity demand; the loss of a "real" knowledge of the city and its transformation; the lack of citizenship status and the lack of political participation for Palestinian people; the lack of representation of Palestinian people and the lack recognition of Palestinian civil society actors.

Within this large set of issues, the key priority and the main condition for being able to tackle the many other issues is the **recognition of Palestinian civil society actors** by the Occupying authorities and the **opening of space for negotiation and dialogue** in which Palestinian citizens' organisations can play a role other than the simple provision of basic (education, health and relief – including the defence from human rights violations) services. Regarding these two priorities, in addition to project funding and support to CSOs, international donors have a mediation, legitimate and political support role to play.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – Bibliographical and Documentary References

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Annex 2 – Met 2nd level Civil Society Organisations

A.M. Qattan Foundation	Ramallah
Al Haq	Ramallah
Al Haq	Ramallah
Al Majd Women Association	Gaza
Al-Najda Association for the Development of Palestinian Women	Gaza
Alternative information centre	Jerusalem
Aman –Transparency Palestine	Ramallah
Arab Centre For Agricultural Development	Gaza
ARD EL AFTAL /Palestine	Hebron
AWCSW, *Association of Women Committees For Social Work*	Ramallah
AWCSW, *Association of Women Committees For Social Work*	Ramallah
Bisan Centre for Research and Development	Ramallah
CAC, Community Action Centre – Al-Quds University	Jerusalem
Caritas Jerusalem	Jerusalem
Coalition for Jerusalem	Jerusalem
CWLRC - Centre For Women's Legal Research & consulting	Gaza
Dalia Association	Jerusalem
DCI, Defense for Children International-Palestine	Ramallah
DWRC, Democracy and Workers' Rights Centre	Ramallah
Faisal Husseini Institute	Jerusalem
Gaza Community Mental Health Programme	Gaza
General Union Of Disabled Palestinians	Gaza
HADAF, Centre For Human Rights	Gaza
HWC – Health Work Committees	Ramallah
HWC – Health Work Committees	Ramallah
IPCC, International Peace and Cooperation centre	Jerusalem
Jabalia Rehabilitation Society	Gaza
JCSER, Jerusalem centre for social and economical rights	Jerusalem
Juzoor Foundation for Health and Social Development	Ramallah
Labor Resources Centre	Gaza
MA'AN Development Centre	Ramallah
MA'AN Development Centre	Ramallah
MAS, Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute	Ramallah
Miftah, Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy	Ramallah
MUSAWA, Palestinian Centre for the Independence of the Judiciary and the Legal Profession	Ramallah
Muwatin, The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy	Ramallah
National Council for Development	Hebron
National Society for Democracy and Law	Gaza
NDC, NGO Development Centre	Ramallah
NDC, NGO Development Centre	Ramallah
PACF, Palestine Avenir for Childhood Foundation	Gaza
SDPRC - Palestinian Commission for Refugees Rights Protection	Gaza
Palestinian counseling centre	Jerusalem
Palestinian Food Industry Association	Gaza
Palestinian General Union Of Charitable Societies	Ramallah

Palestinian Hydrological Group	Ramallah
Palvision – Palestinian Vision	Jerusalem
Panorama Centre	Ramallah
PARC, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees	Ramallah
PARC, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees	Ramallah
PARC, Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committees	Ramallah
PCDCR, The Palestinian Centre for Democracy & Conflict Resolution	Gaza
PCPD, Palestinian Centre for Peace and Democracy	Ramallah
PENGON, Palestinian Environmental NGO Network	Ramallah
PFU, Palestinian farmers union	Ramallah
PFU, Palestinian farmers union	Ramallah
PHD - Palestinian Commission for Human Development	Gaza
PNGO, Palestinian NGOs Network	Ramallah
PNGO, Palestinian NGOs Network – Gaza Strip	Gaza
PYALARA, Palestinian Youth Association for Leadership And Rights Activation	Ramallah
Right To Live Society	Gaza
Rowwad Foundation for Development Work	Gaza
Rural women development institute	Ramallah
Safe Agriculture Producing Cooperative SAPS	Gaza
Save the youth future	Gaza
Sawa Centre	Jerusalem
Shams – Human Rights and Democracy Media Centre	Ramallah
Sharek Youth Forum	Ramallah
Sharek Youth Forum – Gaza	Gaza
Teacher Creativity Centre	Ramallah
University of Bethlehem - Institute community Partnership – ICP	Bethlehem
LDC - Wall damages registration committee	Ramallah
War child Holland	Jerusalem
War child Holland	Jerusalem
WCLAC - Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling	Ramallah
WCLAC - Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling	Ramallah
Welfare Association	Ramallah
Woman's Affairs Centre – Gaza	Gaza
Young Artists Forum	Ramallah

Annex 3 – Organisations participating in the Focus Group Meetings

Alkarmel Youth Sports Club	Hebron- Yatta, Al karmel
Southern Society for Rehabilitation	Hebron- Yatta
Cooperative Association for Olive Pressing	Hebron- Yatta- Al karmel
Yatta Charitable Society	Hebron- Yatta
Alistklal Sports Club	Hebron-Yatta, Raqaa
Islamic Association for Orphans Care	Hebron- Yatta
Community Based Rehabilitation – CBR	Hebron- Yatta
Hebron Rehabilitation Committee	Hebron
Family Development Foundation	Hebron- Mashtal
Women's Work Society	Hebron- Mashtal
Cooperative Association for Protecting and Developing Local Seeds	Hebron- Halhoul
Women's Programmes Centre	Nablus-Balata camp
Hewar for Children Centre	Nablus
Borqa Women Club-Rural Women Development	Nablus-Borqa
Mothers School Association	Nablus-Sabastia
Nablus Zakat Committee	Nablus-Sabastia
Tubas Charitable Society	Tubas
Green Agricultural Association	Tubas - Kardalah
Ein Albeeda Cooperative for handicrafts	Tubas - Ein Albeeda
Tamoun Cooperative for handicrafts	Tubas-Tamoun
Cooperative Rural Association for Saving and Credit	Tubas
Cooperative Association for Agricultural production	Tubas-Tamoun
Holy Tree Agricultural Cooperative Association	Tubas
Alaqaba Cooperative Association for Housing the Displaced	Tubas-Alaqabeh
Rural Women's charitable Association	Tubas-Alaqabeh
Jericho and Alaghwar cooperative for beekeeping	Jericho- Aqabet Jaber camp
Alqamar Charitable Society	Jericho
Jericho Women's Charitable Society	Jericho
Aloja Cooperative Association for Rural Development	Jericho - Aloja
Fisheries association	Jericho-Mish Alkhatef
Palestinian Women Relief	Jericho
Al Awda Centre for Childhood and Youth	Tulkarem
Cultural Centre for Child Development	Tulkarem
Al-Harah Theatre	Beit Jala
Manhal Cultural Centre for Women and Children	Nablus- Rafidia
Jerusalem Social Solidarity Association	Jerusalem-
Yaffa Cultural Center	Nablus-Balata camp
Sebastia Charitable Association (BARA'EM)	Nablus-Sabastia
Children Happiness Centre	Hebron
Hekaya Theatre Foundation	Ramallah-Um asharayet
The Freedom Theater	Jenin- Refugee Camp
Innovation and Talent for Children and Youth	Ramallah – Sateh marhaba
Jabal Annar Club	Nablus
Jerusalemite Youth Culture Forum	Jerusalem- Selwan
Jifna Club	Ramallah-Jifna
Kofr Allabad Sports & Cultural Club	Tulkerem-Kofr Allabad
Kufr Ra'i Charitable Association for Development and Culture	Jenin-Kufr Rai
Popular Development Centre (Land Defense Committee)	Ramallah

Nur Shams Association for Handicapped Rehabilitation	Tulkarem-Nur Sams
Women Programme Centre	Tulkarem-Nur Sams
Palestinian Child Arts Centre	Hebron
Jerusalem Culture and Civilization " SIWAR"	Jerusalem- Silwan
Jenin Association for family interdependence and solidarity	Jenin
Youth Development Society	Nablus-Sebastia
Rural Women Development Society	Nablus-Sebastia
Youth and Childhood Ajyal Centre	Jenin-Berqin
Women's Charitable Society Alola	Salfeet-Qarawa
Center for Palestinian Women Development in AL-Aghwar	Jericho –Jiftlik
Dar Al-Fonon Wa Al-Torath Center	Nablus
Women's Cultural Society for Palestinian Popular Heritage	Jenin
Mother Guidance & Child Care Society	Nablus
Sourif Association for Higher Education	Hebron-Surif
Women and Family Affairs Centre	Nablus
Alaqaba Agricultural Cooperative Association	Tubas-Alaqaba
Cultural Forum Society	Qlqilia
Local Committee for Rehabilitation	Nablus - New Askar camp
Borqa Women Society for Social Development	Nablus-Borqa
Borqa Cultural and Social Sports Club	Nablus-Borqa
Bardala Cooperative Association for Herbs	Tubas-Bardala
AFAQ for Development	Eastern Gaza, Gaza
Safe AgriculturE Producers Society	Biet Hanoun, North Gaza
Women's Programme Center	Tal El Sultan-Rafah
BENA' for Empowerment and Development	Jabalia Village , North Gaza
Al Rahma Society for Charitable	Jabalia Camp, North Gaza
Al Ata'a Al Khairya	Beit Hanound, North Gaza
Beit Lahia Development association	Beit Lahia, Gaza
Labor Resources Centre	Gaza City, Gaza
Society for the care of disabled families	Rafah, Gaza
Deir El-Balah Rehabilitation Society	D/Balah, Gaza
Buriej Sociaty Care and Rehabilitation	Buriej Camp, Middle Area, Gaza
Agriculture Cooperatives for Strawberries, Vegetables and flowers Producers Association	Beit Lahia, North Gaza
Psycho Social Support Association	Remal, Gaza
Palestine Association for serving society	Beach Camp, Gaza
Northern Association for Social Development	North Gaza - Jabaliya camp
Al Karamah Comission for Culture and Art	Rafah, Gaza
Hiker el Jamie` youth organization	D/Balah, Gaza
Al Satter Al Gharbi for Developing Community and Farmers	Kh/Younis, Gaza
Culture and Arts Gaza Association	Gaza City Gaza
Childrens Friends Society	Jabalia City, Gaza
Human First Charity Association	Jabalia Camp, Gaza
Al Ahleya Association for the Development of Palm and Dates	D/Balah, Gaza
Association of Culture, Arts and Popular Heritage	Beach Camp, Gaza City
El Wafa charitable society	Al shejaeya, Gaza
Remedial Education Centre	Jabalia Camp, Gaza Strip
Palestinian National Association for Youth	Gaza
Benevolent Community Centre Association	Beit Lahia, North Gaza