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Advocacy Efforts and Syrian Civil Society

Policy Paper

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Dawlaty



Dawlaty was founded by Syrian activists as a platform to develop and share content on democratic transition and has collected, archived and shared tactics of the nonviolent movement, as well as testimonies of those affected by the Syrian conflict, with a focus on marginalized groups including young women and men. Dawlaty works through its civic engagement and oral history programs to advocate at the local and international level for an inclusive justice for all Syrians. For more information, visit www.dawlaty.org

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ABSTRACT

The concept of advocacy has emerged in Syria in the last ten years due to growing needs for lobbying, drawing regional and international attention to protracted violence and military and political developments, and procuring humanitarian and development aid. This policy paper focuses on the main challenges that Syrian actors continue to face in their advocacy efforts and networking at the national level, and provides context-specific recommendations based on lessons learned from experience in advocacy and networking in Syria. Mapping out Syrian advocacy campaigns at the local, national, and international levels, as well as advocacy efforts in the diaspora, is beyond the scope of this paper.

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ACRONYMS

CBOs *Community Based Organizations*

CSOs *Civil Society Organizations*

GoS *Government of Syria*

INGOs *International Non-Governmental Organizations*

IDP *Internally Displaced Person*

MoSAL *Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor*

NGOs *Non-Governmental Organizations*

NWS *Northwest Syria*

INTRODUCTION

The Syrian uprising and ensuing conflict have provided a unique opportunity to Syrian civil society organizations (CSOs) and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to emerge and grow throughout the last ten years.¹ However, Syrian CSOs and CBOs continue to encounter several challenges that hinder their work, weakening their financial and human resources and their organizational development, and threatening their existence and sustainability. Although Syrian CSOs and CBOs have been operating under various local authorities, de facto forces, and changing governance structures, these challenges are generally applicable across the country without exception. The protracted violent conflict, military escalation, and lack of security have considerably restricted civic space. Additional security risks have arisen due to the difficulty of registering CSOs and CBOs in areas controlled by the Government of Syria (GoS) and beyond, as well as the direct threats and targeting that civil society actors face. Donor fatigue and dwindling funding resources in light of recent cuts in UK and US funding,² economic sanctions, and financial restrictions have also affected and exhausted Syrian CSOs and CBOs as they seek alternative funding and continue to provide services. Inconsistent donor requirements and restrictive banking procedures for transferring money have destabilized the work of Syrian CSOs and CBOs and led many to cease their activities.³ Military developments and the overlapping forms of forced displacement inside Syria and beyond its borders have further contributed to the disappearance of many Syrian CSOs and CBOs. In addition, the closure of several border crossings and inconsistent access has a dramatic impact on the work of civil society actors during a time when Syrian organizations were implementing 75% of the projects for the UN's Syria cross-border humanitarian fund 2020 allocations.⁴ The World Health Organization (WHO) classified Syria as being at very high-risk to the global COVID19- pandemic in March 2020.⁵

The pandemic's eruption inevitably affected Syrian CSOs' and CBOs' work environment, shifting

¹ There are no accurate statistics on the number of civil society actors in the different regions of Syria or in the neighboring countries and diaspora in the last ten years. There are numerous registered CSOs and CBOs and unregistered volunteering teams and initiatives that deliver civic work in different fields across the country. For details on Syrian civil society and mapping its actors, see: Khalaf, R., Ramadan, O. & Stolleis, F. (2015). *Activism in Difficult Times: Civil Society Groups in Syria (2014 - 2011)*. Badael Project and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung; Ahmad, J. (2019). *Changing Contexts and Trends in Syrian Civil Society*. Berlin: IMPACT Civil Society Research and Development; Citizens for Syria (2015). "Phase One," *Mapping Syrian Civil Society Actors*. Berlin: Citizens for Syria e.V.; MoSAL (2018). *Mapping of Protection Static Facilities inside Syria as of August 2018*. [url](#); UNU-Merit (November 2019). *Diaspora Mobilization in Contexts of Political Uncertainties*.

² William Worley. (30 March 2021). UK, US announce steep cuts in funding to Syria. Devex. [url](#).

³ For more details on the challenges of money transfers to NGOs inside Syria see: Joseph Daher (2020). *Invisible Sanctions: How over-compliance limits humanitarian work on Syria*. IMPACT; Gordon, S., Robinson, A., Goulding, H. & Mahyub, R. (2018). *The impact of bank de-risking on the humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis*. Overseas Development Institute, Humanitarian Policy .

⁴ Hall, N. (June 2021). *The Implications of the UN Cross-Border Vote in Syria*. CSIS. [url](#).

⁵ OCHA. *Syrian Arab Republic: COVID19- Update No. 11 - 02 March 2020*. [url](#).² William Worley. (30 March 2021). UK, US announce steep cuts in funding to Syria. Devex. [url](#).

the scope of their work to emergency plans including the distribution of medical kits and COVID19-awareness-raising campaigns.⁶ Several CSOs and CBOs feared that the pandemic would affect support for the Syrian humanitarian response and that sanctions would further impact the health sector and prevent much-needed resources from reaching the population.⁷ Although the protracted conflict has left Syria's healthcare system at the brink of collapse, underfunded and understaffed local health actors and medical NGOs outside the GoS-controlled areas have been racing against time attempting to respond to the situation.⁸ Again, Syrian civil society actors have found themselves confronting exceptional and perilous threats to their work and continued existence.

This policy paper focuses on the challenges that face Syrian CSOs and CBOs in their advocacy efforts and activities in Syria. The introduction provided a brief overview of the contextual background of Syrian civil society and the broad challenges that hamper its work. The second section will offer an overview of CSOs' and CBOs' experiences in advocacy, and the third section will provide an overview of the main challenges facing Syrian CSOs in their advocacy efforts. The fourth section addresses the probability, feasibility, and (dis)advantages of networking as part of advocacy activities at the local and national levels. The fifth section deals with the strategies, cost, and impact of advocacy in Syria and the last section provides context-specific recommendations based on lessons learned from experience in advocacy work and networking in Syria.

⁶ CSPPS (20 July 2020). Towards a greater role of the civil society in conflict settlement in Syria after Covid19-? [url](#).

⁷ We Exist (April 2020). The Impact Of The Covid19- Pandemic On Syrians: An Analysis By Syrian Civil Society. [url](#).

⁸ Gharibah, M. & Mehchy, Z. (25 March 2020). COVID19- Pandemic: Syria's Response and Healthcare Capacity. LSE. [url](#).

ADVOCACY IN THE SYRIAN CONTEXT

Very little has been written about the advocacy efforts and experiences of Syrian CSOs and CBOs at local, national, and international levels. The concept of advocacy has emerged in Syria in the last ten years due to growing needs for lobbying, drawing regional and international attention to protracted violence and military and political developments, and procuring humanitarian and development aid. According to one definition, advocacy is “a way of exerting power so as to influence the institutional rules that shape an organization’s operational environment.”⁹ Although there is no single definition of advocacy, the NGO and civil society sector adopted the concept of advocacy and intensified their advocacy work as a means for affecting institutional policies and creating long-lasting social change.¹⁰ Many understand advocacy as a way of working with institutions so that changes can be made in policy or its implementation in order to improve sustainability and increase scale in a way that cannot be achieved by organizations through direct service provision or capacity building.¹¹ In general, advocacy is the act of influencing, supporting, or changing policies.¹²

Although there is no consensus on the meaning of advocacy among Syrian CSOs and CBOs, advocacy is mostly understood in terms of targeting international decision-makers and influencing international policies on issues pertaining to Syria. Syrian CSOs and CBOs have implemented advocacy campaigns concurrently with the revolution, military and political developments, human rights violations, forced displacement, and growing humanitarian needs on the ground. However, those campaigns were in many cases individual and reactive and did not affect or change global policies in order to deter human rights violations and civilian bombardment. One dominant model for advocacy work consists of organizing institutional and media campaigns to communicate people’ needs and priorities, denouncing the GoS’ policies and abuses, as well as its allies and other de facto forces, and improving the livelihood of Syrian refugees and IDPs.¹³ The Avaaz platform, for example, encouraged Syrian activists to launch Syria-specific advocacy campaigns and estimates that more than 100 campaigns were conducted with its support from 2011 to mid 2017.¹⁴ Due to the momentum that existed during the first few years of the Syrian uprising, advocacy campaigns

⁹ Scott, W. R. (1983). “Reform Movements and Organizations: The Case of Aging.” In *Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality*.

¹⁰ Silpakar, S (December 2012). *Policy Advocacy Strategies of Civil Society Organizations in Nepal*. Alliance for Social Dialogue.

¹¹ Ross, J. (October 2013) *Advocacy: A Guide for Small and Diaspora NGOs*.

¹² Silpakar (2012).

¹³ Jusoor for Studies (September 2020). *Experiences of Civil Society*.

¹⁴ Enab Baladi (16 July 2017). [حملات المناصرة لأجل السوريين.. تسجيل مواقف والتأثير “تراجع”](#). [url](#)

were perceived as relatively successful in raising awareness and drawing international attention to several issues, but they did not necessarily lead to major changes in decision-making.¹⁵ During military and political escalations, individual and collective advocacy activities have mainly targeted international audiences, and they have not managed to generate collective advocacy work at the national level.

Several civil society networks and platforms were formed in order to enhance coordination, resource exchanges, and organizational mechanisms, with particular emphasis on carrying-out mobilizations and advocacy activities and exerting pressure in international fora.¹⁶ Some existing networks include: the Syrian NGO Alliance (SNA), the Syrian Relief Network (SRN), the Syrian Civil Society Coalition (TAMAS), the Syrian Civil Society Organizations Union, the General Union of Charities and Aid Groups, and the SHAML CSOs Coalition. These networks include organizations that were outside GoS-controlled areas at the time of their establishment, with the exception of TAMAS, which covers most of the country.

Furthermore, similar initiatives were founded in GoS-controlled areas such as the Syrian Networks Federation and the Syrian Civil Society Platform, in addition to already existing groups, Mobaderoon, JCI, and Juzour.¹⁷ We Exist, an alliance of Syrian CSOs, was established to organize and coordinate public campaigns, participate in advocacy opportunities, and coordinate lobbying that targets decision and policy makers in Europe.¹⁸ One of the main activities of the Syrian Networks League, comprising eight coalitions and a total of 180 organizations, was to conduct advocacy work.¹⁹ In addition, the UN supported the establishment of various consortiums and platforms. For example, the UNOCHA-managed Syrian Civil Society (SCO) Platform managed by UNOCHA Turkey was established in 2014 to participate in inter-agency and humanitarian advocacy activities among many other objectives.²⁰ The Civil Society Support Room (CSSR) was established by the Special Envoy for Syria and his team in order to contribute to their advocacy for a political solution in Syria.²¹

¹⁵ Syrian Dialogue Center. (6 April 2021). Efforts of Syrian mobilization and advocacy in the international field, complicated reality and absence of strategies.

¹⁶ Jusoor for Studies (2020).

¹⁷ Citizens for Syria (2017). Syrian Civil Society Organizations Reality and Challenges.

¹⁸ We Exist. [url](#).

¹⁹ Check Syrian Networks League. [url](#).

²⁰ OCHA.(July 2018). Syrian CSO Platform Frequently Asked Questions. [url](#)

²¹ Civil Society Support Room CSSR. [url](#)

Due to forced displacement, security concerns, and bureaucratic constraints, most of these networks and coalitions were formed in the diaspora though they maintained part (or most) of their programs and support inside Syria. Therefore, building similar coalitions at the national level has yet to be explored or experienced.

ADVOCACY CHALLENGES

The challenges that hinder the advocacy work of Syrian civil society actors mirror the overarching challenges that have continually obstructed their progress and existence. The main challenges can be summarized using the following categories:

Legal, Political, and Security Challenges

Since the onset of the Syrian uprising and subsequent conflict, legal and security concerns have remained key challenges that hinder the work and advocacy efforts of civil society actors. Lengthy bureaucratic procedures and the impossibility of registering in GoS-controlled areas and beyond, in addition to security threats to civil workers and organizations, have impeded their work across the country both individually and collectively. Changing governance structures and de facto authorities have resulted not only in the fragmentation of Syrian CSOs and CBOs at the national level, but also in the divergence of their priorities, needs, and approaches. Moreover, the absence of democratic laws that could be a conduit for unified advocacy efforts has not helped Syrian CSOs and CBOs find an encouraging and safe environment for their advocacy work. In addition, because advocacy work seeks to change policy, in many cases states and local authorities are hostile to civil society actors engaged in advocacy or campaigning.²² CSOs registered in the GoS-controlled areas have been restricted to conducting non-controversial activities and hence there is little to no room for working on advocacy. In addition, the lack of trust between local authorities and Syrian civil society at large, the absence of political diversity, and poor participatory mechanisms have all hampered advocacy work and restricted its activities at the national level.

Societal and Conceptual Challenges

Since the concept of advocacy is new in Syria, there can be resistance to accepting or recognizing advocacy efforts. Perceptions of the role of women in the public space, for example, have become more restrictive of launching advocacy campaigns for women rights or encouraging women to initiate and lead advocacy activities. In addition, advocacy is sometimes understood or perceived through the lens of providing services and material or in-kind support. Hence, advocacy in many cases can be distant from its main goals and objectives. The absence of a clear conceptual understanding of advocacy has led to a lack of distinction between advocacy, communication, and awareness raising, which makes it difficult to consolidate medium- and long-term advocacy

²² Silpakar (2012).

activities. Moreover, there is a lack of clarity or transparency in perceptions of the role of CSOs and CBOs and their collective civic work, which is often wrongfully restricted to charity or relief work. This has led to the role of civil society not being solidified and to a lack of awareness about the concept of civil society, its various roles, and its mission.²³ Some believe that advocacy will shift the focus and main objective of CSOs and CBOs from serving society to serving political interests and donor agendas. This creates divergence among CSOs and CBOs across the country that seek to identify common interests and produce cumulative, uninterrupted advocacy knowledge.

Institutional and Funding Challenges

With the exception of a few Syrian CSOs that have included advocacy in their workstream, the majority of Syrian CSOs and CBOs lack the organizational capacity, financial and human resources, and institutional expertise necessary in order to conduct advocacy work. In addition, the lack of knowledge capacity, not only in terms of advocacy work per se but also in relation to certain topics and the pertinent laws, hampers the progress of advocacy work. The lack of technical expertise remains a challenge for producing campaigns capable of raising awareness, drawing national and international attention, and changing policies in the medium- and long-term. Several CSOs and CBOs are incapable of conducting the required research, sampling, and surveying to serve their advocacy work. Funding to alleviate the Syrian humanitarian crisis has been dwindling in the last few years, which is exacerbated by financial restrictions and bank de-risking caused by various sanctions imposed on Syria. In turn, the COVID19- pandemic has had a drastic impact on funding. More notably, funding to local and national advocacy efforts in Syria has yet to become a priority for donors, instead, support is more frequently observed at international events like the Brussels donor conferences. Reliance on foreign funding and the politicization of aid has led Syrian civil society actors to implement foreign agendas and become less visible and outspoken.²⁴ In the midst of this dependency and conflicting agendas, it has become harder to exert advocacy efforts at the national level, particularly with the lack of a unified Syrian national identity.

²³ CCSD (2018). Syrian Civil Society: As Important Now as Ever. Center for Civil Society and Democracy.

²⁴ Al Achi, A. (2020). How Syrian Civil Society Lost its Independence in a War of Conflicting Agendas. Carnegie Middle East Center.

NETWORKING IN ADVOCACY AT THE LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVELS

Advocacy at various local, national, and international levels is crucial in order for efforts to feed into one other productively. While advocacy at the international level seeks to make a positive contribution at the national level, national-level work (which provides evidence of issues, needs, and solutions) must in turn feed into advocacy at international levels.²⁵ Understanding the Syrian context requires more effort and work at the national level and the creation of linkages within the country for advocacy. Needless to say, networking in advocacy efforts provides more leverage and allows for complementarity of expertise and skills among Syrian CSOs and CBOs. It also increases the legitimacy and credibility of advocacy activities, and brings together CSOs and CBOs with different domains and interests in order to achieve shared goals. Networking in advocacy helps with reaching a broader audience, influencing decision makers, and unifying, combining, and securing human and financial resources.²⁶ Such networking opens advocacy campaigns to new connections and expedites desired changes. However, in networking it can also be difficult to ensure that all CSO and CBO members in the networks are involved in the decision-making process, and to create a clear structure that is useful for labor division and responsibility sharing.²⁷ Networking and coalition-building in advocacy can be a very lengthy process wherein unequal shares of power and hierarchical domination can lead to unequal compromises on priorities and tactics. Hence, networking at the national level demands effective collaboration and communication as well as shared understandings, capacities, and priorities, as well as, most notably, strategic patience for affecting public opinion and making changes in the medium- and long- term.

As mentioned earlier, several networks and platforms have been established since 2011 to coordinate and support the work of Syrian CSOs and CBOs. However, the continuity, long-term objectives, and impact of these alliances are not always clear.

The structure of aid funding creates fierce competition among Syrian CSOs and CBOs over limited resources, which consequently deters harmonization and coordination to unify their advocacy efforts. In addition, advocacy coordination and networking requires additional time and resources and hence CSOs and CBOs may perceive their individual work to be more efficient and visible.

²⁵ van Wessel, M (March, 2021). Linking and localizing in multi-level advocacy. Cordaid.

²⁶ Syrian Dialogue Center (2021).

²⁷ Ibid.

This competition, together with the structural dynamics of aid, leads to a handful of Syrian CSOs who have access to funds and resources being favored, and in turn it creates unbalanced hierarchies and power dynamics within CSOs and CBOs. A lack of knowledge transfer mechanisms has created elitist behavior and excessive dependency on individuals as opposed to organizational capacity and knowledge, particularly with the introduction of new advocacy concepts.²⁸ This is not to undermine the role and endeavors of several Syrian CSOs who tirelessly try to provide support to smaller CBOs, volunteering teams, and initiatives.

Geographical fragmentation and security concerns have forged different priorities, needs, and safe spaces for Syrian CSOs and CBOs and hampered working on unified advocacy campaigns at the national level. Syrian civil society actors also have different levels of experience, qualifications, and organizational maturity, and it is therefore natural that they would have different levels of understanding, commitment and responsibility regarding advocacy work. In addition, advocacy work requires diverse tools that do not necessarily serve the main objective of every organization or its behavioral needs analysis. Owing to shifting governance structures, de facto authorities, and geographical isolation throughout the last ten years, there is an obvious lack of knowledge about security, legal, and socioeconomic issues in different local contexts throughout Syria. Some parts of the country like Northwest Syria (NWS), for example, have been outside the GoS control since 2012 and 2013, so there is a lack of mutual knowledge between NWS and GoS-controlled areas about civic trajectories and the alternative strategies and tools that enable civil society actors to practice their civic and advocacy work at the local level. Dispelling normative stereotypes and understanding security dynamics and conflict analysis are key to doing comprehensive advocacy work and developing common interests. In addition, understanding the ever-changing dynamics that involve limited choices and political alternatives in relation to civilian aspirations and de facto authorities is pivotal. Limited or non-existent knowledge of various local contexts and developments therein has resulted not only in work done in isolation but also in misrepresentation at the national and international levels. It has also hindered the development of a shared understanding and agenda to guide advocacy activities at the local and national levels.

It is often argued that advocacy work among Syrian CSOs and CBOs is neither feasible nor advisable due to the previously-mentioned limitations. However, there is an invisible and unique opportunity to mobilize efforts and find alternative strategies for building on common

²⁸ forumZDF (April 2021). *An Indispensable Need for a New Breath*.

denominators and leading national-level advocacy campaigns. The diversity of Syrian CSOs and CBOs provides a richness to their collective work when they are provided with the needed time, planning, and financial and logistic resources. While solidarity, trust, and coordination among CSOs and CBOs is based on geographic distribution and political tendencies and preferences, diversity and working at the national level provide a sense of ownership to the campaigns. In addition, national-level advocacy prevents groupings based on ethnic, gender, geographic, and partisan allegiances among the CSOs and CBOs because it presents an opportunity for collective loyalty to the advocacy campaigns and their needs. To some extent, the rich diversity of CSOs and CBOs mirrors Syria prior to 2011. It reflects the relationship between urban and rural areas in the country, varied levels of exposure to new structures and concepts, different bodies of qualitative knowledge, and the marginalization and isolation of rural areas.

Several CSOs and CBOs have the desire and intention to work and coordinate collectively when there is an environment conducive to bridging gaps and breaking the current isolation. The lack of mutual contextual knowledge is not indicative of pure polarization or a lack of interest. In many cases it is the result of the harsh socioeconomic conditions faced by the various CSOs and CBOs across the country that are struggling to survive and to afford their basic individual and organizational needs. Networking in advocacy among Syrian CSOs and CBOs must be an organizational behavior and practice regardless of the institutionalization of said networking per se.

Since advocacy requires swift and coordinated action, decision making structures can also work against successful advocacy as such.²⁹ Advocacy and related networking at the national level in Syria poses several questions around who the decision-makers are in Syria, how they can be identified at the local and national levels, and what are the available decision-making structures that could support advocacy efforts. In addition, seeking visibility may damage advocacy work at the national level and incur serious security threats. Therefore, visibility should not be the main focus of advocacy activities.

²⁹ van Wessel (2021).

ADVOCACY STRATEGY, COST, AND IMPACT

Different local contexts mean different strategies, different understandings, and different priorities. Incompatibilities and gaps between an advocacy topic and an organization's identity and work stream hinder to some extent the advocacy work and its success both at the local and national levels. Syrian CSOs and CBOs often lack the time, resources and commitment to work collectively on advocacy campaigns and this results in expectations that are unachievable in light of the reality of organizational and institutional capacities, finances, and logistical resources.

Advocacy work in Syria has usually been fragile, spontaneous, and unplanned, happening in response to certain military escalations. It tends to lack long-term strategies and coordination among organizations in order to advocate for the shared priorities and needs. The general lack of planning and prioritization in the work of Syrian civil society³⁰ has created an immense challenge to unified advocacy priorities. The absence of clear decision-making structures, the lack of sustainable and uninterrupted funding mechanisms, and the lack of technical capacity and expertise in advocacy obstructs developing long-term advocacy planning and strategic relevance. Generally, advocacy campaigns in Syria do not have tools for creating pressure, lack strategies or clear objectives, and have failed to attract new audiences, instead focusing on raising awareness.³¹

The cost of advocacy activities depends on the tools and level of investment in relationships. Financial restrictions, money transferring inside Syria, and the required vetting of individuals and organizations continue to burden Syrian CSOs and CBOs with additional challenges. Rigidity in budgeting makes it more difficult to get multifinance from the same donor to the same CSO or CBO. Most importantly, it also makes it hard to plan national-level advocacy activities and unify logistical costs in the country's different regions.

Advocacy work needs strategic patience; it takes time for it to be impactful in the medium- and long- terms. The impact and credibility of advocacy is largely determined by its ability to follow up and respond to local needs. Credibility is also intertwined with providing services and material support, which affects advocacy as well as popular support and participation.

³⁰ CCSD (2018).

³¹ Syrian Dialogue Center (2021).

Advocacy activities are mostly implemented locally on a small scale, which means that their results are not measurable and that in many cases there is no direct or noticeable impact. Despite continuous limitations and a lack of cumulative advocacy knowledge, there is need, feasibility, and a genuine desire to work collectively on advocacy at the national level. The most workable approach and best tools for collective advocacy at the national level, however, must be explored further.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Donor Community, UN agencies, and INGOs

Structures, Knowledge, and Technical Capacities

1. Strengthen local Syrian civil society structures for conducting advocacy work and effectively participate in national dialogue in order to address the common good and common priorities.
2. Strengthen the organizational development and programmatic capacity of Syrian civil society for conducting advocacy activities at the national level.
3. Build the knowledge and technical capacities of advocacy teams within CSOs and CBOs, and work on the consolidation and integration of organizational knowledge capacities among CSOs and CBOs.
4. Provide consistent and long-term strategic coaching, advising, and learning-by-doing to support national-level advocacy.
5. Provide long-term funding that is specifically allocated to national advocacy activities with clear medium- and long-term objectives and ensure flexibility, dynamic structures, and the ability to adapt to abrupt needs.
6. Facilitate the space, resources, and time for physical meetings and trust-building among CSOs and CBOs, and stimulate more advocacy activities to overcome geographical isolation at the national level.

Research and Analysis Capacities

7. Build the research capacity of CSOs and CBOs for developing and conducting studies, analyses, polls, and assessment tools that serve their advocacy campaigns at various local, national, and international levels.
8. Support research on advocacy efforts and how to link multi-level advocacy to make change at local, national, and international levels, as well as how to bridge the knowledge gap on issues pertaining to Syrian civil society, advocacy, and the role of the donor community.

9. Support the mapping of advocacy campaigns and activities of Syrian civil society actors at the local, national, and international levels and make this mapping accessible and visible in order to draw from and capitalize on the lessons learned through that work.

10. Provide Syrian CSOs and CBOs with the research and analysis tools that would enable them to have ownership and agency over all phases of their advocacy activities and to develop different modalities for collective advocacy work at the national level.

Syrian Civil Society Actors

Integrate and Leverage

1. Integrate advocacy campaigns into organizational priorities and make advocacy a core part of every program and service delivery.

2. Develop medium- and long-term advocacy strategies and ensure the implementation of these strategies in the organization's overarching strategic planning.

3. Utilizing the leverage of Syrian civil society actors, influence the donor community in international fora to support more advocacy work at the national level and cite relevant successful experiences whenever applicable. Share expertise and advocate within the international community to leverage funding allocation towards supporting advocacy activities at the national level.

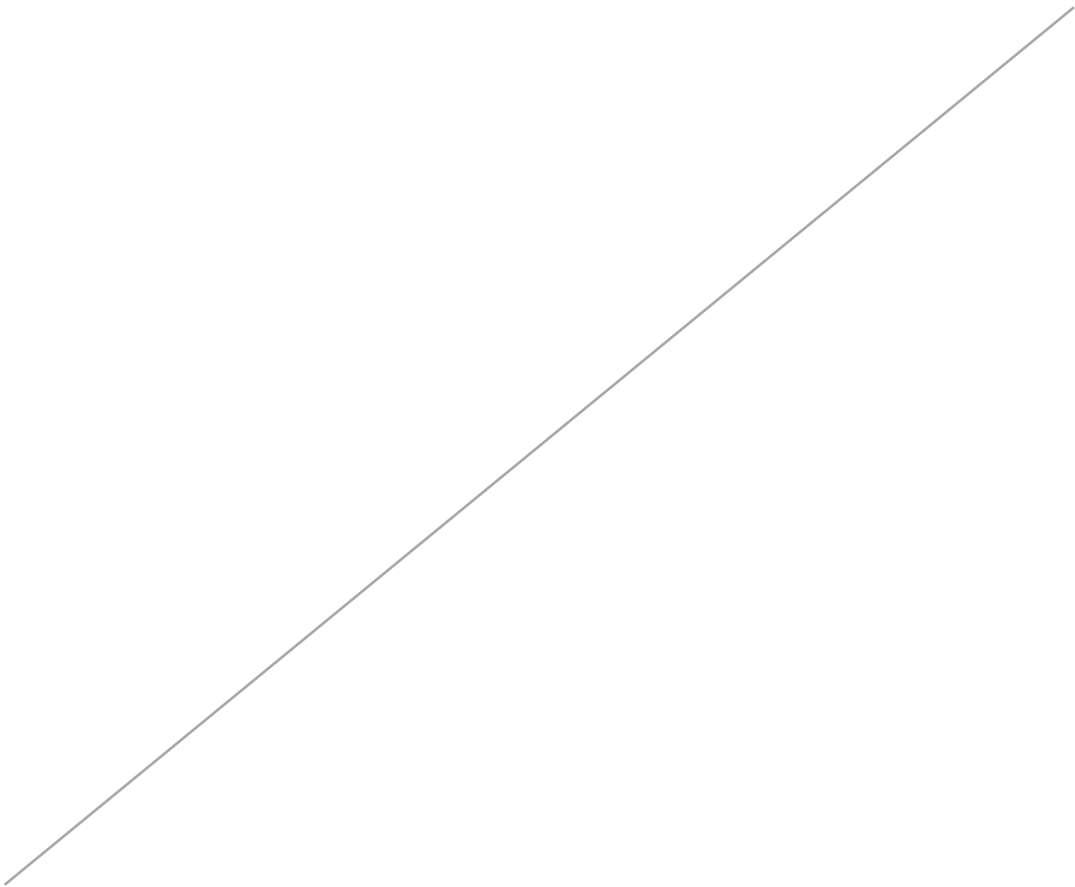
Gaps and Collective efforts

4. Identify community needs and gaps that inform relevant campaigns and clarify objectives, timelines, and work plans for any national-level advocacy work.

5. Understand the social capital of CSOs and CBOs and rediscover the common purpose of working collectively and aligning advocacy objectives with individuals, experts, and organizational experiences, contexts, and capabilities.

6. Map out all individual and collective advocacy campaigns and activities that Syrian civil society actors have been working on since 2011, regardless of their size, geographical location, workstream, or registration.

7. Align collective expectations and processes that contribute to, explore, and (re)build relations among civil society actors, and develop their own independent national agendas and actions.
8. Develop shared interests and prioritize potential opportunities for building the foundations for collaboration and coordination based on mutual respect, trust, and participation towards the goal of working on effective national-level advocacy.



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