

Data Analysis Report

Relations Between Nongovernmental Organizations and Local Governments in Developing Countries

The Case of Lebanon

Prepared by Khaldoun AbouAssi*, Ann O'M. Bowman**, Jocelyn Johnston*, Long Tran*, and Zachary Bauer*

With contributions from Sawsan Bou Fakhreddine, Jawad Bou Ghanem, and Vicky Zwein



SCHOOL of PUBLIC AFFAIRS
AMERICAN UNIVERSITY • WASHINGTON, DC



* Department of Public Administration & Policy, School of Public Affairs, American University
** Bush School of Government and Public Service, Texas A&M University

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For additional information, please contact Khaldoun AbouAssi
abuouassi@merican.edu.

Table of Contents

GLOSSARY.....	V
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	VI
BACKGROUND	1
METHODOLOGY	4
DIFFICULTIES FACED AND ISSUES CONFRONTED	5
SURVEY RESULTS.....	6
PART I: NGO-LG RELATIONS	6
PART II: INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION	21
PART III: RESPONDENTS' PERSONAL PROFILES	23
BEIRUT ROUNDTABLE REPORT	26
DC ROUNDTABLE REPORT.....	28
COMMENTARIES.....	30

GLOSSARY

Charitable organization:	An organization whose primary objective is social well-being (mainly charitable and religious)
Club:	An organization typically serving the youth of a certain locality, focusing on sports and recreational activities
Collaboration:	A process of operating in multi-organizational arrangements to solve problems or address an issue
Contract:	A mechanism for procurement of a product or service, specified in detail by the principal
Cooperative:	An autonomous association of limited number of persons united voluntarily to meet common economic, social, and cultural needs through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled body
Donor:	An institutional funder (typically governments of developed countries or multi-lateral organizations)
Family association:	An organization formed by people who share a common ancestor or last name who come together for various purposes (reunions, celebrating history, support, etc.)
Grant:	A type of financial assistance awarded for the conduct of a project as specified in an approved proposal
INGO:	International Non-Governmental Organization
LG:	Local government (commonly referred to as municipality in Lebanon)
Municipal Union:	A legal entity comprised of a number of municipalities that enjoys a legal personality and financial independence and work on common projects benefiting member municipalities
Mutual Fund:	An autonomous association of fee-paying members built on the desire for mutual solidarity and support for benefit of its own members
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
Partnership:	A form of collaboration, where two or more entities work together on a specific project or initiative with a specific budget within a specific timeframe

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the relationships between nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local governments (LGs) in Lebanon. The information presented in the report was generated from two surveys conducted in 2017: a total of 248 officials completed the LG survey; 223 executives completed the NGO survey. The intent of the surveys was to explore the perceptions of these officials on numerous issues related to NGO-LG interactions. Key takeaways from the surveys include:

- Significant cross-sectoral interaction is taking place; even among non-collaborators, there is an interest in working with organizations from the other sector in the future.
- The reasons for not working together vary. LGs report a lack of opportunities and interest from NGOs as the most common barriers to collaboration. For NGOs, no single reason explains the absence of collaboration, although 14% of NGO respondents do not perceive benefits in working with LGs.
- LGs engage NGOs to improve the quality of local services and build a stronger sense of community; NGOs engage LGs to gain additional resources or funding and improve the quality of services.
- For LGs, cross sector relationships have led to increased citizen satisfaction or trust; for NGOs, these collaborations saved financial resources and increased the level of community services and programs.
- Both sets of respondents report lack of resources, financial and human, as limitations to working together. Perceptions of LG's constrained authority and NGO's interest to work with central government inhibit these relationships.
- Collaboration tends to be 1:1; that is, one NGO is working with one LG.
- For both NGOs and LGs, 'social services' is the service area in which collaboration is most likely to occur.
- In general, NGOs initiate collaborations; donors and central government secure funding. There is disagreement about LG and NGO coordination and decision-making responsibilities.

- For NGOs, the primary mechanisms for collaboration are grants; for LGs, it is joint service delivery. Sharing workspaces and exchanging information are also common collaborative practices.
- The majority of NGOs and LGs assess cross-sector relationships as effective. However, NGOs overwhelmingly rate their relations with international organizations higher than those with LGs.

The survey results were presented at two roundtables, one in Beirut in May 2017 with representatives of NGOs, LGs, the central government, and international organizations; and the second in Washington DC in October 2017 with representatives of federal agencies and international organizations. The roundtable discussions provided an opportunity to probe the trends and patterns identified in the surveys further. Four major themes emerged from the roundtables:

1. Politics affects NGO-LG interactions and may limit the effectiveness of the relationships that develop. This is particularly important as there is a need to balance between NGOs' technical expertise and the legal (and political) authority of LGs.
2. Decentralization in Lebanon—as well as in some developing countries—remains nascent; LGs would benefit from additional empowerment.
3. Donors play a critical role in stimulating NGO-LG relationships but may also divert those interactions toward donors' priorities. There is a need for donors to institute some changes including accepting the risk of failure.
4. An interest in cross-sectoral collaboration is evident, but challenges such as the focus on service delivery and vaporous trust between the two sectors hinder the potentials (and promises) of collaboration.

BACKGROUND

Across the globe, countries are experimenting with an array of approaches intended to provide public services, ensure sustainable development, and give voice to the people. One of these approaches involves decentralization. Over time, decentralization has become a near-universal tide, a desirable option for dispersing decision making and allocating responsibility, and is advocated by the two Bretton Woods Institutions (the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund) and similar organizations. By shifting decision-making to the lowest governmental level, decentralization has the potential to enhance accountability as well as efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery, and promote citizens' participation.

The shifting tides of decentralization evolved in tandem with the increased role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the development industry. Donors favored these actors as vehicles for inspired change due to their values and ability to reach the poorest of the poor and to deliver services efficiently and cost-effectively. It is widely acknowledged that NGOs serve citizens, build local ownership, strengthen civic engagement, and work for the public interest/good¹.

While decentralization entails a devolution of the nation state's authority, there has been growing concern in the international donor community and development circles about the effectiveness of aid, sustainability of development, and results management. The 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, and the 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation adjust the focus of aid programs to adhere to principles of local ownership and national priorities. In order to ensure the readiness of local communities—in terms of capacity and willingness to engage with new responsibilities--promoting partnerships between local actors has become a priority on the agenda of aid agencies of developed nations, including the United States Agency for International Development. Specifically, donors realized that, at the local level, NGOs could

¹ AbouAssi, Khaldoun. 2010. International Development Management through a Southern Lens. *Public Administration and Development Journal*, 30(2): 116-123

complement or supplement the work of LGs² in arrangements more akin to partnerships³. The boundaries that once separated the public sector from the private and nonprofit sectors are increasingly fuzzy – “no one is fully responsible for anything...”⁴. Initiatives to partner between NGOs and LGs in developing countries are building a noteworthy trend.

Scholars⁵ have examined central government-NGO relationships in developing countries, but until now no one has researched these relationships at the local level. This research project intends to help fill this gap, using an inter-disciplinary approach from the fields of public administration and nonprofit management. Using primary survey data, we will compare central government-NGO relationships and LG-NGO partnerships. Because existing frameworks of the central government-NGO relationship are not applicable to the local setting, we aim to propose an alternative theoretical framework. We are interested in developing a set of propositions to be tested in future research, focusing on organizational capacities, management structures, nature and types of services, and issues of legitimacy and credibility. As we begin to untangle the nature of relationships between LGs and NGOs, we will assess their roles in supporting effective governance and decentralization. More specifically, variations in identified features of the LG-NGO relationship will be exploited to specify the impact of these arrangements on governance quality and decentralization.

² Gazley, Beth. 2008. Beyond the Contract: The Scope and Nature of Informal government–nonprofit Partnerships. *Public Administration Review* 68 (1):141-54.

Gazley, Beth. 2010. Why Not Partner With Local Government?: Nonprofit Managerial Perceptions of Collaborative Disadvantage. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 39 (1): 51-76.

Gazley, Beth and Jeffrey L. Brudney. 2007. The Purpose (and Perils) of Government-Nonprofit Partnership. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 3: 389-415.

³ Brinkerhoff, Jennifer and Derick W. Brinkerhoff. 2002. Government–Nonprofit Relations in Comparative Perspective: Evolution, Themes and New Directions. *Public Administration and Development*. 22:3-18

⁴ Kettl, Donald F. 2002. *The Transformation of Governance: Public Administration for Twenty-First Century America*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press. Page 157

⁵ Brinkerhoff, Jennifer M. 2002. Government-Nonprofit Partnership: A Defining Framework. *Public Administration & Development* 22 (1): 19-30.

Najam, Adil. 2000. The Four-C’s of Third Sector-Government Relations: Cooperation, Confrontation, Complementarity, and Co-optation. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership* 10 (4): 375-396

Young, Dennis. 2000. Alternative Models of Government-Nonprofit Sector Relations: Theoretical and International Perspectives. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 29(1): 149-172.

This is a pilot study that concentrates on Lebanon. Conducting this analysis, at this time, can help inform Lebanon at a critical juncture in its quest for the optimal administrative system for its conditions, social culture and political system, and the urgency of its development. This study has been conducted as the country is revising laws and policies in order to diffuse authority downward. The assumption is that LGs and local actors collaborate and support each other, but little empirical evidence exists to support this belief.

METHODOLOGY

Two surveys were developed to address these questions; one designed for NGO respondents and the other for LG respondents. The objective was to explore relations between LGs and NGOs, understand how LGs and NGOs get involved in delivering services, and examine the nature of that involvement. The two surveys were identical in terms of the categories and questions, with minor tailoring to each respondent group. The instruments were translated from English to Arabic and then back- translated for accuracy purposes. A pilot survey was conducted to test the two surveys in November-December 2016. Ten LGs and nine NGOs completed the surveys to provide feedback that was incorporated in revised survey instruments. Respondents on both sides reported working relations with the other sector; but more LGs than NGOs reported skepticism about these interactions for various reasons, including but not limited to the constrained authority and resources of LGs.

The first survey, targeting LGs in Lebanon, launched in February 2017. A local vendor was tasked to conduct the survey through a data collection team on the ground. A stratified sample was used to ensure a representative and proportional distribution based on size and geography. The data collection was completed in May 2017. Of 1,108 total LGs in the country, 248 survey entries were completed, generating a response rate of 22.4%.

Region	Distribution	Actual % collected	No.
Beirut	1%	-*	-
Mount Lebanon	32%	30%	74
North Lebanon	14%	11%	28
Akkar	11%	12%	30
Beqaa	9%	14%	35
Baalbeck/Hermel	7%	10%	26
South Lebanon	15%	11%	27
Nabatiyeh	12%	11%	28

* Despite multiple attempts, the vendor was unsuccessful in securing a commitment from the city of Beirut to participate in the survey.

The second survey, targeting NGOs, was launched in March 2017. Two versions of this survey were prepared. One was an online version using Qualtrics, an online

analytical survey software. A contact list of 650 NGOs was derived from the United Nations Development Program's database⁶ and Daleel Madani's directory⁷ was populated into the software before a mass email was sent out inviting NGO leaders to complete the survey. The other version was a hard copy that was distributed by a local associate who contacted these organizations. Efforts were made to avoid duplicate responses and to increase response rate (three awards were posted as incentives to complete the survey). The efforts led to 223 completed entries, comprising a response rate of 34%. The dataset includes 85 sets of responses that represent direct, dyadic relationships between individual NGOs and the specific LGs with whom they work.

Difficulties Faced and Issues Confronted

Several challenges were encountered during the survey administration, more typically for those surveys targeting LGs. All efforts were made to ensure a scientific data collection process and a representative sample, but some common difficulties (listed below) were experienced.

1. The contact information of many NGOs was inaccurate or outdated; some of the organizations on record have ceased to exist.
2. There were difficulties in securing appointments and many appointments were postponed or rescheduled.
3. Some LG mayors and NGO executive directors delegated the responsibility to answer the survey to staff or other elected officials on their behalf.
4. There is a general lack of interest in or misunderstanding of the value of research among NGOs and LGs that resulted in declining to participate in the survey.
5. There is a negative stereotype toward data collection among certain groups that caused a resistance to the survey.
6. Some LGs refused to participate in the survey due to preconceived distrust of NGOs.

⁶ <http://www.undp.org.lb/partners/NGOs/AffiliationType.pdf>

⁷ <http://daleel-madani.org/webdirectory-ngos>

SURVEY RESULTS

The survey results are presented in three subsections. The first subsection covers respondents' perceptions and assessments of collaboration between NGOs and LGs in Lebanon. The second subsection reports institutional information for the organizations that participated in the survey; the last section presents the personal profiles of the respondents who completed the surveys.

Part I: NGO-LG Relations

Existence of Collaborative Relations

Most respondents on both sides report having worked together in the past year.

	YES		NO	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
NGOs	150	67	73	33
LGs	148	60	100	40

Perceptions of Non-collaborators

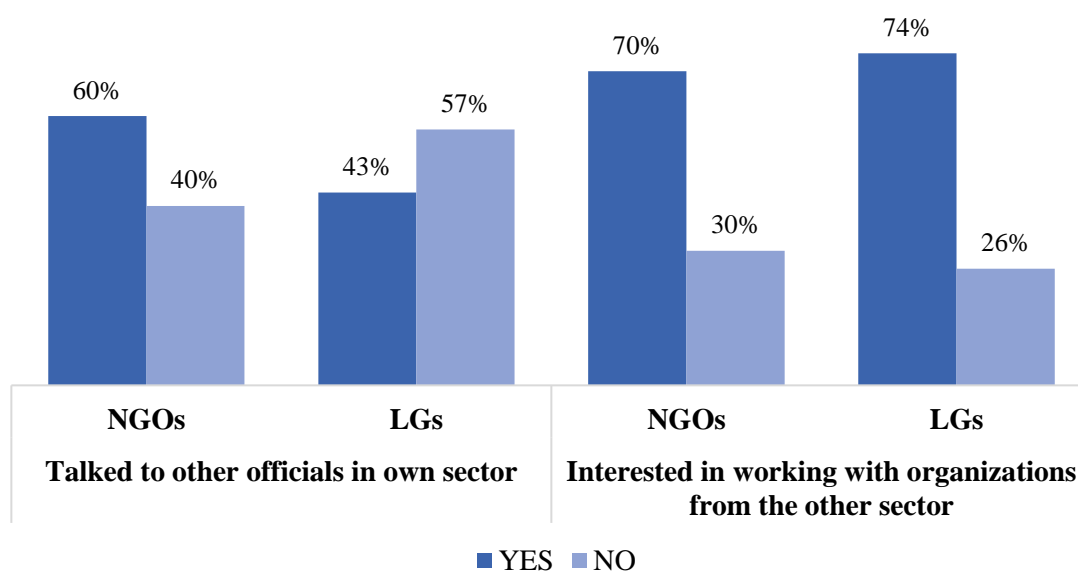
1. *Reasons for not collaborating*

Among the LGs who indicate not working with the other sector, the most common reported reason is *lack of opportunities*; for NGOs, the most common reported reason is *no perceived benefit of working with LGs*. NGO respondents also volunteered other reasons including the *nature of the work* and the *young age of their organizations*. It should be noted here that many LGs also cite *no interest from NGOs*, while NGOs often cite *no interest from LGs*. These responses may reflect a misunderstanding between the two sectors about each other's commitment.

Reasons	LGs	NGOs
	%	
Collaborate with other organizations	3	12
Collaborate with private sector	2	5
Insufficient funds	14	6
Insufficient staff	8	4
No interest from LGs	2	11
No interest from NGOs	22	3
No opportunities yet	26	10
No perceived benefit	9	14
No trust in the other	3	9
Not cost-effective	2	3
Too much trouble	1	10
Worked in the past, discontinued because of funding problems	1	0
Worked in the past; partner did not uphold end of agreement	3	2
Worked in the past; goal achieved	1	2
Others	2	9

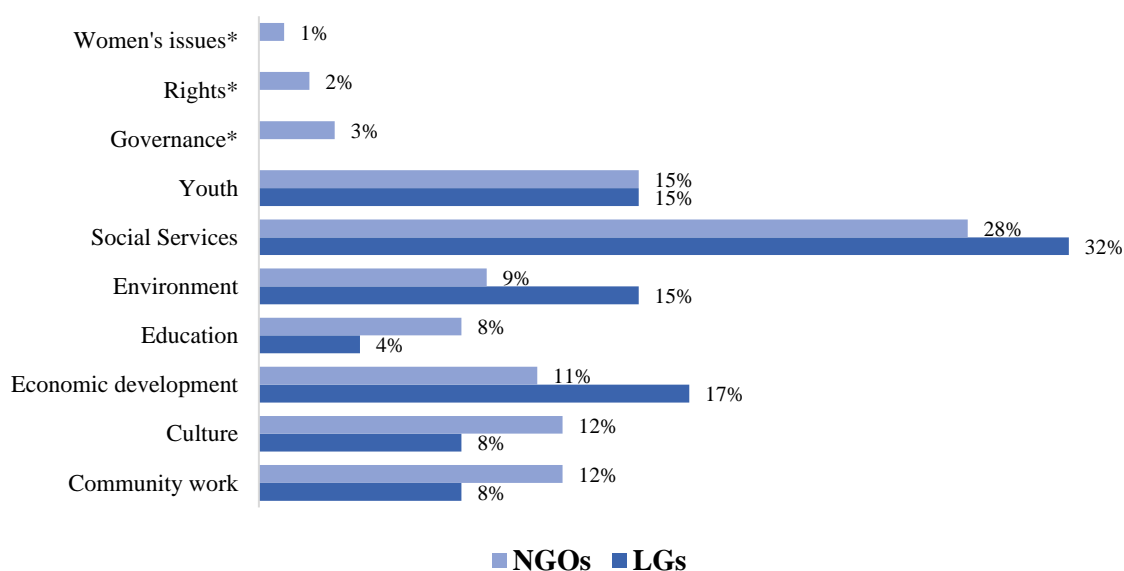
2. Discussion about and interest in future collaboration

Among the LGs and NGOs that do not work with the other sector, most NGO respondents (60.3%) have discussed this subject with other officials in their own sector and 70% are interested in working with LGs in the future. As for LGs, 74% are interested in future interactions although only 43% have discussed these relations with other LG officials.



2. Useful service areas for future collaboration

Both LG and NGO respondents tend to name *social services* and *youth development* as the two service areas most useful for future collaboration. Social services include: health, senior services, housing and handicapped. LGs are also interested in collaboration for *economic development* and the *environment*. The largest priority service gaps for the two groups are *environment* and *economic development*.

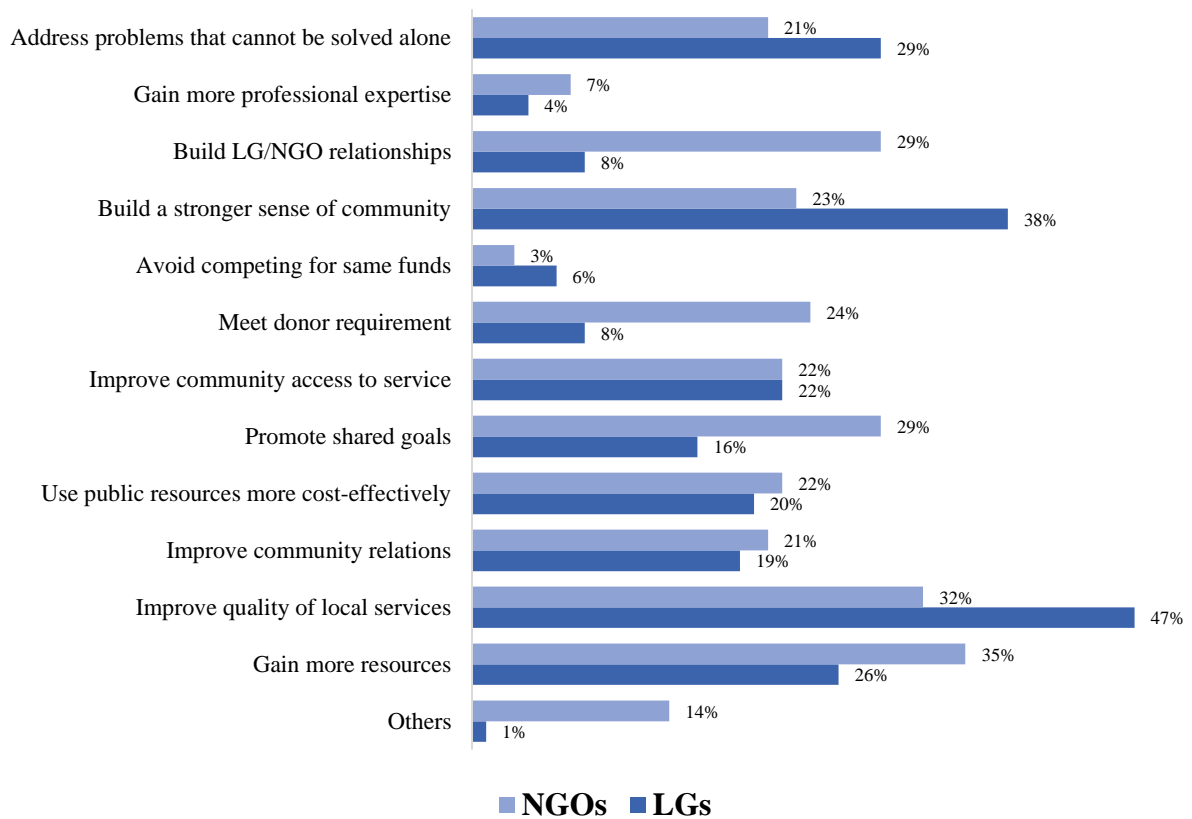


* No response was given by LG respondents

Perceptions of Collaborators

1. Reasons to collaborate

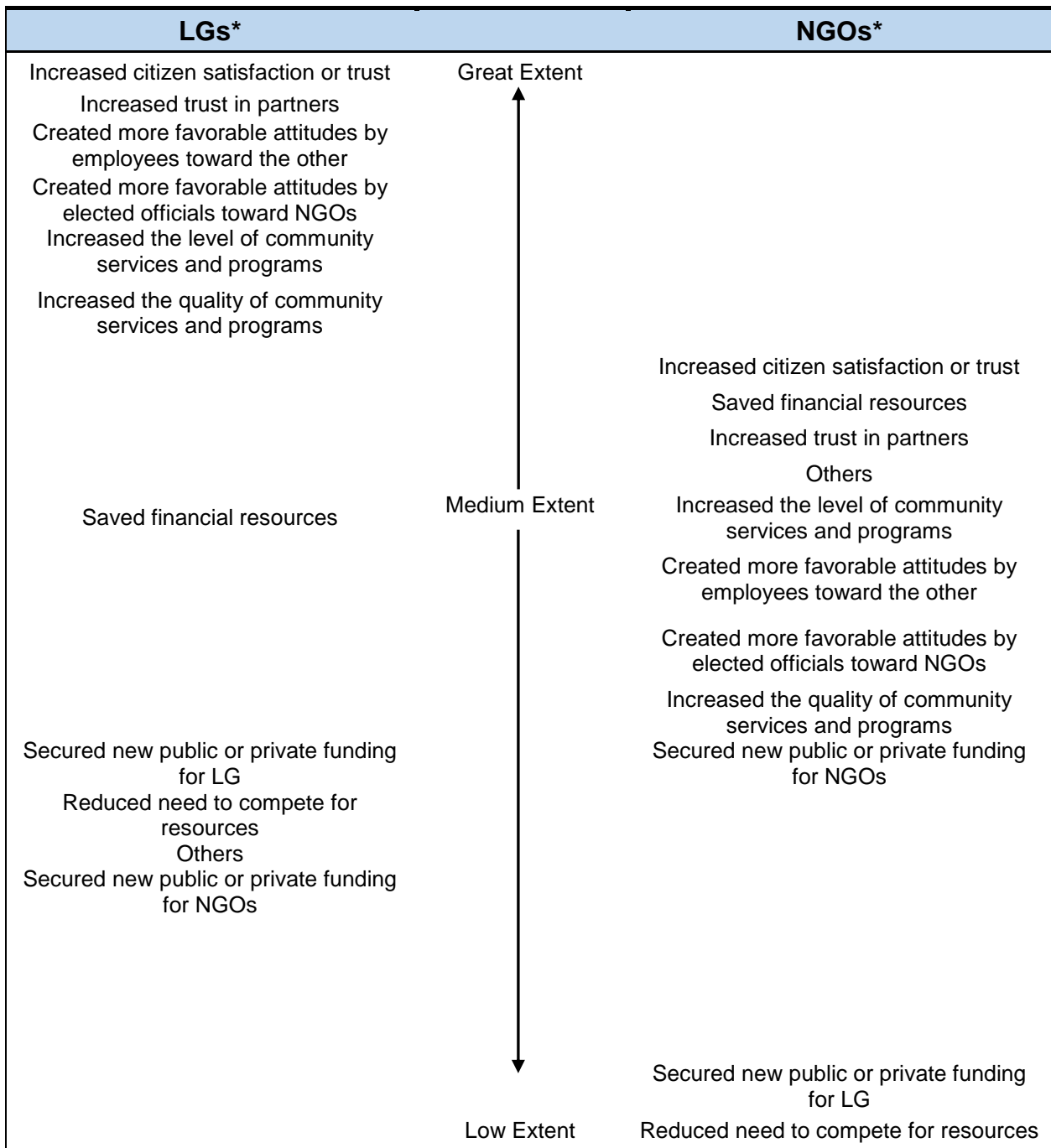
Both LG and NGO respondents report the *improvement of the quality of local services* as a main driver of collaboration. However, among NGOs, *gaining more resources or funding* is slightly more important, followed by *building better NGO-LG relations* and *promoting shared goals* are more important to NGO respondents. For LG respondents, *building a stronger sense of community* and *addressing problems that cannot be addressed alone* are also important factors. Some NGO respondents identified *political demands or requests* as well as the *authority and legitimacy of the elected LGs* as other factors behind their engagement with LGs (*Others*).



2. *The accomplishments of collaboration*

Both NGOs and LGs report *increased citizen satisfaction or trust* as the chief accomplishment of their collaborations. Both sectors are also positive about *increased trust in partners*. NGOs are more likely than LGs to perceive *saved financial resources* as a major collaboration accomplishment. Both sets of respondents rank *reducing need to compete for resources* as among the least successful elements of their collaborations.

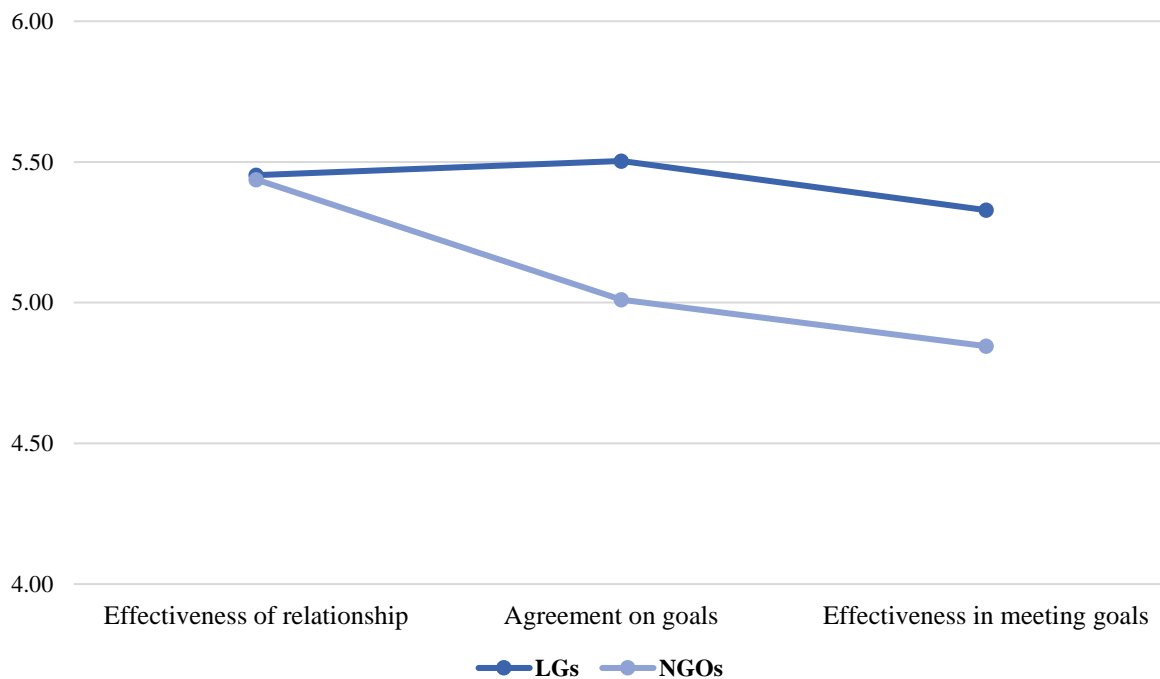
NGOs do not necessarily perceive LGs as either sources of or competitors for funding; this might be due to the fact that NGOs rely on funding sources that are typically distinct and, to a certain extent, not accessible to LGs. Yet these inter-sector relations *save NGOs financial resources* and help them *increase the level*—but not necessarily the *quality—of community services* and programs to a certain extent. Some respondents mention that working with LGs helps NGOs *meet donor requirements* (*Others*).



* as ranked by each set of respondents

3. Assessments of Effectiveness

On average, LG and NGO respondents share a positive perception of the effectiveness of their relationships. However, they diverge in assessing their agreement on goals and their relationships' effectiveness in meeting goals. In both cases, NGOs assess these outcomes less positively than their LG counterparts.



4. Barriers to collaboration

LGs and NGOs do not always agree on the barriers inhibiting collaboration. Respondents from both sectors about whether *LGs have constrained authorities* or that NGOs are *more interested in working with the central government*. LGs are also more likely than NGOs to report that they do *not have financial resources* to support a collaboration partner; they tend to perceive an *absence of personal relations* as a barrier to collaboration while NGOs do not.

There is general agreement about a *lack of staff or time* to manage the relationships; this might explain why over a third of respondents in each sector report that *relationships are not sufficiently developed* to support collaboration. While both sets of respondents tend to agree that that *'the other' sometimes provides unreliable or poor quality service*, neither sector is likely to report that *relationships generate loss*

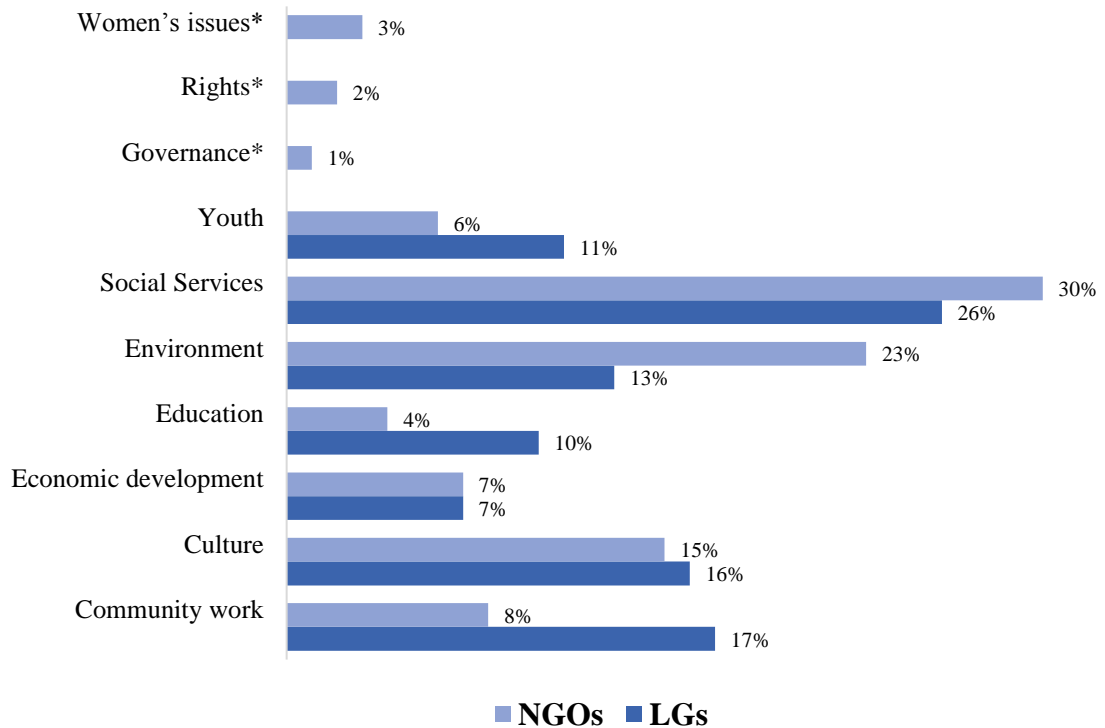
for their organizations. Both sectors' respondents tend to agree *that there is no trust* between the sectors, and they generally agree that the other sector's organization does not *represent the entire local community*.

	LGs			NGOs		
	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Disagree %	Neither	Agree
Competition for resources discourages working together	65	13	22	39	27	34
LG authority constrained	52	18	30	36	22	42
LG do not have financial resources	12	9	79	28	18	54
LG do not have staff or time to manage relations	36	8	56	24	14	62
Negative attitudes discourage engagement	51	19	30	41	19	40
NGOs are interested in working with the central government	28	27	46	57	14	29
Strong enough relationships have not developed yet	42	24	34	52	15	33
The 'other' does not represent the entire community	13	17	70	19	22	59
The 'other' sometimes provide unreliable or poor quality services	33	21	46	36	24	40
The 'other' usually/always provide unreliable or poor quality services	67	18	15	58	24	18
There are no personal relations	36	12	52	78	8	14
There is no trust	60	23	18	54	19	27
Working together, LGs tend to lose	49	21	30	80	14	6
Working together, NGOs tend to lose	63	22	15	61	17	22
Others	0	0	100	5	4	91

Structural Arrangements of Collaboration

1. Service areas of existing collaboration

Both LG and NGO respondents report that they collaborate most often for *social services* (which include: health, senior services, housing and handicapped). In terms of other leading service areas for current collaboration, NGOs report *environment* while LGs report basic *community work* and *culture*. It should be noted here that the central Ministry of Social Affairs provides contracts and grants to NGOs and has service centers across the country to help deliver social services.



* No response was given by LG respondents

2. Modes of collaboration

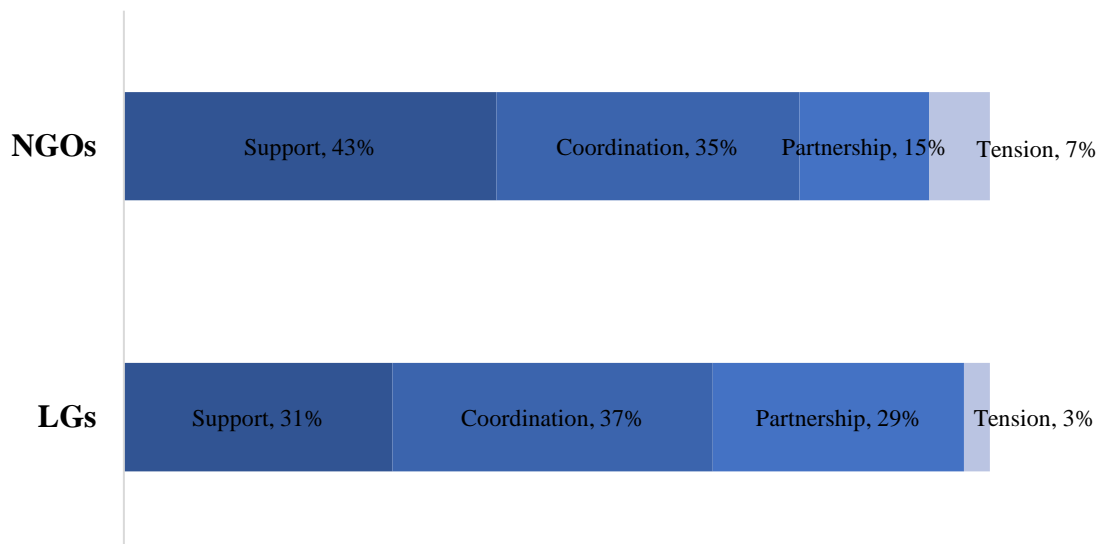
The respondents in the two surveys differ in identifying the primary mode of collaboration. One-fifth of LG respondents report their governments are engaged in *joint service delivery* with NGOs while a quarter of NGO respondents report *receiving grants* as their primary manner of engagement with LGs. The two sides, however, both agree that *exchange of information* and *sharing workspace* (mainly when the LG provides its facilities to NGOs) are also dominant means of working together.

Ways	LGs	NGOs
	%	
Grants	6	21
Joint service delivery	20	8
Information exchange	18	17
Share workspace	19	20
Joint recruitment of staff, volunteers	10	2
Joint case management/coordination	5	5
Formal service contract	2	1
Provide equipment	2	6
Joint fundraising	1	1
Joint program development	2	5
Joint purchasing/selling	1	3
Joint advocacy to central government	2	3
Moral support	14	6
Issue licenses and permits	-*	3

* No response was given

3. Nature of the relationship

The overwhelming majority of both sets of respondents describe their relationships as *supportive* and *coordination-oriented*; few report high levels of *tension*. However, LG responses were more evenly distributed, with nearly a third describing the relationships as *partnerships*, which is a more elaborate and effort-intense relationship as compared to coordination.



4. Funding

Most of the 248 LGs report that they do not fund NGOs. Among the 25% that did, 14% of respondents report *grants* and 11% cite *contracts*, as the primary funding mechanism. A majority (51%) of NGOs report that they received no LG funding. It is plausible then to assume that while NGOs and LGs work together, these relations are not based on funding; when funding is involved, LGs are not necessarily the source.

		YES	NO
		%	
NGOs		49	51
LGs	Grants	14	75
	Contracts	11	

5. LG motives for funding NGOs.

Both LG and NGO respondents cite the *need for services and the importance of supporting these organizations* as primary motives for LG funding, with *the fulfillment of the mandate of the organization* a less common reason. For both groups, *lack of opportunities and lack of resources* are the primary barriers to funding, with *the absence of or weak communication* as a less serious problem.

Category	LGs	NGOs
	%	
Lack of opportunities	21	18
Lack of resources	43	17
Lack of communication	4	5
Need for services	19	26
Importance of support	7	12
Fulfillment of Mandate	2	8

6. Number of service delivery collaborations and individual collaborators involved

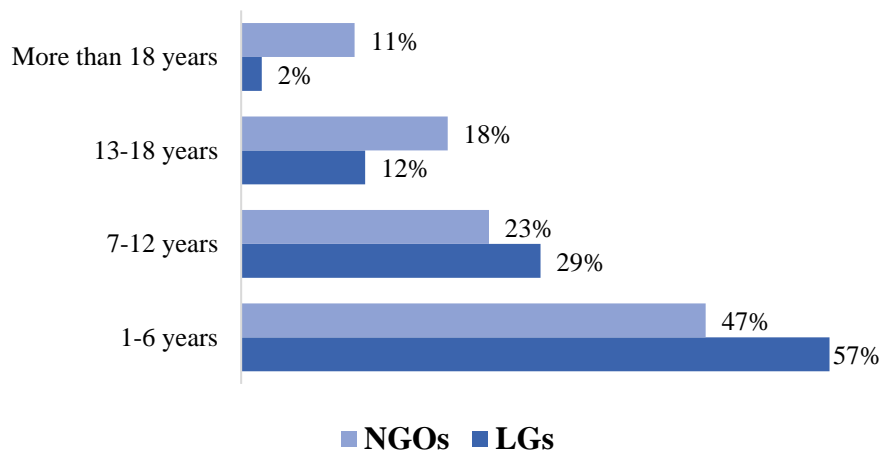
The overwhelming majority of both LGs and NGOs have *four or fewer* service delivery collaborations with each other; in most cases, it is *two*. Each collaboration

can include multiple entities working together; the overwhelming majority of both LGs and NGOs indicate working with *four or fewer* of these entities from the other sector during a fiscal year. There are some exceptions; one LG indicated that they partner with 18 NGOs for culture-related services and one NGO works with nearly 50 LGs in the area of environment.

No.	Service Delivery Collaborations		Collaborators	
	LGs	NGOs	LGs	NGOs
1	51	69	37	52
2-4	36	25	41	34
5-7	10	1	11	6
8-10	2	1	5	2
More than 10	2	3	5	6

7. Length (age) of collaborative relations

Both groups report that their relationships typically have been in force for *less than 6 years*. It should be noted that local elections in Lebanon take place every 6 years.

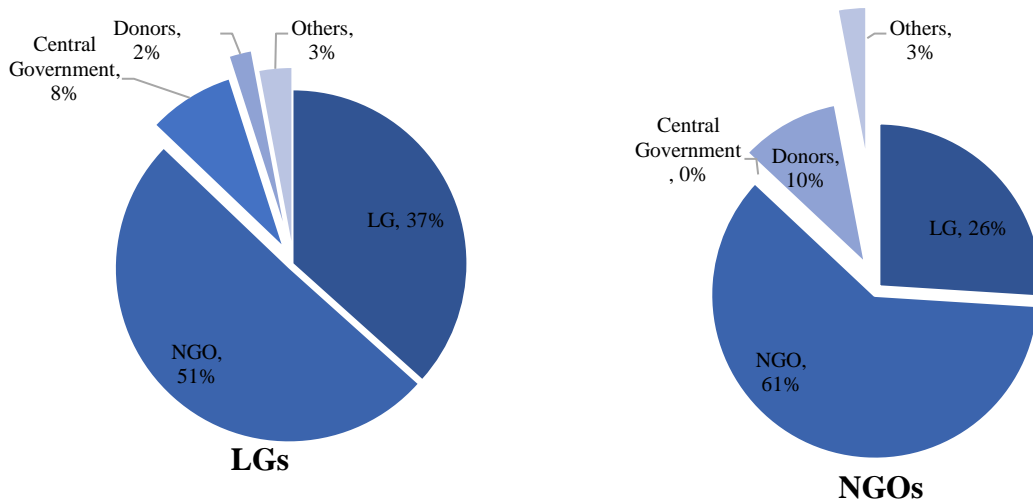


Answers between were rounded up to a full year for data comparison purposes, including those of less than 11 months.

Governance of Collaboration

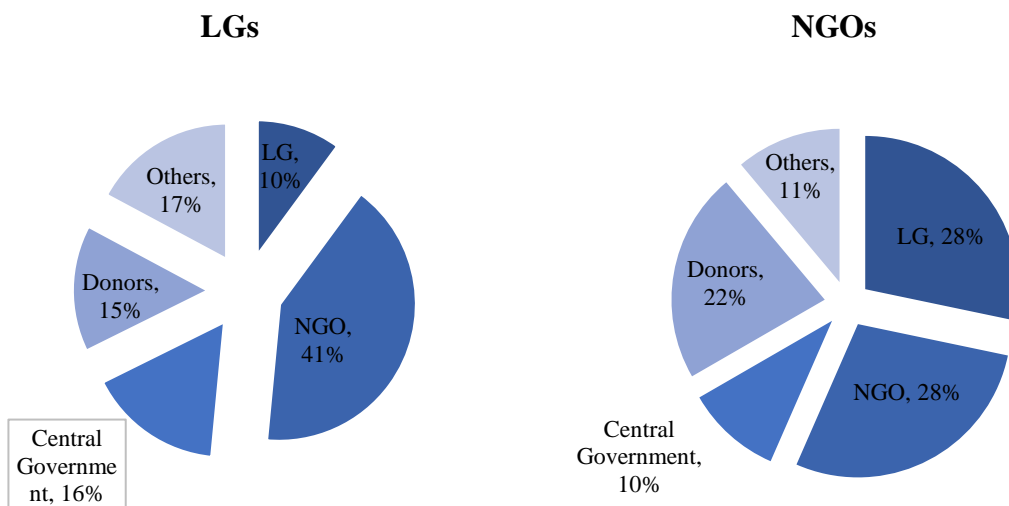
1. Initiation

Both LG and NGO respondents agree that NGOs tend to initiate these relationships. It appears that the role of other entities (central government or donors) in initiating these relations is limited.



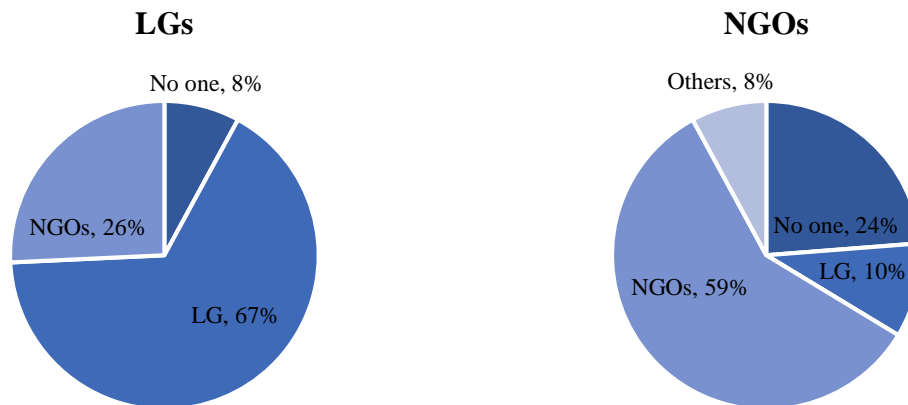
2. Funding

Reflecting their limited financial resources, only 10% of LGs indicate that they are chief funders of these relationships. The main source of funding for the 17% who report *Others* is joint funding from both donors and central government. NGO respondents view LGs and NGOs as equally important funding sources. The main source of funding for the 11% who report “others” is individual donations or private sponsorship.



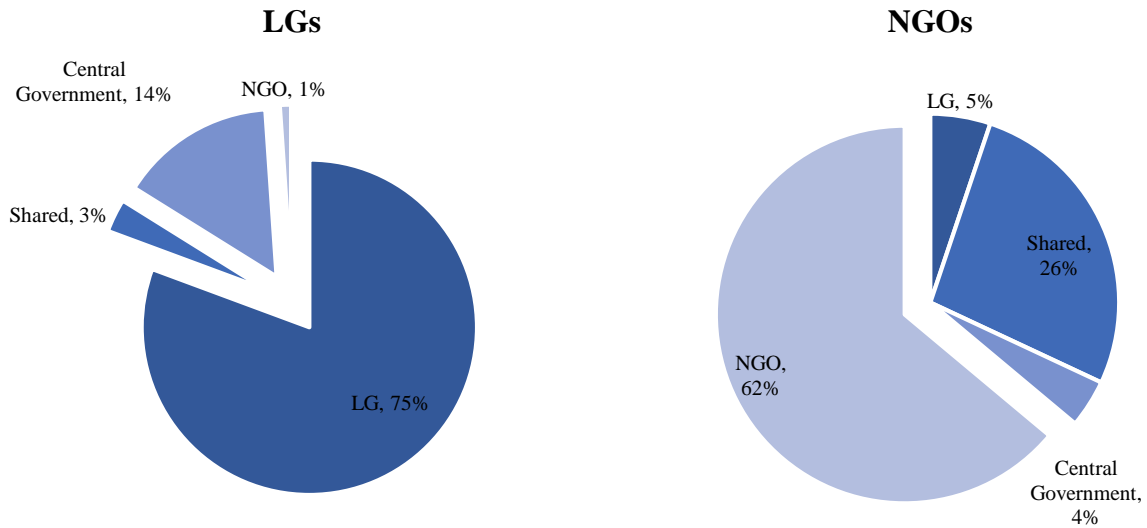
3. Coordination

Each sector's respondents tend to claim credit for coordinating efforts and relations. However, almost one-third of the respondents point out that there is no coordination taking place in the targeted service area. It should be noted that 8% of NGO respondents indicate that the donor is responsible for coordination (*Others*).



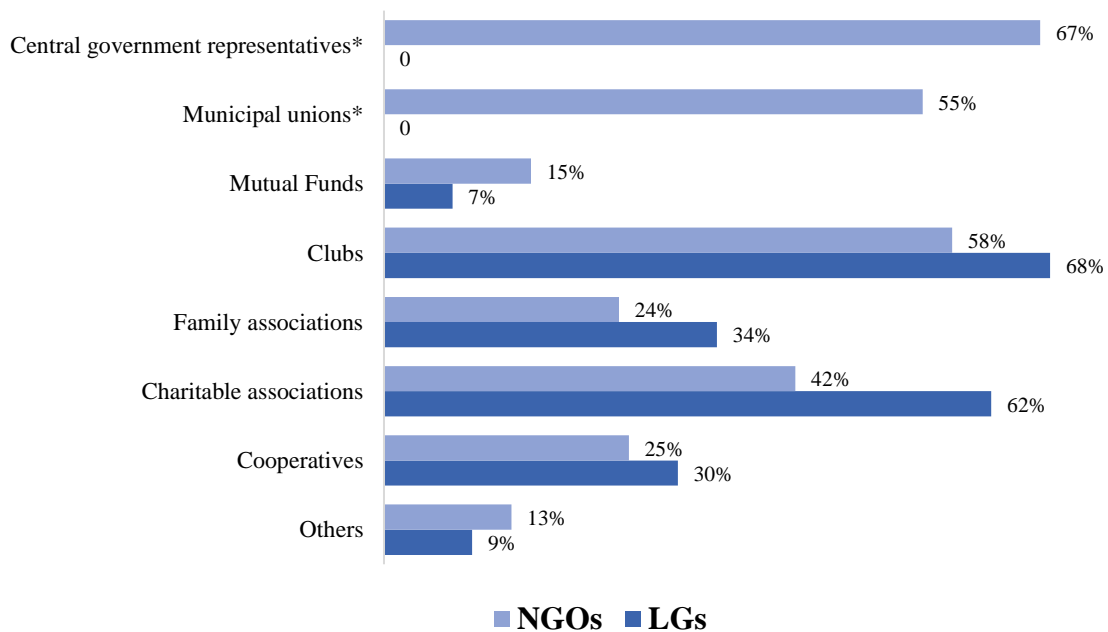
4. Decision-making

Both sets of respondents consider themselves as the main decision-makers in their collaborations. Thus, there are stark differences in perceptions on this dimension. Fifteen percent of LG respondents identify the central government as the chief decision-maker for these collaborations. Almost one-quarter of NGO respondents considered the decision-making authority to be shared.



Collaboration with Other Entities

The majority of LG respondents list *clubs* and *charitable associations* as entities with which they work. For NGOs, *clubs*, *municipal unions* (umbrella of multiple LGs), as well as the *representatives of the central government* in the regions dominate the list. Other entities both sides work with include the *private sector*.



* These options were not available as survey responses since LG are legally required to work with central government representatives and municipal unions officials

Collaboration with International NGOs (INGOs)

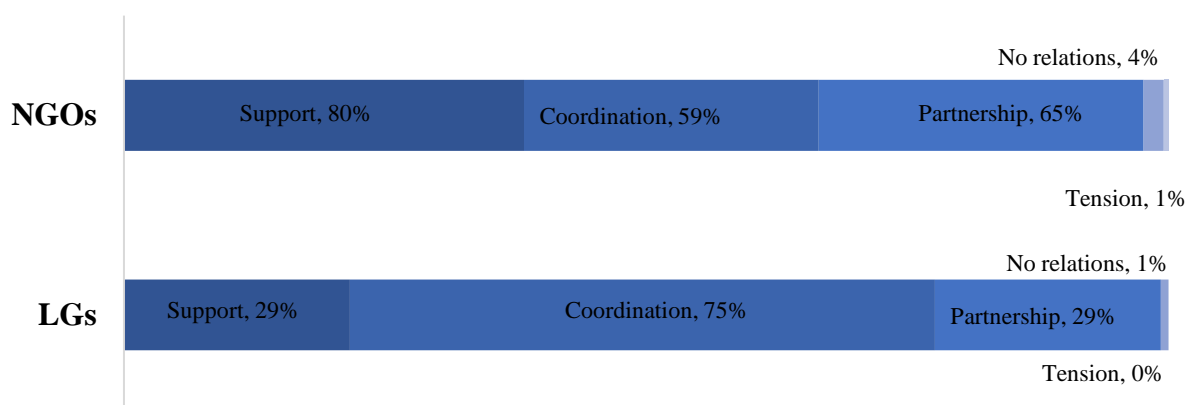
1. Existence of relations

The overwhelming majority of NGOs interact with International NGOs at some level; by comparison, only half of LGs do so.

	YES %	NO %
NGOs	73	27
LGs	49	51

2. Nature of relationships

LGs' report *coordination* as the dominant type of relationship with INGOs; by comparison, NGOs report more even distributions of collaborations as *support*, *coordination*, and *partnership*.



Respondents could select more than one response.

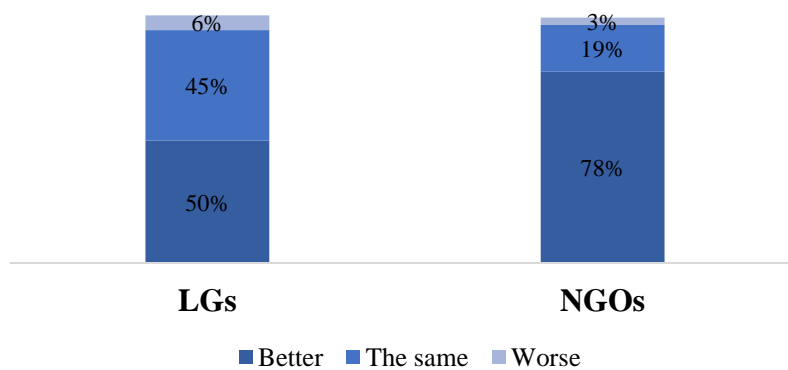
3. Effectiveness of the relationships

There is an overwhelming favorable assessment of the effectiveness of the relationship with INGOs among both LG and NGO respondents (69% and 89% respectively- ratings 5-7).

Scale	LGs	NGOs
	%	
1 (Not at all effective)	4	1
2	1	1
3	4	3
4	23	6
5	24	26
6	24	31
7 (very effective)	21	33

4. NGOs-INGOs relations vs. NGO-LG relations

Most NGO respondents rate their relationships with INGOs as *better* than those with LGs. Only a small percentage of both LG and NGO respondents perceive relationships with INGOs as *worse* than their relationships with one another.



Part II: Institutional Information

1. Descriptive data in comparison to other organizations within the same sector

		LGs %	NGOs %
Budget size	Small	60	49
	Medium	35	40
	Large	5	11
# of staff	Small	71	70
	Medium	23	25
	Large	6	5
Type of area	Rural	77	46
	Suburban	15	29
	Urban	8	25
Level of operation	Local		42
	Regional		23
	National		35

2. NGOs field of operation

Service area	NGOs %
Community work	2
Culture	10
Economic development	14
Education	7
Environment	14
Social Services	27
Youth	6
Governance	7
Rights	8
Women's issues	5

3. Institutional Arrangements

Arrangements	LGs %	NGOs %
Membership in municipal union/ local networking bodies	99	88
Membership in regional/international unions/networking body	6	87
Agreements with twin cities/international NGOs	8	80
Liaison officer/position with LG	4	58

Part III: Respondents' Personal Profiles

1. Current position

Position	NGOs %
ED	14
President	44
VP	6
Senior Staff	8
Staff	28

Position	LGs %
Staff	23
Elected Mayor	32
Elected Vice Mayor	14
Elected Municipal Member	31

2. Length of tenure in current position

Years	LGs %	NGOs %
Two years or less	41	26
3-6 years	11	33
7-12 years	27	27
13 or more	20	14

3. Tenure with the organization

Years	LGs %	NGOs %
Two years or less	31	11
3-6 years	11	21
7-12 years	33	31
13 or more	25	37

4. Previous professional experiences in other sectors

Sector	LGs %	NGOs %
LG	-*	7
NGOs	16	36
Public Sector	28	10
Private Sector	71	47
Others	0	23

* No response was given

5. Level of education

Level	LGs %	NGOs %
High School or less	44	14
Bachelor's	37	43
Master's	15	29
Ph.D. or equivalent	4	15

6. Gender

Gender	LGs %	NGOs %
Female	17	45
Male	83	55

7. Membership in NGO/LG

	LGs %	NGOs %
Yes	26	8
No	74	92

BEIRUT ROUNDTABLE REPORT

Representatives of 30 NGOs, LGs, central government, and international organizations participated in a roundtable in Beirut, Lebanon on May 25, 2017. The purpose of the roundtable was to discuss the nature of relationships between NGOs and LGs in Lebanon. Four overarching themes emerged from the discussions.

It is all about Politics. All parties at the roundtable agreed that politics plays a substantial role in NGO and LG relationships and affects the provision of services. Political influence is especially constraining for LGs, interfering in their relationships with NGOs. For example, tensions may arise in LG and NGO relationships due to clashes in political views. LGs often regard NGOs as inexperienced in their understanding of internal municipal affairs, politics, and public administration, especially in rural areas. NGOs often disregard the role of LGs in local contexts and limit working with them due to donor requirements or necessity.

Decentralization is still nascent. Participants emphasized the need to push for further decentralization and empowerment of LGs. LGs in Lebanon have very limited authority for the execution of plans and projects; central government approval is required for the release of funds exceeding \$12,000. Consequently, NGOs seeking municipal support are often discouraged from collaboration and time bound projects are often delayed because of constrained local autonomy. Participants agree that work with the central government (widely perceived as corrupt) is both unproductive and politically charged; consequently NGO-LG relationships are more likely relative to NGO-central government relationships. Participants agreed on the need to further empower LGs to engage in the development of local communities.

Donors' impact is critical. Most of the NGO-LG relationships and collaborations are motivated or stimulated by donors or international organizations. NGOs and LGs are working with one another, not necessarily due to mutual interest, deliberate decision or voluntary action, but rather under the pressure of

international donors' or organizations' priorities and agendas. Consequently, NGO-LG relationships often lack structure and sustainability and are time-bound, project-based, and short-term. Participants expressed the need to establish long term collaborative relationships between NGOs and LGs that are driven by the two sectors; a clear pathway on how to establish and govern such a solid relationship is not clear. Donors should invest in these relationships recognizing the relationships as priorities with inherent value, instead of using them to carry on their agendas.

There is a clear interest in collaboration. NGOs and LGs want to work together and enhance their relationships. There was overall agreement that NGOs and LGs need to work together to achieve mutual goals. It was also agreed that collaboration leads to enhanced services and outcomes for local communities. However, challenges include lack of knowledge about the work of the organizations from the other sector, distrust in the work or credibility of the other sector's organization, lack of trained human resources, lack of a community development perspective or a vision for the future. Trust was a major theme discussed during the roundtable. Causes of distrust between LGs and NGOs include lack of knowledge of the other party, different expectations of collaboration and outcomes, and clashes over funding sources and level of financial contribution.

DC ROUNDTABLE REPORT

Representatives of approximately 12 federal agencies, multilateral and international organizations, and nonprofits participated in a roundtable in Washington, DC on October 5, 2017. The purpose of the roundtable was to acquire nuanced insights on the nature of NGOs-LGs relations, in general. Three themes emerged from the discussion.

There is tension between political and technical expertise. Managing the technical expertise of NGOs and the political expertise of LGs is important for relationship building. Tension surfaces in relationships because NGOs perceive politics as antithetical to their mission and values, discouraging them from collaborating with LGs. Likewise, LGs agree that NGOs have the technical expertise that makes relationships successful, so long as NGOs' idealism does not overrun the realities of the political environment. Managing the political environment is important for NGOs because of the role the central government plays in disbursing funds and resources to municipal governments. NGOs are tasked with balancing the political constraints imposed on LGs from the central government, while still pursuing their own mission.

There is a need to move beyond service delivery. The salience of service delivery during discussions on NGO and LG relations is recognized; delivering services to populations in need is the essence of development. However, 'development as freedom' should put emphasis on equity, transparency, inclusion, and accountability - values that are often absent in the discourses (as well as shy in the survey responses). Service delivery is favored by donors and implementers because it is safe and likely does not result in conflict; but holding governmental entities accountable is an important role of NGOs. NGOs might be reluctant to do this because they are dependent on government for resources; they try to avoid creating friction that could affect their ability to provide vital services. NGOs are therefore tasked with managing the tension between politics and good governance.

Again, donor's impact is critical. There is a need for a long-term commitment to strengthening the capacity of local partners. Because most international NGOs will be gone in a number of years, their local NGO partners need to be empowered and equipped to make long-term changes and remain sustainable. Therefore, it is important to begin every development initiative with a good design, which necessitates good data and knowledge of the local context—something that is oftentimes unavailable. Moreover, the common tension between donors' desire for high accountability and success and implementers' abilities and difficulties on the ground is critical. For example, extreme reporting requirements sometimes compel international NGOs to implement projects by themselves instead of working through local NGOs. Hence, donor agencies need to increase their tolerance for failure and allow for greater flexibility

COMMENTARIES

More Decentralization, Better Relations

By Victoria Zwein^a

Even during the Lebanese war, when almost the whole country was paralyzed, both LGs and NGOs stayed active and worked together to keep the situation normal as much as possible- at least at the level of towns and cities. However, this has been changing in the recent years as rumors or claims of corruption are raised—and the garbage crisis in 2015 is a clear example.

We are noticing the lack of trust between different stakeholders especially between NGOs and any governmental agencies including local authorities. This was highlighted in the survey: 36% of the NGOs saw no benefit in collaborating with LGs and 24% had no trust in them. But it is important to highlight the fact that when collaboration happened it was successful and the assessments of the effectiveness of existing relationships are favorable.

The disappointing finding has to do with the ways LGs and NGOs collaborated together. Less than one fifth on each side report collaborating by sharing information; information is crucial for any project to succeed; resources and efforts are often wasted when information is not shared.

Based on my experience as an elected LG official, LGs should be taking the initiative to reach out to and work with NGOs on local development. The turning point would be to deal with NGOs as real partners in and throughout the decision-making process, and not only for project implementation.

The important point that needs to be highlighted is the decentralization. In my opinion, once decentralization is implemented, properly and effectively, LGs would

^aSin El Fil Municipal Council Member- Lebanon

be looking for each opportunity to partner with different stakeholders, especially NGOs and private sector. The process would become easier and faster, and, therefore, more efficient. Under the current system, any partnership LGs are involved in, especially those that entail financial commitments—regardless if LGs are contributing or receiving funds—requires a long process and takes a long time. Complicated processes and bureaucratic routines are key obstacles to real partnership between NGOs and LGs in Lebanon.

Funding, Politics, and Tension.

By Jawad Bou Ghanem^a and Sawsan Bou Fakhreddine^b

Many factors shape the relationships between NGOs and LGs in Lebanon. In fact, the mutual interest of both in partnering with each other is vital. The willingness to build partnerships and the extent to which both sides collaborate are influenced by several variables. This commentary focuses on three main relationship elements: funding, politics, and tension.

Funding is highly contingent on the size of NGOs and their scope of work. LGs usually approach big NGOs to seek support, while the opposite is true for small NGOs. Therefore, the research should consider NGO size especially in relation to funding. Big NGOs working in social service and sustainable development usually build solid partnerships with LGs based on mutual interest and community needs. In general, NGOs and local authorities do not compete over financial resources knowing that both of them are interested in building a partnership in order to gain access to international funds. Most of the international donors encourage partnerships and participatory approaches to local development as critical factors for success.

The fact that the Lebanese society is highly politicized manifests itself in the structure, function, and practices of several LGs. Many LG councils are affiliated with powerful political parties which influence their decisions to a high extent. This fact could be either a barrier or a catalyst to partnerships with certain NGOs. For example, NGOs can encounter barriers in certain areas as local authorities are reluctant to cooperate with them due to geographical and political prejudices; or LGs were pressured by political parties to disengage from working with international entities. Therefore, the influence of politics on shaping NGO-LG relationships needs to be further explored and addressed due to the implications for the democratic process and the free will of communities.

^aCoordinator of Sustainable Development Program, Association for Forests, Development and Conservation (AFDC)- Lebanon

^bDirector General, Association for Forests, Development and Conservation (AFDC)- Lebanon

In general, tensions in relationships between NGOs and LGs arise due to the lack of coordination and potential conflicts of interest. Some LGs view big NGOs as a threat to their own local power, especially when these NGOs tend, intentionally or unintentionally, to carry out community activities without coordinating with the local authorities. This has been taking place more often in the last few years with the influx of Syrian refugees; the scattered and isolated responses by some NGOs are not only leading to tension with LGs but also reflecting on the operations of international NGOs.

For better relations between NGOs and LGs in Lebanon, these three issues need to be resolved to the satisfaction of both side.