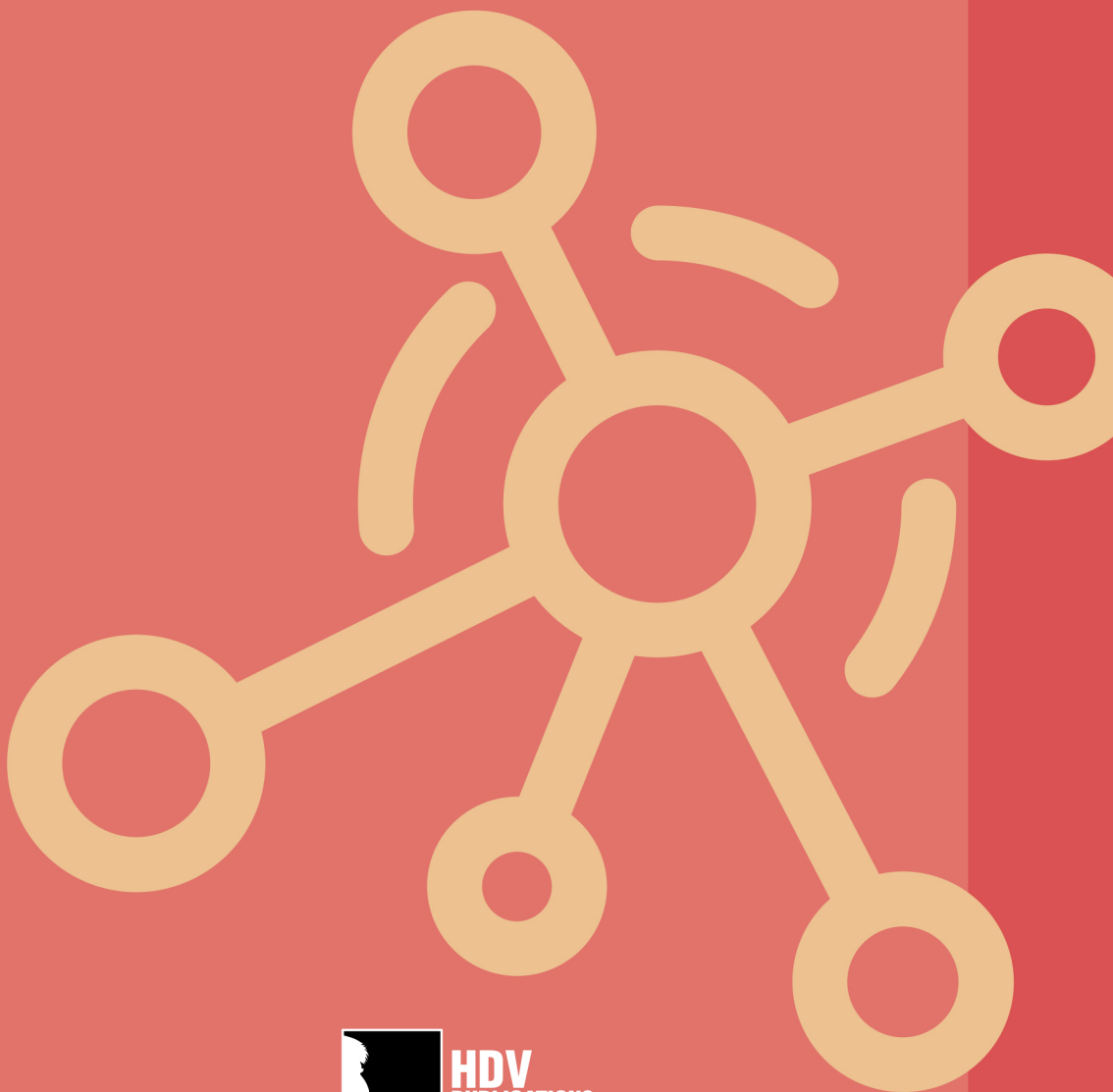# CIVIL SOCIETY DEBATES:

Current issues, needs, and suggested solutions

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HRANT DINK FOUNDATION

After Hrant Dink was murdered on January 19, 2007 in front of the offices of his newspaper Agos, the Hrant Dink Foundation was established in order that such grief might never be experienced again, and in honor of his speech and courage toward the realization of his dream of a more just and free world. The demand for democracy for all, with their ethnic, religious, cultural and sexual differences, constitutes the fundamental principle of the Foundation.

The Foundation is working for a Turkey in which freedom of expression is utilized to its fullest; where all differences are encouraged, survive and multiply, and where conscience is paramount in our view of the past and the present. At the Hrant Dink Foundation, our 'struggle for which we live' is for a future dominated by dialog, peace and a culture of empathy.

CIVIL SOCIETY DEBATES:
CURRENT ISSUES, NEEDS, AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

CIVIL SOCIETY DEBATES:

Current issues, needs, and suggested solutions

ASULIS DISCOURSE, DIALOGUE, DEMOCRACY LABORATORY

Since the day it was founded, Hrant Dink Foundation aims to improve the culture of co-existence through combatting discrimination and hate speech. Developing various inclusive and pluralistic applications and contents for people of different religious beliefs, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and sexual orientations to coexist equally, with their differences makes up the main axis of the Foundation's works. We report hate speech in the media and try to raise awareness, knowing that discrimination starts in the language and that it can lead to destructive consequences. We continue our efforts as part of ASULIS Discourse, Dialogue, Democracy Laboratory, which we founded in order to create a space for such studies and to produce together. The name ASULIS is a combination of two verbs in Armenian: *asel (to say)* and *lisel (to listen)*. ASULIS is a social sciences laboratory that combats discrimination, conducts studies on discourse and supports other studies in this field.

"Empowering CSOs and sparking change for tackling discrimination and promoting diversity" project was initiated in 2019 as part of ASULIS. The project, financially supported by the European Union and carried out in partnership with Sabancı University Istanbul Policy Center and Olof Palme International Center, aims to empower and support civil society actors combatting discrimination. Information sharing and transfer of experience, strengthening the communication between local and national civil society organizations that focus on human rights and democracy in Turkey and reaching the masses are among this project's objectives.

This project gathered civil society professionals, academics, experts and human rights activists to discuss fundamental approaches in civil society, civil society's boundaries and responsibilities, organization around different identities, changing aspects of the civil field, perception of civil society in Turkey, philanthropy and inner dynamics of civil society organizations as part of the online panel series "Civil Society Sharing Screen" organized between March-November 2021.

This booklet is authored by Onur Sazak and includes the author's comments as well as the important points discussed during the panels.

You can watch the videos of the panel series on www.hrantdink.org/en.

Contents

RECONTEXTUALIZING CIVIL SOCIETY
ACTORS, STRATEGIES, POLICIES

E. Fuat Keyman

In recent years, we have observed a diminished interest in civil society in both the academic and public realms. Interest in civil society, which progressively grew and became more widespread starting from the 1980s through the 1990s and into the early 2000s, has been gradually waning since the 2010s. This observation is true both on a global scale and for Turkey specifically. That said, the developments we have been experiencing, the risks we have been facing and the processes we have been undergoing since the beginning of 2020s, that have been affecting the entire world, reveal the need to revitalize civil society both as an influential actor and as a field in itself. We can say that three distinct developments, that are nonetheless connected to each other, support the notion that interest in civil society needs to be rekindled: first, the Covid-19 pandemic; second, global warming and the climate crisis, for which doomsday warnings are now issued frequently by international organizations; and third, the threat of a second cold war or a third world war, now being brought up even by governments and their leaders, with Russia's war on Ukraine and the systemic negative impacts of war on basic needs such as food and on the global economy.

How can civil society be revived? In this study, I will seek to answer this question. In the broadest sense, I will recommend that in order to revive it, civil society needs to be recontextualized within the framework of its organizational structure, its role as an actor and its course of action. Antonio Gramsci's assertion in the early 20th century that "we are in an interregnum where the old is dying, but the new cannot be born", still rings true today. First with Covid-19 and then with the war in Ukraine, the globalized world is now experiencing the end of the 'post-World War II liberal order', which was established in 1945 based on the foundations of American hegemony and the West. War and systemic change are happening simultaneously. The old is ending, but the question "What will the new look like?" still awaits an answer. The answer becomes even more convoluted as the issues of the pandemic, global warming and climate change, and

inequality, with unemployment and the food crisis, pile up. In light of all these developments, risks and challenges, there is a need for civil society, with its transformative capacity for establishing the 'new' based on the principles of democracy, justice and peace. However, for such a civil society, we must first learn Marx's assertion that defines the "interaction between the actor and the structure", stating that "actors make their own history, but they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves", and then initiate the recontextualization process according to the relevant actor-environment-capacity-strategy. This study will touch on the basic parameters of the process for recontextualizing civil society in the form of notes.

Let's start with the reasons behind the recently diminished interest in civil society. .

A Neutralized Civil Society: Three Challenges
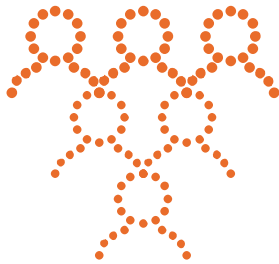
In the fields of academic and public research and discussion, we can clearly observe an increased interest in civil society that started back in the 1970s, gained pace during the 1980-2010 period, after which this trend was reversed, particularly during the last ten years, with said interest waning and, more significantly, civil society losing its impact and becoming neutralized. Considered to be among the most important actors in the processes of 'Democratization', 'Globalization' and 'Europeanization' in the European Union and Turkey during the 1980-2010 period, civil society has fallen off the agenda and is becoming less and less effective since 2010. The pendulum no longer swings towards civil society.

I believe there are **three** main reasons behind this transformation:

First of all, the beginning of the process in which we deviate from democracy, the strengthening hand of competitive authoritarianism and populism, and the destructive nature of polarization. This period of 'deviations from democracy' and 'democratic recession' on a global scale, in which an approach to politics is implemented based on 'strong governance', where friends and foes are clearly identified and separated from each other, where autocratic leaders gain more power, where the system of balance and supervision is weakened, and where security and economy come before democracy, an approach for which Turkey can be given as one of the most cogent examples, and which is not only seen in developing democracies but also in developed democracies such as the Unit-

ed States and certain EU member states (Hungary, Poland), has an immensely negative impact on civil society.

Deviation from democracy, combined with the destructive issue of polarization, an administration based on strong governance benefiting from this destructive polarization, society being pulled into political, cultural, even emotional extremes and identities, and an approach to politics based on separating friends from foes, are neutralizing civil society.

The centralization of power based on governance, lack of control and destructive polarization create a major challenge for civil society, and failing to respond to this challenge, civil society becomes increasingly ineffective.

Secondly: the hegemonic power of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, which considers the free market, growth, profit and the economic as the main descriptors of individual and social relationships, reduces society to a marketplace, ignoring issues such as public interest, basic needs, etc., and equates politics and public administration with managing corporations, still managed to maintain its hegemony on the national, regional and global scale despite all of its issues and the 2008 economic crisis.

We can see that in the 2010s, neoliberalism was linked to competitive authoritarianism and a deviation from democracy. In the examples of the USA, the UK, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Brazil and India, populist leaders and administrations that took the side of competitive authoritarianism found their economic rationale in the neoliberal market economy and economic growth.

Neoliberalism has affected civil society adversely both in terms of corporate and financial capacity, and legitimacy. Falling into the clutches of competitive authoritarianism and neoliberalism, civil society has faced the issue of sustainability and has experienced a decline in its ability to make an impact through policymaking.

Thirdly, and perhaps even more important than external challenges such as neoliberalism and the deviation from democracy, the protests, activism and demonstrations that started with the Arab Spring that emerged in Tunisia and Egypt back in 2010, continuing with the Gezi Movement in Turkey, including examples at the global scale ranging from the Maidan Uprising in Ukraine, to the USA and Hong Kong: all of these movements, although similar in appearance, were protests and events that significantly differed from civil society.

These protests were dynamic and effective actions that were organized quickly and made good use of social media tools, continuing for a period of time and creating their own norms with intersubjective communication, bringing activism into daily life into the streets and public squares, while also lacking organizational structure or leaders. These movements, which made the streets and public squares into the main arena for politics, resistance and demonstrations, bringing together different identities, without relying on the parties and actors of the existing democracy, also created an inherent and effective challenge for civil society.

The different features of these movements, which were ignited mainly by young, educated middle-class urbanites--features such as organizational capacity, demands, norms, forms of demonstration, etc.--also highlighted the existing issues of civil society, such as its method of organization and operation, falling behind the zeitgeist, being ponderous, clunky and slow, and having a weak effect. These developments, which occurred in organizational life, and which are, in a sense, related to civil society, also brought forth the necessity to recontextualize civil society as an inherent challenge.

If civil society is to be revived in the face of all these challenges and if this revival is also to include the recontextualization process, what then should the parameters for such a process be? In the following section, I will focus on the parameters for recontextualizing civil society. We can discuss at least four parameters: definition, values, actors, and policies and strategies.

Civil Society: Definition

Civil society, in the broadest sense, is comprised of the organizational structures that run on a voluntary basis outside of government supervision, and which are created by multiple groups and individuals who come together to work on specific subjects. In this regard, it is characterized by the concepts of 'organized community' and 'active citizenship'.

Within the context of its historical development, we can define civil society as an important 'analytic reference point' for understanding and analyzing social life, an important 'strategic-political field' in which the process of democratization is initiated, an actor for good social administration and participatory democracy which is 'expected to be effective', and the 'organizational identity of the concept of active citizenship' that wishes to contribute to its environment, to nature and to social life. I believe that this definition can also apply today and to the process of recontextualizing civil society. I will support this suggestion with references to two important studies that have been carried out on civil society.

According to the definitions given by Michael Edwards and Charles Taylor, who undertook seminal and impactful studies on civil society, civil society is defined based on three different approaches, in addition to being 'outside of state supervision and jurisdiction' and based on the principle of 'volunteering'. The first and *minimalist* approach defines civil society as organizational life outside of state supervision, which is based on volunteering. While this definition is correct, because it includes non-civil organizations and organizations that act according to economic interest or market interests in addition to voluntary organizations, it excludes principles such as non-violence, public interest, democracy, fair and democratic governance, etc. In this sense, it is unable to prevent the exploitation and abuse of civil society at the hands of authoritarian and neoliberal governments and administrations. The second and *maximalist* approach, defines civil society as a 'strategic-political field' for resisting authoritarian administrations and transitioning to democracy without paying regard to organizational life, as we have seen in Southern Europe and Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s, and in Central and Eastern Europe during the 1990s. We need to consider this approach important in the sense that it points to a link between civil society and democratization; however, we have to concede that it is limited and problematic as it ignores organizational life.

The impact of these two approaches to civil society studies prompted Edwards to open his book Civil Society with this question: "*Is civil society one of the most important and key concepts for the 21st century, or is it going to become less and less important and eventually disappear within this century?*"[1] This question is valid and important for both developed western democracies that have transitioned into (or are in the process of transitioning into) post-industrial information societies; it applies as well to present-day Turkey. Today, although we cannot deny its importance in both western democracies and in Turkey, we also have to admit that civil society is at a serious crossroads. At this point, the path to be chosen will affect the future of civil society, and therefore, our answer to Edwards' question. If the path that is chosen is highlighting the importance of civil society in the 21st century, then we have to put civil society through a grinder that is a self-critical, interrogative, but also constructive, process. Only when this dis-

[1] M. Edwards, *Civil Society*, 4th Edition, Boulder, Lynne Rienner, 2020. For Taylor's definition, E. F. Keyman and Şebnem Gümüşçü, *Identity, Democracy and Foreign Policy in Turkey*, London, Rowman Little, 2014.

cussion is carried out on a two-dimensional plane will it be useful and beneficial. In other words, we have to discuss civil society by bringing its issues to light, while at the same time developing a new understanding or model of civil society that will provide a permanent solution to these issues.

In this regard, we require a third approach or a third definition of civil society. This means defining civil society as a structure that (a) is outside of government supervision and is based on the principle of volunteering, (b) works for both human rights and the rights of all living beings, nature, the planet, and therefore for the 'rights to life' or 'rights to coexistence', (c) considers both information-based policy-making and activism together for the 'democratic governance of life', and for this reason, (d) embraces the principles of active citizenship and a flexible organizational social life. This third approach defines civil society as the **organizational identity of active citizenship that works for the democratic governance of life**, and we can conclude that this definition can be used in the process of revitalizing the civil society.

Civil Society and Active-Virtuous Citizenship

Within this third definition, civil society can play an important role in fighting against the issues and risks we face, from global warming to unemployment, from inequality to marginalized identity, by bringing to the forefront not only human-oriented rights but also the rights of all living beings, nature and the planet, their languages, and the concept of active citizenship; in building a general trust across communities and differences against a trust based on identity and community; in increasing the social harmony between the state-society/individual relations and fighting against political and emotional polarization. We can see that in countries where collaboration with civil society is strong, society and individuals obey the rules and norms more, while social harmony gains strength and polarization weakens. This collaboration contributes to a more ethical behavior of individuals and to their sense of solidarity, prompting them to act as **moral selves and virtuous citizens**. A society that acts with more solidarity and responsibility creates an important space of support for the success of societal governance. We can observe that in all examples that have achieved success in the fight for democratic and inclusive governance, there is a well-oiled mechanism for civil society-moral self-virtuous citizenship.

As indicated by the studies and discussions carried out both in Turkey and around the world on the matters of the pandemic, global warming and resistance to war, positive developments in the individuals' relationships with themselves, others and nature highlights the importance of being **moral** and the field of **ethics**. We now better understand the importance of considering the person/subject as a **moral self** and the **relationship between morality and the self** as analyzed in Zygmunt Bauman's work *Postmodern Ethics*[2] and Ian Almond's interesting and seminal book *Sufism and Deconstruction: A Comparative Study of Derrida and Ibn 'Arabi*[3]. İbn 'Arabi and Jacques Derrida find common ground on the importance of the **moral self** in the relationships between the subject-self and subject-nature, in very different periods of time and in very different parts of the world.

Influenced by Emmanuel Levinas, Bauman suggests that the "relationship based on morality" that is established between individuals and themselves, with other individuals and with nature in the fight against critical risks ranging from environmental destruction to violence and war, from economic crisis to poverty and deprivation—we can add the Covid-19 pandemic to that list—has critical importance in achieving success and creating a better world. This relationship is *a relationship defined by responsibility against the environment, dialogue with the other and the effort to understand what is different, and in that sense, "a virtuous and, at its core, ethical" relationship*. According to Levinas, ethics plays a role in the "responsibility for the other"; in other words, "the individual's conception of their relationship with themselves and with their self through the category of the other" and sensing the self as "the other of the Other".

The moral self emerges once we assume responsibility for the other. Each and every one of the efforts and activities, such as working for the rights of life, fighting against marginalization and violence, making policies for basic needs ranging from healthcare to access to food, etc., can be achieved with a moral self and with a sense of responsibility for the other.

2   Zygmunt Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, translation: Alev Türker, Ayrıntı Publishing House, 1998.

3   Ian Almond, *Sufism and Deconstruction: A Comparative Study of Derrida and Ibn 'Arabi*, translation: Kadir Filiz, Ayrıntı Publishing House, 2012.

Civil Society and the New Localism

In Turkey, we live in a world that is both globalized and urbanized. Urbanization, which is currently at 72%, will have transformed the whole world and Turkey into an urbanized society by 2030.

Along with its potential, urbanization also brings serious risks. The terrorism and violence we have been experiencing lately is now in urban areas and thus has become urbanized. The Covid-19 pandemic revealed a very serious and vital risk that we are facing now in urban areas. With urbanization, food and water safety have become very serious global issues and risk areas. We see the same thing with unemployment and poverty: unemployed and impoverished urbanites have become important elements of this area.

All of these risks and challenges further expand and differentiate the areas of operation and organizational structure of civil society. Now, just like non-governmental organizations, there are cooperatives of urban organizational life, urban councils, neighborhood councils, citizen initiatives, and municipal organizations. Instilling the qualities of a 'fair and virtuous city' into urban administration, directing them towards the area and rights of coexistence, while inviting them to be inclusive and participatory, are all included in the areas of operation of civil society.

We can call all of these new methods of organization and actors 'New Localism'. In addition to being a part of civil society, this new localism also creates an important manner of application for moral, virtuous, active citizenship. This is why we need to include the concepts of urbanization and new localism in the process of recontextualizing civil society, and why we must consider civil society and new localism together as interconnected phenomena.

Civil Society and Coexistence

Türker Kılıç focuses on the question "How does the brain manifest the mind?" in his book *Yeni Bilim: Bağlantısallık, Yeni Kültür: Yaşamdaşlık* (New Science: Connectivity, New Culture: Coexistence).[4] Seeking the answer to this question, he visits the field of epistemology and takes the approach of "connec-

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4   Türker Kılıç, *Yeni Bilim: Bağlantısallık, Yeni Kültür: Yaşamdaşlık* (New Science: Connectivity, New Culture: Coexistence), Ayrıntı Publishing House, Istanbul, 2019.

tive unity". With references to the philosophies of Spinoza and Mevlana, Kılıç considers life as an "information processing center with all of its diversity" and investigates the connections within this diversity. He suggests that instead of only going from whole to part or from part to whole, we need to investigate the interconnectivity between both, and their differences, therefore approaching the processes of "understanding, explaining and transforming" by using the method of connective unity. In life, the brain operates as a unit for the mathematics of information. Kılıç defines this approach to understand the brain as the *new science.*

In the second chapter of the book, he introduces the concept of 'coexistence', which he sees as the new culture. Citizenship is a concept we use when studying and discussing the relationship between state-society-individual. When discussing rights and freedoms within this concept, we have always taken a 'people-oriented' approach. The field of human rights, for example, requires a people-oriented approach. It's true that it is a very important field. However, the people-oriented approach considers as secondary other living creatures in other areas of life, and even itself in the diversity of life.

Coexistence means that "the mind quits simply being a 'leaf' but instead takes its place in the connectivity of the 'forest'". Kılıç suggests: "Humanity learned how to be an individual with the Enlightenment… a citizen with the nation-state… then a citizen who pays their taxes… and a global consumer with the neoliberal economy… Now, with the science and culture of connective unity, they will learn how to coexist". In this sense, coexistence involves the transition from saying "life exists for me" to saying "**humans exist as part of life and for life**". Staying with the forest-leaf metaphor, what we call coexistence is the leaf's becoming free of its assumptions that the forest exists for it, and understanding instead that it exists for the forest.

Humans are a part of biological diversity, a part of life with animals, living beings and nature and they exist for life. In this regard, coexistence considers not only human rights but the rights of life, not me but us, all of us, and even life, not transforming but being transformed; the only truth, not power and interest but curiosity, goodness, creativity, the moral self, responsibility for the other, humility and solidarity as its describing characteristics.

Life and coexistence must be the area of operation and focus for civil society; it must abandon the Anthropocene approach and embrace a life-oriented motto, establish its impact and visibility in life, with different aspects, relations and actors, within the framework of connectivity, and in this regard, combine coex-

istence with cyclicality. When considering issues such as epidemics, unemployment, poverty, violence, lack of heating and basic needs, it must approach them from the perspective of coexistence and consider the **Sustainable Development Goals** of the United Nations as among the founding elements of its own vision.

Civil Society, Flexible Organizational Structure and Activism

Lastly, in the process of revival, civil society must embrace 'flexible methods of organization', be open to activism, and work actively in fundamental subjects such as information-based policymaking, in order to break free from the shackles of the clunky organizational structures that currently bind it. We are required to see policymaking and activism as interconnected to defend the rights of life and coexistence, and fight against violence and marginalization. Finding a balance between these two, working towards capacity increase in both areas, and caring about active struggles as much as we care about organizational and financial capacity, must be included in the process as important aspects of recontextualizing civil society.
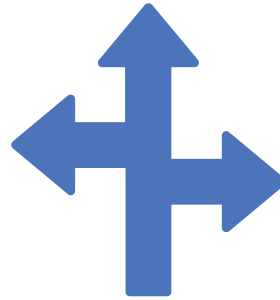
Only in this way we can consider revival and recontextualization together and interconnected, and transform civil society into an actor that contributes to the establishment of democratic, inclusive, fair governance and to a culture of living together in spite of differences, in today's world where the old is dying, but the new cannot be born.

HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENTS AS A WAY OF CIVIL ORGANIZATION

The Hrant Dink Foundation's "Civil Society Sharing Screen" program forms an invaluable basis for experts working in the field of civil society in Turkey and in the world, and all those contributing to the development of the third sector to evaluate the current status of, and challenges faced by, civil society in our country. It is safe to anticipate that such a comprehensive panel series will cover a wide range of topics from funding to civil society responsibilities and areas of operation, from the rights-based approach to social services-based organizational models. Within this context, it is important for the panel series to put the focus primarily on rights movements defined as a cornerstone for civil society's responsibilities, activities and areas of operation. Any discussion that approaches civil society through its rights movements and analyzes how this concept shapes civil society requires the careful and sensitive construction of definitional borders. Although it is not right to divide civil society actors and traits into categories, examining rights-based movements requires a more labor- (and knowledge-) intensive process than evaluating or analyzing other civil initiatives. That the panel series starts off the civil society discussion by taking the challenges faced by human rights movements as an anchor point is indicative of the richness of the series content and our ability to challenge our intellectual reflexes.

The question "Is the human rights movement in crisis?" brings in turn many more questions: How do we define human rights? What do we understand by the term 'human rights movement'? From an ontological point of view, human

rights and movements only exist when there is violation, abuse, and loss, which leads us to ask: Have human rights and movements not always been in a dead-lock? What are the developments pushing us to describe the problems faced by these movements as a 'crisis'? Finally, if human rights movements (or rights-based movements in general) are in a crisis, how does this affect civil society in Turkey, and in the world?

How do we define 'human rights movement'?

What do we understand by human rights? It would not be possible to fit into the scope of this study and would in itself entail a lengthy discussion covering all the way from the Magna Carta to the French Revolution, from the American Decla-ration of Independence to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, we can still refer to the definition provided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a basis to help us understand the current crisis taking hold of rights movements. Thomas Buer-genthal, prominent international lawyer and scholar, summarizes the definition as follows:

The Universal Declaration divides rights into two broad categories: civil and po-litical rights, and economic, social and cultural rights. The category of civil and political rights includes the right to life, liberty and security; prohibition of slav-ery, torture, violence and inhumane acts; the right not to be subjected to arbi-trary detention, arrest and exile; the right to a fair trial in civil and criminal courts; presumption of innocence and the principle of non-retroactivity of laws. The dec-laration recognizes individuals' right to privacy as well as the right of posses-sion of property. It also covers freedom of speech, religious freedoms, freedom of assembly and freedom of movement… According to Article 22, economic, so-cial and cultural rights… include individuals' rights to social security, protection against unemployment, equal pay for equal work and the right to benefit from other social security methods, if necessary, to ensure humane living conditions for themselves and their families… Article 25 stipulates that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and wellbeing of himself and his family. Article 26 of the Declaration guarantees free access to elementary and other fundamental stages of education… Article 27 is related to cultural rights; it guarantees individuals' right to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and share in scientific advancement and its benefits.[5]

5   Thomas Buergenthal, *International Human Rights 2nd Ed,*. St. Paul, MN: West Publishing Co, 1995, 30-32.

As for human rights movements, they emerge as a natural outcome of the violation of the rights that we think are guaranteed by conventions, almost everywhere in the world throughout history. When we consider this cause-and-effect relationship, it is by definition impossible for the human rights movement to exist unaccompanied by challenge and struggle. What then are the factors that are making us consider that this phenomenon--cyclically emerging for the purpose of overcoming serious obstacles and violations--has become a 'crisis'?

According to professor of history and Yale Law School lecturer Samuel Moyn, who delivered the panel's opening remarks, it is the recent rise of the extreme right, and the populist movements on which it feeds (the extreme right even getting a say in the governments of some western countries associated with democracy and the rule of law) that heightens the perception that human rights violations, which have always existed on a local and regional scale, have today turned into an unprecedented global crisis. Moyn's remarks also reveal that the reason behind this perception is not a correlation between the rising number of authoritarian regimes and the violation of rights but rather an approach that reduces the issue of human rights and rights movements to the issue of basic freedoms, which contributes to other types of rights violations being overlooked: namely the struggle for the right to food, shelter, hygiene and health, which Moyn emphasizes are at least as vital as the freedoms of expression and belief.

Can there be a hierarchy of rights?

Moyn underlines the principles of fair distribution and an adequate standard of living for all, and although these principles appear in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, they are not valued as greatly as basic freedoms in terms of rights advocacy, which comes to the forefront as the decisive factor of the 'crisis' faced by human rights movements today. In other words, rights are subjected to a normative hierarchy which prevents human rights movements from coming together and generating holistic solutions, on one hand, and results, on the other hand, in the fear of 'crisis' becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Moyn explains that the problematic of the fair distribution of social rights and assets has gone through three critical stages since the 19th century before taking on its current form. The first stage covers the 1800s when capitalism was

developing. During this period the sense of belonging to a group or community, and the concept of individualism, became widespread rather than the system of nations. What was meant by human rights at this stage was rather the rights of the wealthy. In other words, the newly emerging constitutional rights and the freedom to do business free from state intervention were, in fact, only given to the wealthy. Moyn states that many rights in the legal system of this period belonged only to the wealthy and reminds us of the words of Karl Marx: "We must shelve human rights because they are in fact a pretext to protect the interests of the wealthy."

In light of these dynamics, rising poverty and inequalities, and the widening gap between the wealthy and the poor, manifested themselves in the 20th century with the awakening of the nationalist movement and the emergence of the welfare state. According to Moyn, nationalism and the idea of the national welfare state take hold during this period, which he describes as the second stage of the social rights struggle. The idea of the welfare state appeared to counter the deepening inequalities in welfare and distribution of the previous century; the idea secured its place following World War I, first in the constitutions of some countries of Latin America, and later in the constitutions of the European states established after the war. However, suggests Moyn, the model of the welfare state still looked out for the wealthy and created a hierarchy in terms of accessing welfare, thus widening the gap between the wealthy and the poor, even in this period of unionist movements in which social rights were advocated. Moyn cites T.H. Marshall, an important thinker in the field of social rights, and gives clues as to the understanding of 'sufficiency' predominating again in this period between the two world wars. When expectations from the welfare state model increase in terms of equal distribution and provision, the question "Who will pay the bill?" comes to light again and the argument suggesting that equal provision and distribution of assets must have a 'ceiling' rapidly gains acceptance.

The collapse of the colonial system and the emergence of newly independent states into the international arena in the aftermath of the Second World War meant the start of a new era in the fields of inequality and rights struggles. According to Moyn, the centuries of imperial oppression endured by these states that had recently gained their freedom brought along profound global inequalities. The period between 1945 and 1975 particularly witnessed both inequalities of distribution and provision between newly independent states and former colonial powers, with problems of social injustice and poverty becoming more

and more chronic within nations themselves. Moyn states that in light of these developments these states were much closer to equal distribution and fair provision and had the opportunity of setting an example in terms of basic social rights gains; however, the nations of the global south missed this important opportunity when they conceded to neoliberal policies in the 1970s. Another important development reinforcing social rights movements which is believed to have had an important opportunity in those years was the struggle for civil and political rights that started in the late 1960s and accelerated in the 1970s. Moyn emphasizes that social justice was overshadowed by these movements. In fact, this suggestion helps us understand that the seeds of today's crisis in the human rights movement were planted over a process of fifty years where various rights were separated, categorized and hierarchized.

Where in this crisis does civil society stand?

If we are indeed, as suggested, in a crisis of human rights movements, we can find its most evident manifestation in the problems of interaction, communication and cooperation among rights-based civil society organizations. Although the challenge of coming together as more than one organization, establishing dialogue and cooperating experienced by such organizations working in the field of rights violations does not in itself point to a crisis, it can be indicative of an important deadlock. Among the reasons behind this situation observed in Turkey, as well as in other countries and civil cultures, are territory protection, duty glorification and limited access to funds, all of which not only isolate rights-based civil society organizations, but also diminish their influence.
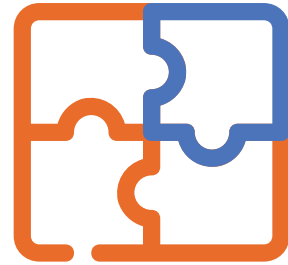
In this context, rights-based organizations should first of all remember that they work for the benefit of society. Furthermore, the removal of the ongoing hierarchy of rights prevailing for the past two centuries will make it possible to put in place a new cornerstone. Civil society organizations working for basic freedoms and rights-based initiatives can present the best example of this by coming together and combining their expertise in their respective areas. This kind of coalition will not only diminish the frequently encountered and wearisome competition in the field, but will also prevent redundancy and result in a more efficient use of the limited financial resources allocated to civil society.

The fact that varied organizations addressing human rights violations in Trump's America from different perspectives and with different priorities came and worked together sets an example and shows us that this can be achieved. However, for this to be managed, civil society organizations need to adopt the principle of an equality of rights and sincerely advocate that economic and social rights are at least as important as basic freedoms. As stated by Hacer Foggo, one of Turkey's foremost human rights advocates in the struggle against poverty, "Eliminating hunger is as basic a right as the freedom of expression."

THE ROLES OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE INTERSECTION OF SOCIAL RIGHTS, SERVICES AND RIGHTS ADVOCACY

Having started with the challenges faced by human rights movements, we continue our analysis of the concept of civil society and the status of civil society in Turkey by further examining services and advocacy movements that play an important role in access to social rights. As mentioned in the previous section, Samuel Moyn, lecturer at Yale Law School, believes social and economic rights to be equivalent to the basic rights to freedom of expression, belief and association. Moyn underlines that the hierarchal approach coming to the forefront especially in recent years has had the effect of dividing rights movements. Moyn argues that the human rights movement started to put freedom of speech and equality of status in its center especially as of the late 1960s, which pushed social and economic rights off the agenda for the next 20 years; rights advocates began to focus more on violations such as arbitrary detention, torture, unlawful trial and impunity while very few corporate or individual rights advocates put equality of provision and distribution on their agenda.
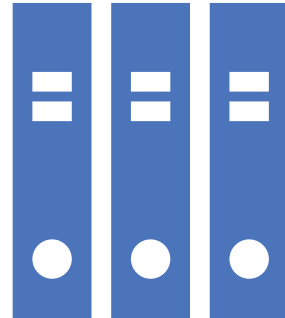
However, emphasizes Moyn, the countries where populism has become most prevalent are also those where all human rights, especially social and economic rights, have suffered the most. Rights that are defined as 'basic' overshadow the others and those such as the rights to equal provision and distribution are

further neglected, which only deepens the deadlock in which rights movements find themselves. As indicated in the previous section, what is needed is a unifying understanding of civil society, defending economic and social rights to the same extent as freedoms of expression and belief, differentiating itself from the fields of responsibility of unionist and socialist parties on this path and adopting the principle of equality of rights. In this respect, we can say that the civil society organization that emerged out of the pandemic is promising. New movements such as Black Lives Matter in the United States, representing the demands of all ethnic groups, classes and genders, signify that single-purpose activism will no longer suffice. Based on Moyn's suggestion that 'transcendentalism' will shape civil society in the upcoming period, it is safe to anticipate that, in this context, success stories will come from those civil society organizations that combine rights-based and services-oriented activities.

How can these two concepts come together in a reality in which division and individualization both within rights-based movements and among these movements and services-oriented organization models have prevailed for nearly fifty years? What are the factors that can gather the rights-based approach and the fulfilment of social and economic needs under one roof? Can rights-based tendencies and the protection of social rights and the fulfilment of needs be tackled independently? What are the success criteria determined by organizations synthesizing these movements? What kind of challenges and obstacles do they encounter? Can the positive examples set by such organizations be adopted and successfully implemented by other movements? What kind of a role does local concentration play in the efficiency of successful rights and services-based organizational models?

We can find the answer to these questions in the experiences of civil society organizations that combine these two concepts in their activities. In this context, the experiences of Hakan Ataman, a leading human rights advocate in Turkey and founding member of Amnesty International Turkey, and the representatives from Zero Discrimination Association and Support to Life Association, all of whom successfully blend rights and services-based approaches, can widen our horizons. Contributions from Elmas Arus, director of the Zero Discrimination Association and Mahmut Can İsal, legal sector manager for the Support to Life Association point out important projections pertaining to how rights-based activities and social services can be combined in the third sector.

Can the concepts of rights-based and services-based civil society be combined?

As emphasized in the previous section, we are going through a period in which the superficial hierarchy established between rights movements and civil initiatives, and the ensuing competitive approach feeding on division, has not yielded results. Through his observations on the characteristics of this period of change, Hakan Ataman gives civil society organizations important clues as to how they can continue their activities and maintain their effectiveness in the future. He underlines that globally there is still a separation between rights-based and services-based activities within civil society discussions and states that advocacy on its own is no longer sufficient. Ataman suggests that civil society organizations that wish to continue their activities under worsening humane and economic conditions, along with the pandemic, need to combine rights-based and services-based approaches. Such organizations should also conduct their activities taking concrete outputs into consideration as much as possible, with a focus on local needs. In other words, merely rights-based advocacy will not suffice, just as civil society activities that do not include basic and social freedoms among their priorities will remain limited in responding to new challenges.

During the pandemic, what kind of relationship was established between rights-based approaches and services-based approaches in civil society?

The deepening problems related to shelter, hygiene, security and poverty, along with the global health crisis caused by Covid-19, have forced civil society to develop rights-based and services-focused solutions, though there are obviously certain challenges associated with bringing these two concepts together. The Zero Discrimination Association is one of the organizations giving priority to the protection of social rights as much as critical services. The association's director Elmas Arus states that advocacy work finds less meaning in the field as pandemic circumstances prevail. Underlining that vulnerable groups were exposed to the most negative effects of lengthy lockdowns enforced as a measure against the pandemic, Arus points out that in this period minorities, the poor and other disadvantaged groups suffered particular deprivation of their basic rights through job and income losses.

The loss of employment and revenue deprived vulnerable groups of their basic rights to shelter, food, hygiene and education during the worst days of the pandemic and pushed the Zero Discrimination Association to adopt services-oriented activities in addition to their existing rights advocacy work. Considering that the Roma communities with whom Zero Discrimination had worked for years were among the most affected by the losses of employment and revenue caused by curfews, it is safe to say that the most vital problem faced by these groups in the short run was being deprived of the means to meet their basic needs. We learn from Arus that the Zero Discrimination Association revised its policies and the axis of its activities in line with pandemic conditions in order to address these problems. The most critical reform they implemented was the addition of various services so that Roma citizens could recover their basic social rights. Among the concrete problems shared by Arus in this context are the power cuts in several metropolitans of Turkey suffered by families who could not pay their electricity bills and, indirectly, the deprivation of such basic rights as security, hygiene and education.

The methods developed and implemented by Zero Discrimination in the face of these problems present a good example of how rights-based and services-based approaches can be combined efficiently. Again, in Arus' words, the association not only paid the bills for families who had endured power cuts, through an aid campaign it launched, it also conducted effective advocacy campaigns to influence public opinion on the rights violations suffered by vulnerable groups affected by this sanction. Thanks to these aid and advocacy campaigns launched under the leadership of the association, the cut-off services were reinstated, vulnerable groups were trained on how to demand their basic rights from public institutions, and local and central administrations were informed of their responsibilities related to the provision of basic rights and services. Arus emphasizes the importance of advocacy work conducted through the channels of local administration such as district governors' offices and provincial directorates while also pointing out the benefit of delivering training to rights holders, especially in the fields of the public institutions and petition writing.

The Support to Life Association is another effective civil society organization known for its contributions in the field of procuring rights-based services since the mid-2000s. Mahmut Can Isal, lawyer and legal sector manager of the organization, underscores that one of the distinctive characteristics of Support to Life is that it does not differentiate between rights-based and services-based activities.

According to Isal, Support to Life adopts civil society as one of the main principles of democratic life; they take a rights-based approach when addressing stakeholders' needs and carry services to rights holders in line with these criteria. Within this context, nearly four million refugees have benefited from the rights-based services provided by the association. Support to Life carries out crucial work in the fields of community-based protection for refugees, individual protection, support for livelihood, psychosocial cohesion and legal counselling, in addition to child rights and protection, and prevention of child labor in seasonal agriculture.

According to Isal, as with other rights and services-based organizations, the primary objective of Support to Life is to inform stakeholders of their basic rights in order to empower them to emerge stronger from their difficult circumstances rather than simply providing open-ended humanitarian aid. To this common vision Hakan Ataman adds another principle, relevant to all rights and services-based organizations: the rule of law. Ataman underlines that in this context, a rights-based approach is the ensemble of the following indispensable principles: empowerment, participation, accountability, rule of law, non-discrimination and human-centricity.

Can rights-based tendencies be imagined independently from protection of social rights and provision of needs?

As stated previously, it is not easy for every civil society organization to synthesize rights and services-based practices and put them into practice together. Among the main challenges are 'assessment and evaluation' and 'visibility'. Questions such as "How do we measure the success of our rights and services-based solutions?" and "How and when will we see the positive effects of this work on society?" guide the perception of success related to the work of these organizations. Ataman points out that time pressures and the criteria for impact assessment/evaluation generally set forth by funding institutions make more difficult the job of civil society organizations who try simultaneously to provide advocacy and services.

Although the ways that organizations cope with these challenges differ, the strategies established through an efficient use of technology, in line with demands from local stakeholders, stand out as the main tools. The access to food campaign conducted by Zero Discrimination, by mobilizing stakeholders during the pandemic, sets a good example in terms of designing strategies in harmony with changing circumstances while making efficient use of digital platforms. Through the use of videos taken by neighborhood residents, the problem of access to food for its 30,000 followers in Roma neighborhoods where neither public institutions

nor civil society organizations were present, the Zero Discrimination Association managed to grab the attention of the Ministry of Family and Social Policies.

Isal states that Support to Life uses digital platforms and other mass media to counter the increasing disinformation activities against refugees after the pandemic. Isal emphasizes that the concept of rights is not really meaningful to a significant segment of society. The effective use of the latest communication technologies, flexible policies, and much patience are required to explain the necessity of providing basic social and economic rights to everyone regardless of gender, language, religion or race.

Civil society organizations have entered an era in which they need to adopt both rights and services-based approaches in order to remain effective. One of the significant aspects of this era is that services-oriented approaches responding only to needs do not eliminate the source of the problems. Another aspect is that the struggle for rights, in turn, cannot find support from those in need or other stakeholders if more immediate short-term needs are not addressed. Therefore, as emphasized many times by the experts who contributed to this section, the future of civil society organizations that conduct advocacy but fail to guarantee individuals' social rights or that implement only short-term, services-based activities presenting limited access to these gains will not be sustainable. On the other hand, impact assessment/evaluation and visibility criteria derived from the concepts of 'competitiveness' and 'project centricity' imposed by the actors who fund civil society, put rights and services-based work to the test through new obstacles. Civil organizations wishing to carry on their work into the future have new obligations such as needing to prove the positive effects of their work in a short time and communicating this to large groups as well as combining advocacy and services while struggling with these challenges. In this direction, the new civil society will distinguish itself from the old to the extent that it can combine rights and services-based approaches and spread best practices to a large group of stakeholders using state of the art analytic and digital technologies.

CHANGES IN CIVIL SOCIETY AREAS OF OPERATION IN TURKEY OVER TIME: CONVENTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES, CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, NEW APPROACHES

What are civil society's responsibilities and how can their areas of operation be defined?

Some functions and responsibilities of civil society have remained unchanged since the time of Ancient Greece while some areas of operation have expanded or narrowed in line with changing political and social realities. Finding a balance between individual and social interests, representing people's priorities in regimes' decision-making mechanisms and policies, promoting equal distribution of welfare, and providing access to basic social rights and gains for all stakeholders of society are among the duties and responsibilities of civil society that have remained unchanged over the ages.

It can be said that in addition to these four main characteristics, civil society has assumed new roles in the face of progress made and challenges encountered by the processes of democratic development. For example, defending personal rights has been an important element for civil initiatives since the efforts towards accepting and generalizing individual freedoms in face of the weakening oppression from the Church started in the Age of Enlightenment. Similarly, capital owners in 18th century England and Holland opening up space for themselves in the face of the monarchy by establishing guilds, or ordinary citizens relatively affecting state policies (again via organizing) through access to basic rights and social services in
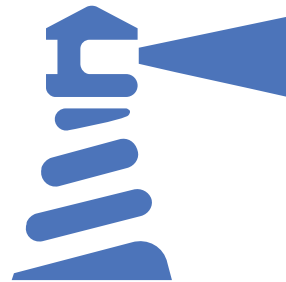
Europe and the United States of America in the 19th century were among the main characteristics of civil initiatives in those times. When it comes to the 20th century, the notion of civil society gained new areas of duty and responsibility including the expansion of freedom of expression, rule of law, common interests and human rights.

In short, enabling individuals' participation in the development of society as active stakeholders, functioning as a bridge between society and government, equal distribution of welfare, and social solidarity and cooperation are the four universal characteristics of civil society. Individual rights, organization, freedom of expression, rule of law, common interests and human rights advocacy are among the deep-seated roles and responsibilities of civil initiatives brought about by solutions developed in the face of problems that have suppressed societies for centuries.

Areas of operation and the changing responsibilities of civil society in Turkey

It is safe to say that the areas of operation and responsibilities of civil society in Turkey undergo similar periodic changes. For example, in the period from the establishment of the republic until the end of the 20th century there was an increase in the number of associations, foundations, professional chambers and regional development agencies. However, it cannot go unnoticed that these organizations mostly conducted benevolence, solidarity, development and membership activities for many years and that very few prioritized social welfare and participatory processes such as the development and supervision of government policies. The commencement of civil society activity in Turkey in the fields of human rights, individual freedoms and the common interest evidently coincides with the post-1980 military coup period. The grave human rights violations caused by the 1980 military coup coupled with the relative liberalization and foreign expansion in the 1990s enlarged civil society's areas of operation. In other words, human rights, democratization, rule of law, advocacy for individual freedoms, supervision and orientation of government policies made up the new responsibilities of civil society in Turkey at the threshold of the 21st century.
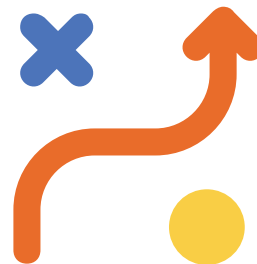
Metin Bakkalcı, chair of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, has closely observed how these periodic political developments have changed civil society's areas of operation in our country over the past 40 years. Bakkalcı defines the September 1980 military coup in Turkey as a threshold in terms of the development of civil society in Turkey and cites torture victims and the health professionals who witnessed torture as among the determining factors of human rights-focused civil organization. He points out that these actors came together through informal networks under the leadership of the Human Rights Association and the Turkish Medical Association for the purposes of tending to both the physical and emotional wounds of victims and bringing acts of torture to light. In Bakkalcı's words, the state attempted to intervene in human rights violations, paving the way for negotiations in the early 1990s which witnessed the organization of rights-based movements under root institutions such as the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey.

Bakkalcı states that, just as in the 1990s, when human rights violations increased, boosting sensitivity in turn, the 2000s witnessed the expansion of civil society's area of operation, especially in the field of human rights. In this sense, the period between 2000 and 2004 stands out as a more controlled and sensitive period when the state had a stronger grasp of human rights. Without a doubt, concrete developments in Turkey's accession to the EU had an impact on this. However, this period did not last long; according to Bakkalcı, rising authoritarianism in the world in the post-September 11 era has resulted in the gradual closure of the negotiation space in Turkey after 2004. As a result of the amendments made to the law of associations in 2008 and new legal arrangements introduced after 2016, the operation area of civil society organizations has narrowed. Civil initiatives, especially those that are active in human rights, found themselves in a deadlock as the tools of negotiation with the state dwindled and the state intervened in the civic space through some privileged groups close to itself. In addition to these observations, Bakkalcı underlines that it is important that rights-based organizations, like other civil society organizations, be able to maintain their activities in legitimate fields rather than shutting down, and to continue to receive necessary support from international organizations.

The importance of solidarity among CSOs for protecting areas of operation

Both local and international solidarity mechanisms developed by CSOs are among the most effective methods for countering the shrinkage in countries that have not completed their democratization process. Coordination and solidarity networks

established among civil initiatives fulfill important functions such as defining challenges faced by CSOs and communicating them to larger groups of local and international stakeholders, sharing solution proposals and mobilizing technical as well as financial resources. Especially civil initiatives focusing on rights mobilize national and international institutions for solving local problems, presenting significant opportunities for these actors in the process of negotiation with the state. It is evident that, in addition to coordination-focused platforms, creative solidarity methods aiming to raise awareness in society are required to counter the threats of 'shrinking civic space' that loom like nightmares over authoritarian regimes in recent years.

One positive example for the protection and expansion of civil society areas of operation in Turkey is the Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP). Founded jointly by Human Rights Association (IHD), Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for the Oppressed (MAZLUMDER), Helsinki Citizens' Association (HYD), Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) and Amnesty International Turkey, IHOP is an important model demonstrating how civil initiatives that share the ideal of building a participatory democracy in Turkey based on human rights and freedoms and the rule of law can join forces. Feray Salman, IHOP general coordinator, underlines that the platform has been collectively creating an intervention space for opportunities presented by the EU membership negotiations launched in 2005, the same year the platform was founded.

Salman's legitimate observations present important clues related to the impact of internal and external dynamics on civil society's capability to maneuver and develop new solutions. Like Salman, Bakkalcı describes the 1990s as "critical times" in terms of civil society's transformation in Turkey. Those years witnessed grave human rights violations and caused tremendous suffering while paving the way for civil society to become stronger through solidarity and cooperation. What's more, Salman states that civil society was presented with new opportunities in the international arena and that even a sort of internationalization was launched. From this perspective, it can be argued that the World Human Rights Conference in Vienna in 1992 served as a decisive point of reference. When it comes to Turkey, the EU harmonization process enabled civil society to be included in the efforts of developing democratic reform packages and to work in close cooperation with its European counterparts in this framework. Salman points out that one of the most concrete gains created by this moderate climate, which continued until 2009 and

strengthened solidarity among civil society organizations, was the adoption of the draft law on Equality and Non-Discrimination.

The shrinkage of civic space that started in the 2010s and accelerated between 2016 and 2018, when several organizations were unlawfully shut down and more than 130,000 professionals were expelled, reaffirms the importance of solidarity among CSOs for the protection of civic space. Today, civil society organizations working internationally in the field of human rights confirm that their impact has decreased as civic space shrinks and populism rises. According to Goran Miletić, director for Europe and MENA at Civil Rights Defenders, there is a significant increase in the number of states that have been building their own institutions and organizations to obstruct civil society and confine it to a smaller space, as the discourse of the extreme right gains strength. In addition, Miletić argues that human rights movements are shifting away from an evidence-based approach towards emotion-based approaches along with digitalization. In other words, the new generation prefers videos showing rights violations and other digital content that can be consumed rapidly to longer, factual, written reports. A few minutes-long digital content may trigger fast, emotional reactions. Miletić emphasizes that digitalization increases civil society's capacity for organizing and molding public opinion while civil society slowly loses its influence on governments, and recommends that, in any case, civil society should adapt to the realities of this age, evolve and even find new ways of affecting government policy. Miletić's recommendation reaffirms the role of solidarity in helping civil initiatives have an exchange of experience and establish new channels of cooperation.

Effects of funding on civil society's areas of operation

As mentioned before, easy access to social rights and services and equal distribution of resources and welfare together make up the primary factor that brings civil society into existence and the primary responsibility of civil society. The role played by voluntary organizations, charities and aid agencies throughout history in mobilizing and distributing the resources required for solving the fundamental problems of accessing basic rights such as education, health, shelter, food and hygiene enabled philanthropy to take its place among the main factors that bring civil society into existence. In the 21st century, we witness civil society going beyond the matching of philanthropic resources with those in need to using them to sustain their own activities and even follow competitive policies for accessing these resources.

From this perspective, it is safe to say that the third sector is acting almost like the private sector even though it claims to focus primarily on the interests and benefit of society. We take notice of CSOs adopting certain free market practices in order to fulfill the criteria and expectations of funding institutions in the post-pandemic period as sources of funds become increasingly scarce. Institutional hierarchies, professional staff, financial literacy, feasibility studies and auditing and evaluation programs are common in Turkey's civic space, as they are in the civil society organizations of North America or Western Europe. We can also add digitalization to these lines of work collected from the private sector along with the pandemic.

Miletić evokes that limited funding sources are a reality for civil society and argues that the "Will we have money tomorrow?" concern is still valid today. Miletić's emphasis on the fact that civil society does not have the responsibility of taking on governments' service obligation is a warning to be taken into consideration by CSOs that struggle to exist in the fields outside their area of expertise for the purpose of increasing their funding sources. Both Miletić and Salman underline that especially rights-based organizations working for human rights do not have unlimited funds and must, therefore, work in solidarity with other organizations in the field without giving up on their priorities.

In conclusion, we can observe that civil society has been assuming new functions in the past 40 years to adapt to its changing areas of operation both in Turkey and in the world, on top of pursuing its main responsibilities. Despite the shrinking civic space and a government becoming increasingly authoritarian, CSOs for the past fifty years have been working for solidarity, social benefit, social rights and equal distribution while pursuing their struggle for basic rights and freedoms. Functions such as advocating for individual rights, co-existence, freedom of assembly, participating in decision-making mechanisms and supervising government policies are still a part of the mission for several CSOs. However, as the example of Turkey demonstrates, the problem of funding that has deepened due to the wave of authoritarianism in the past decade, and now the pandemic, oblige these organizations to adopt new principles and methods with which to protect their current space. In this context, to the contrary of the current trends, a rising number of civil initiatives adopting the principle of solidarity whose seeds were planted in 1990s in the third sector of Turkey would be a step in the right direction. A rising number of solidarity platforms among these organizations would enable CSOs to consolidate their impact on decision-makers as well as cracking the door open for a more efficient use and fair distribution of dwindling national and international funds.

VARIOUS DEFINITIONS AND ACTORS IN CIVIL SOCIETY: IDENTITIES, VALUES AND SOCIAL BENEFIT

PANEL INFORMATION

Rethinking Civil Society: Identities, Values and Social Benefit

April 21, 2021

Panelists: Emrah Gürsel – The Kreuzberg Initiative against
Anti-Semitism (KIgA)
Ferhat Kentel – Academics
Yıldız Tar – Kaos GL
Işık Tüzün – Education Reform Initiative

Moderatör: Ayşe Köse Badur - Istanbul Policy Center (IPC)

Civil Society's Journey in History

Defined mainly on the axis of participation in de-cision-making processes, rights-based advocacy, representation of the interests of minorities and vulnerable groups and social benefit today, 'civil so-ciety' has, in fact, shed its skin many times over its evolution from Ancient Greece until today. The role assigned to civil society has been repeatedly redefined in accordance with the prevailing political, social and religious dogma of the time, throughout civil soci-ety's journey of two millennia.[6] Both in the ancient and middle ages and during the transition to modernity, civil society was considered a necessity for the re-habilitation of the chaotic space remaining outside of the institutions of family, religion and state, associated with the establishment of trust, harmony, conti-nuity and justice.[7] However, with the Age of Enlightenment, civil society started to unite around norms that put participation at its center and were necessary for individuals to determine their own fate and live a meaningful life in harmony with nature, and with other stakeholders in society, without being oppressed by those in power. Finally, at the dawn of the industrial revolution, the 'civil' part of

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6   John Ehrenberg, *Civil Society: The Critical History of an Idea,* New York: New York University Press, 2017, 11–12

7   Ibid., 22–26, 52–57.

society completely left the scope of institutions like family and state.[8] When the capital-owner bourgeoisie completed its development, this turned into collective initiatives established by self-aware property and capital owners that Hegel calls *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (bourgeois society or civil society), to protect and strengthen their rights and interests against political power.[9]

The struggles against the totalitarian regimes that prevailed from the late 19th century until the mid-20th century, ended civil initiatives' roles as actors that merely protect the interests of a certain economic segment and started to organize them as institutions that defend the basic rights and freedoms of individuals (especially laborers). For instance, the comparative politics research conducted in North America and Western Europe in the 1950s and 1960s define civil participation and active involvement in decision-making processes as indispensable qualities of democratic and liberal societies.[10] Along with the 'third democratization wave' followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, many types of civil initiatives such as associations, foundations, think-tanks and professional organizations became widespread under the name of 'civil society organization' as they played a role in the 'democratization' processes of totalitarian regimes and went beyond monitoring activities and first-handedly supported the shaping of participatory political processes with their expertise.[11]

The honeymoon period of civil society organizations that started with the third democratization wave in many parts of the world seems now to have come to an end. Within this context, 'shrinking civic space' has, since the early 2010s, become a frequently encountered (and even pronounced) expression in the daily jargon of third sector professionals. The widespread use of this concept can be interpreted as evidence that authoritarian regimes, fed by rising populism, are obstructing the participation of citizens and civil initiatives in decision-making

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8   John Locke, *Second Treatise of Government*, Project Gutenberg, 14.

9   Edward Shils, "The Virtue of Civil Society", *Government and Opposition 26*, 1991, 6.

10   Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc., 1963.

11   Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

processes and their activities of monitoring, supervising and holding account-able, thus weakening their work and resources.[12] Another striking tendency is 'compartmentalization', and therefore withdrawal, caused by limited freedoms and dwindling funds, and competitiveness overtaking cooperation.

Slippery Definitions and the Function of Civil Society Today

On April 21, 2021 Hrant Dink Foundation organized a panel with the theme "Rethinking Civil Society: Identities, Values and Social Benefit" under their Civil Society Sharing Screen panel series, filling an important gap by tackling these developments in the specific context of Turkey. The panel was mod-erated by Ayşe Köse Badur, Urbanization and Local Governance Coordinator at Istanbul Policy Cen-ter. Panelists included academics Ferhat Kentel, Yıldız Tar, editor of KAOS GL Internet Newspaper, Işık Tüzün, Director of Education Reform Initiative, and Emrah Gürsel, director for International Partnerships at The Kreuzberg Initia-tive Against Anti-Semitism. They provided important contributions to civil so-ciety discussions evaluating the situation of 'civil society' on the verge of a new transformation process in the world and in our country from the perspectives of identities, belongings, values and social benefit.

In her opening remarks, Badur defined civil society as a concept "corresponding to the space remaining outside of family, state and the market", which points to a crit-ical problematic about the ontological and functional ambiguity of this institution with a two thousand year history. In this sense, as emphasized by Badur, although civil society has covered significant ground since the 1980s as a result of suitable po-litical and economic conditions, it is at risk of losing those gains in the face of rising populism, which legitimizes the need for questioning and better understanding civil society's legal, political and social role, as well as its process of formation.

Insisting on the "space remaining outside of family, state and the market", Ken-tel states that civil society has a "slippery definition". According to prominent academics, civil society can even shape the state through customary practices, traditions and institutionalization as much as it can penetrate into the state itself and influence, change and restrain it. According to Kentel, the boom of neoliberalism and the major blow taken by leftist policies in 1980s Turkey and all

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12   "Civic Space on a Downward Spiral", CIVICUS, https://findings2020.monitor.civicus.org/down-ward-spiral.html, accessed April 23, 2021.

around the world are among the main factors that have brought civil society to its current position. Kentel says, "We lived in a different society then," and explains by evoking that civic space before the 1980s was defined based on policies and struggles of class and that the faith in achieving something through this sort of struggle no longer exists today.

This important observation shows us that some qualities attributed to civil society over the ages are now worn out and cannot respond to today's needs. These characteristics can be defined as egalitarian, inclusive and rule-abiding institutions that prevent individuals and communities from resorting to violence or social explosions. Kentel warns that environments in which a society loses its capacity to self-reflect, in which the objectives of social movements are restricted by authoritarian sanctions and cannot be freely discussed, may produce a society that frequently takes to the streets and expresses itself through explosive actions. Kentel's other important observations can be summarized as follows: Under the effect of neoliberal policies, modernity is no longer a promising concept while civil society emerges as a reassuring, confidence-inspiring concept in society. In the 'post-truth' age where populist waves feed racism, civil society undergoes a process of polarization and communitarianism. The most prominent symptom of this polarization is the fact that civil initiatives focusing on different issues or civil society in general, do not ask the question: "What do the people who are not like us do and what should we do to understand them?"

Development of LGBTI+ Civil Movement as a Struggle for Rights and Identities in Turkey

Yıldız Tar, Editor of KAOS GL Internet Newspaper, evaluates the LGBTI+ movement's struggle to organize in Turkey's civil society from the perspective of identities; their invaluable remarks demonstrate that the problematics of polarization and 'compartmentalization' in question are not that far away from us. Tar considers the LGBTI+ movement as an ensemble of several eclectic movements rather than a mere structure of civil society and states that a three-phase process led to the formation of the current structure. Tar explains that in the 1960s people started to come after homosexuals based on some baseless and alienating articles and visuals in the media which were also accepted as the start of the post-truth era for the LGBTI+ and underlines that, as a result of sanctions such as the misdemeanor law, bans and acts of torture targeting transsexuals following the military coup in 1980, soli-

darity emerged as a prioritized need, rather than the need for organization, for the LGBTI+ community. Gatherings in large cities motivated by people's desire to "come together" and "find others like themselves" independent of geography or other limitations, can be evaluated as the first phase of the LGBTI+ organizational process. It is safe to say that the events, activities and publications derived from such gatherings were an important bridge for slowly institutionalizing the movement. Having started its publishing life in 1993-1994 when the movement began to flourish and transformed from solidarity to a quest for rights, the KAOS GL magazine presents a good example. From this period also coinciding with the establishment of Lambdaistanbul on until the early 2000s, the LGBTI+ movement achieved important breakthroughs in the field of rights advocacy; they also prepared a curriculum and organized rallies even though it did not reach the organizational structure of civil society.

According to Tar, the LGBTI+ movement emerged as a civil society initiative on May 1, 2001. New associations emerged in the mid-2000s and the efforts of this period began to create a civil society. In this sense, the transformation of the LGBTI+ movement that set out from the basic need to "find others like oneself" into a civil initiative demanding rights, identifying problems and looking for alternative spaces and methods in a modest period of time of 30 years, mirrors the large gap between the conducive environment of the 2000s and today's atmosphere of increasing pressure and restriction on LGBTI+ initiatives. In this regard, Tar argues that the LGBTI+ civil movement is at a turning point and predicts that either the struggle of the movement will end with total recognition and equality, or conversely, that those who apply this all-out pressure will try to push the movement back to pre-1980s conditions.

The Impact of the Rise of the Alt-Right on Civic Space in Germany

The observations shared by Emrah Gürsel, director for International Partnerships at the Kreuzberg Initiative Against Anti-Semitism, show that the identity politics fed by rapidly spreading populism has penetrated into civic space in Germany. Gürsel states that the recent rise of racism and the alt-right in Germany has repercussions on civil society even though it is not faced with a threat as critical and absolute as in previous authoritarian regimes. He underlines the following:
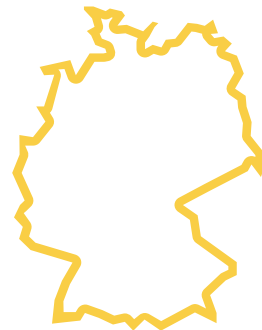
When religious minorities are addressed in political debates, it is still discussed whether or not Germany can be considered a country of immigration, despite receiving regular waves of immigrants since the 1960s. This can even take the form of physical and biological racism, stigmatizing minorities as foreigners. Even though Germany is a state of law, it can still feel the ache of the transformation it underwent. In this context, society is allergic. There are strong prejudices against Muslims, occasionally manifesting as hate crimes. It is observed that even secular migrants are not exempt from this social attitude, paving the way for serious terrorist attacks in the past two years. People can be victims of racist discourse or behaviors because of their country of origin, their name or physical traits. Gürsel shares an extreme case of this attitude, showing that right-wing organizations embedded with the police sometimes leak the personal information of human rights lawyers to other right-wing organizations in order to make them a target.

In the face of these developments, we understand that civil society in Germany, as in other shrinking civic spaces, has to cope with the problematic of ambiguity from time to time. As indicated by Gürsel, human rights organizations defending the interests of rights-holders, especially those who are victims of discrimination and racism, can have their charitable license annulled since the work of such associations can be considered as political activity under German law. Gürsel also points out that there are hybrid structures in Germany's civic space, leading to confusion as to whether certain organizations should be considered as public institutions or associations, and to a high number of organizations that are not in full harmony with the conceptual definition of civil society.

Civil Society Organizations as Stakeholders to Monitor and Transform Educational Policies

When it comes to Turkey, there are only a few civil society organizations that can fulfill their responsibility to monitoring, supervising and contributing to decision-making processes concerning the community at large, which is one of the main functions of civil society organizations. One of these is the Education Reform Initiative (ERG). The main objective of the ERG is to guarantee access to quality education to every child; toward this purpose, ERG brings together all stakeholders of education and presents the data-based views and proposals generated by this interaction to decision-makers. In this respect, it

can be said that it positions itself as a 'critical friend' in the relationship it builds with the state which is responsible for providing quality public education.

Işık Tüzün, ERG's director, underlines that the state's obligation to provide quality public education is not limited to the employment of qualified education personnel or the existence of structures that fulfill basic hygiene and safety criteria. According to Tüzün, quality public education must also be affordable and physically accessible; it must not be discriminatory. In other words, the state must provide acceptable education. What is meant here is acceptability for both children and parents. Tüzün defines acceptability as violence-fee content and methods with a stance against discrimination. In addition, education must be adaptable and able to meet children's differing needs.

It is only through the active engagement of civil society organizations in the field of education that these comprehensive obligations can be fulfilled. In this context, Tüzün's answer to the question of what civil society should do is equally multi-dimensional. She states that civil society's role is usually restricted to "reaching out to those whom the state cannot reach" and evokes that civil initiatives can, however, assume a transformative role, targeting change. In this direction, civil society organizations can present tools from which rights-holders can benefit, can point to the current situation and the potential of change in a certain field, can ensure that political processes are conducted in a more transparent way, and can present policy proposals or conduct advocacy.

Underscoring the existence of civil society organizations that take on these roles both in education and in other fields, Tüzün states that there is a wide range of civil initiatives from those procuring services that the state cannot provide and conducting afterschool programs to those who work on professional development. According to Tüzün, the real need is for civil society organizations to closely monitor and support the processes of policy building and service provision. Evidently, this need can be met only if certain basic problems are solved. Tüzün explains that a problem of participation is emerging, especially now, since the framework to encourage participation in the civil society-public sector relationship does not exist. In addition, there is currently ambiguity as to which stakeholders are invited to policy making processes, as transparency in the public sector diminishes day by day. She also emphasizes the lack of data-sharing when it comes to major issues; there is no data disaggregation or impact analysis for collected data, which is a major reason for the problems encountered today.

What Kind of Future Awaits Civil Society?

The evaluations shared by experts from academia and the field within the framework of the Rethinking Civil Society panel support the argument that civil society development has once again taken a turn towards a more challenging path, as stated in the beginning of this report. The extent to which civic space, rights and freedoms are going to emerge from this process more 'shrunk or more 'expanded' is closely related to the solution of these three questions that have been revolving around identities and values: the phenomenon of 'post-truth' feeding authoritarianism and fed by populism; polarization among civil society, the public sector and society at large; division within civil society.

Ferhat Kentel affirms that, on the one hand, authentic identities are gaining more importance and visibility in this post-truth era; on the other hand, the fear of different identities is increasing. Kentel explains that under the current circumstances that prevent civic space from responding to the needs created by this diversity, people's attachment to one-man regimes that please those with congregational tendencies through their discourse feeding on fear and despair, gets stronger. Unlimited technological infrastructure and digital platforms of the post-truth era enable populist movements around the world to feed on each other. Gürsel and Tar share interesting examples of this interaction. Ultra-right and alt-right organizations can now learn from and copy each other through organizational structures described as "fascist international" by Gürsel. We repeat the example cited by the speaker here: A right-wing organization analyzed the video of an attacker who broadcast his attack on a mosque in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand and reduplicated it with his attack on a synagogue in Germany. Tar states that a similar learning process takes place among authoritarian regimes and that criminal sanctions imposed by authoritarian regimes on the efforts of the detained LGBTI+ to express themselves through artistic activities may result in the imposition of the same sanctions by other authoritarian regimes after a short while. She points out that this technique of peer learning and copying is frequently applied in Poland, Hungary, Russia and Turkey.

Unfortunately, we cannot claim that civil society has an advantageous position in face of these strengthening and consolidating trends of populism and authoritarianism. As suggested by Kentel, Tar and Gürsel in different contexts, both the distance of civil society from the public sector and society at large, and the

polarization within civil society, are getting deeper every day. Kentel emphasizes that civil society's self-abstraction from society at large is a global phenomenon. According to him, a considerable number of people who feel estranged and outcast in their homeland accuse 'civil society' of being a tool for the liberal elite that they believe have mostly detached from society, as demonstrated by the "Tea Party" movement in the United States of America. They do not trust civil society; they question its function and do not have faith in the purpose and communities it serves. Several studies conducted in Turkey reveal that a similar mistrust and dissociation towards civil society also exist in our country.[13] Today, there is a new finding that supports this mistrust: the rapidly growing polarization, inability to establish dialogue and competition within civil society itself. As set forth by the YaDa Foundation's Dialogue Mapping study, even though civil society organizations have the tendency of establishing dialogue among themselves, the issue of compartmentalization in civic space cannot be overcome as they adopt thematic fields and methods as principles.[14]

It does not seem possible for civic space to successfully counter its problems today without eliminating the issue of polarization in society at large and within itself. In this context, the expert opinions drawn from the "Rethinking Civil Society: Identities, Values and Social Benefit" panel organized by Hrant Dink Foundation, present concrete solutions for civil society so that it can emerge stronger from this transformation process. In this direction, the most important step to be taken by civil society must be understanding stakeholders outside of its own area. The concerns of groups that complain about being crushed by the manifestations of policies on immigration, minorities, cosmopolitanism, diversity, social equality, co-existence, etc. and the arrogant approaches of civil initiatives that claim ownership of these policies, must be understood very well. In relation with this, civil society organizations must rid themselves of the 'Messiah complex'; they should not see themselves as virtuous organizations fighting against evil. Today, even those organizations acting based on the most democratic and socialistic principles can bully other civil initiatives they consider less powerful. It is indispensable to end this arrogance and meaningless competition in the interest of increasing dialogue and cooperation within civil society itself. Finally,

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[13]   S. Erdem Aytaç ve Ali Çarkoğlu, "Türkiye'de Bireysel Bağışçılık ve Hayırseverlik 2019", İstanbul: Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı, 2020, 34-35.

[14]   Saygın Vedat Alkurt, Cansu Peker ve Emre Taşdemir, "Sivil Diyaloğun İzlenmesi ve Geliştirilmesi Projesi: Diyalog İzleme Araştırması," Yaşama Dair Vakıf, İstanbul: 1001 Matbaa, 2021.

CSOs must abandon the understanding of 'project-centricity' caused by limited funding, influencing almost the entire civil society to move to human-centric working methods, and exert efforts to solve the existing problems paying regard to the priorities and needs of those experiencing the problems. Only the kind of civil society that adopts these principles and has the ability to reconstruct itself can present an alternative that embraces all identities and values against the authoritarian regimes that threaten our freedoms and democratic rights, can be accepted by the entire society.

THE ROLE OF GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

Covid-19 took a heavy toll on almost every field of life including health, education, livelihoods and travelling over two years. Some international and local organizations state that this process brought permanent damage to civic space in addition to society's main arteries of health, education and social services. The analyses of the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), the European Center for Not-for-Profit Law Stichting (ECNL – ICNL's European equivalent) and CIVICUS on the pandemic's global effects on civic space provide important indicators showing serious political and economic pressure on civil initiatives caused by the pandemic that also took millions of lives.

Civil society in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic

According to these findings, the pandemic provided authoritarian regimes, in which populism has influenced political power, with a unique opportunity to restrict civil rights and liberties. Reports from a wide geography extending from Central Europe to the Middle East, from Russia to Hong Kong, show that authoritarian regimes have been trying to numb the most vital reflexes of civil society by suspending rights to assembly, peaceful protest, etc. on the pretext of "combatting Covid-19". Advocacy, communication and awareness activities of rights-based organizations lost a great deal of ground since their access to public space has been blocked due to pandemic-related regulations.
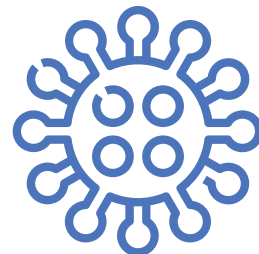
Findings of local and international research also show that, as with political pressures, adverse economic effects of the pandemic have also caused permanent damage to civil society. Without a doubt, the most wearing effect on civil society of the global economic recession caused by lockdowns, travel bans, social distancing rules and other pandemic-related measures has been the decline in funding sources. On the one hand, the losses suffered by the private sector decreased the amount of corporate donations to civil society. On the other hand, they brought about a decline in the amount and volume of grants provided to CSOs through foundations belonging to big investment groups. In addition, public sources have warned that international and supranational organizations contributing to civic space will also reduce their support because of the negative economic projections caused by Covid-19. In light of these uncertainties, the problematic of efficient distribution of limited resources among CSOs has resulted in the sudden exposure of chronic problems swept under the carpet vis-à-vis both granting organizations and those in need.

From the perspective of granting organizations, diminishing sources of funding have brought to the surface critical problems related to vertical decision-making hierarchies in most of these organizations. Civil society stakeholders also took notice of the big gap between central decision-making mechanisms and local initiatives in this period where stakeholders of many granting organizations could not identify their needs in a rapid manner despite the rapid spread of the pandemic. One of the most negative effects of the lack of timely and accurate evaluation of local experiences and requirements by international organizations, foundations and funding institutions on civil society may have been that resources were channeled to a limited number of areas designated as 'urgent' and that other organizations that conduct activities that are just as important were excluded from grant opportunities which are vital for them. For example, large national and international organizations that had uplifted various fields from human rights to ecology through their support before the pandemic shifted their resources towards sectors targeted the most by the pandemic in the short run such as health, education and technology. This reactive tendency in the world dragged CSOs that do not work in the 'urgent' fields mentioned above (but that fill important gaps in critical areas such as rights advocacy, social assistance, protection of vulnerable groups and the environment) into a financial depression that is difficult to recover from. Even worse, many organizations, with a legitimate desire to avoid these financial problems, turned towards the sectors on which grants concentrate, outside their areas of expertise, which deprived important services--although temporarily—to rights holders who had benefited from the work of such organizations, thus further widening the gaps.

Did civil society fail during the pandemic? Are grassroots movements a new alternative to conventional CSOs?

Decision-making problems and bureaucratic obstacles caused by the pandemic at funding organizations remind us of the importance of local initiatives and grassroots movements for the future of civil society. Even though they differ in geography and culture, grassroots movements do have some common features. The main characteristics of grassroots movements include their ability to closely (on-site) monitor the problems of communities in which they are established and whom they represent; they are able to transfer their problems and solutions to larger groups through efficient use of digital technologies; they can conduct activities through networks that come together via digital channels rather than traditional, institutional, organizational structures. Another characteristic that differentiates these initiatives from conventional civil society organizations is the ability of their volunteers, often young people, to democratically participate in decision making processes.

What are the advantages of grassroots movements?

It is predicted that, although grassroots movements are not legal entities, they will pioneer the change in civil society in the wake of the pandemic, thanks to their young and agile staff, in addition to their knowledge and experience of local dynamics. The role of grassroots movements in the transformation of civil society in Turkey and all around the world can be imagined in a more concrete manner with the help of the experiences of experts who personally took part in this process. Bertha Tobias was on the front lines of the #ShutItAllDown movement that reached 11 million people in Namibia through social media and organized young people's participation in the political process. Her experiences constitute a good example of the ground covered by grassroots movements at the local level in Africa. The #ShutItAllDown campaign was organized through digital platforms to raise awareness on the rising number of femicides and acts of gender-based violence in Namibia in recent years and to end this indignation. The campaign helped protests, originally sparked in the capital Windhoek in early October 2020, to spread to the entire country within a few days. A few weeks later, the country's opinion leaders, politicians and civil society leaders mobilized and requested concrete action to put an end to femicide and violence against women.

Tobias talks about the advantages of grassroots movements through the example of #ShutItAllDown and says that, although she respects conventional CSOs, it is now time to leave aside our obsession with old organizational structures. Tobias believes that activism should not be limited to conventional ways of organization and stresses that it is important for movements to define themselves and come up with their own principles. According to Tobias, even though the function of organized civil society efforts is still prestigious, the "we are the best" style competitive culture influencing the sector should come to an end. Another attitude unique to CSOs that the young activist thinks must end is that they aspire to provide services which the government is supposed to provide and hopelessly struggle to provide them.

Leonid Drabkin, General Coordinator of OVD-Info, a grassroots organization in Russia, shares his views on the future of grassroots movements and emphasizes the importance of quick mobilization and instant access to information as the most critical characteristics of the next generation civil initiatives. Drabkin underlines the vitalness of fast and inclusive access to information for himself as the manager of an organization working to counter violations of freedoms of expression and assembly in Russia. He states that they can better protect their stakeholders who suffer from the pressures and rights violations by the Russian government thanks to the information instantly collected from various sources by the organization. Drabkin also argues that the state plays a role in the emergence of new civil initiatives and says that the rising pressure from authoritarian regimes increases civil society's creativity and gives birth to new models of communication and horizontal organization.

Good examples of grassroots movements at the local level in Turkey

The Boğaziçi University protests served as an important turning point for understanding the impact of the basic qualities that make grassroots movements successful in civic space, including instant communication, access to detailed information and emergency mobilization. Boğaziçi University students formed a successful grassroots movement against the arrangements of Melih Bulu, the trustee rector of the time, that resulted in the closure of LGBTI+ student clubs on the campus and the arrest of students. On the other hand this siutation created a public pressure on the universtiy administration.

Furkan Dabanıyastı, Boğaziçi University alumni who was at the movement from the begining, states that when the LGBTI+ clubs were shut down following a night-time police raid on February 1, 2021 he could no longer remain silent and that he reported the developments in the field in real time to participants in an audio chat room on the Clubhouse application.

Dabanıyastı points out that grassroots movements have a larger playing field when compared to traditional CSOs as they are exempt from bureaucratic limitations and cites the importance of this flexible structure as among the reasons local initiatives with a minimum level of hierarchy can reach large masses in a short time. On the other hand, Dabanıyastı accepts that CSOs' institutional knowledge is still relevant and functional and stresses that traditional actors of civil society can embrace the contributions of individual movements and build efficient partnerships with these grassroots movements. In this sense, the Boğaziçi solidarity is a prime example of the impact that agile and information-based local initiatives can create in a short time. As mentioned by Dabanıyastı, it should be noted that an important process of transformation is now beginning in which civil society initiatives with legal entity should internally evaluate what kind of opportunities they can present to grassroots movements and how they can open up space for them. In this process, steps taken by civil society organizations towards sharing can make concrete contributions to the development of grassroots movements. For instance, CSOs can share their archives, capacities, communication mechanisms and institutional resources with grassroots movements – and be sure to take a step back during their decision-making processes.

Do informal forms of organization have disadvantages?

However, in addition to its advantages of flexibility, agility, rapid mobilization and decision-making and ability to mobilize large masses through digital channels, having a disorganized structure free from institutional processes may bring along certain disadvantages. One of these is the lack of a professional management bureaucracy, which, on the one hand, enables grassroots movements to make faster decisions but which, on the other hand, also makes them vulnerable in critical issues such as transparency, accountability, sustainability and protection from the authority pressure from stakeholders. Philip Gamaghelyan, lecturer at Joan B.
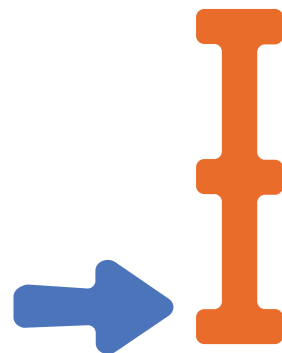
Kroc School of Peace Studies at San Diego University explains this dilemma very clearly. According to Gamaghelyan, the phenomena of over-professionalism, toxic institutionalization and competition caused by limited sources of funding, observed in civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations over the past 30 years, are destroying civil society and exposing it to harsh academic criticism. On the other hand, non-institutionalized civil initiatives may quickly fall apart in the face of pressures such as the closure of their digital channels, arrest of their members and seizure of their assets. Leonid Drabkin, General Co-ordinator of OVD-Info, agrees with this observation and underlines that the lack of institutional infrastructure renders the members of grassroots movements vulnerable to the tactics of authoritarian regimes such as unlawful detention by the police, prolonged detention and judicial processes, o9slander, defamation and delegitimization campaigns.

In conclusion, grassroots movements, creatively borne of the pressure caused by the political and economic adverse effects of the pandemic on the already shrinking civic space, will certainly play an important role in shaping the future of civil society. Grassroots movements, built upon flexible and horizontal hierarchal principles, formed by young volunteers who can rapidly mobilize large masses through the efficient use of digital means and effective, data-based communication campaigns are already shaping civil society's transformation. Even so, both grassroots movements and traditional CSOs must internalize the importance of using constructive tactics over destructive ones in this transformation. In this context, it is more important than ever for grassroots movements, with their good command of local dynamics, and traditional civil society actors, with certain advantages such as reliability, transparency and sustainability thanks to their institutional structure, to cooperate with each other. Otherwise, traditional CSOs will lose contact with local stakeholders because of the bureaucratic burden caused by their legal identity and their institutional priorities following the pandemic while grassroots movements with no bureaucratic structure will fail to expand their scattered activities beyond a limited period of time and number of beneficiaries, as a result political and economic pressures. We cannot predict what the future will bring for civil society, but today's developments indicate that the solution for changing the direction of the global shrinkage in civic space cannot be imagined without cooperation between grassroots movements and conventional CSOs.

TURKEY'S PERCEPTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY: REALITIES AND HOPES

As emphasized in the third section, which addressed the areas of operation of civil society in our country, there is no uniformity in civil society in Turkey, neither periodically nor in terms of its actors. From the establishment of the republic until the 1980s, the most common forms of organization for civil initiatives were associations and foundations with very clearly framed areas of operation and definitions of activity. However, it can be argued that the number of unionist movements, cooperatives, professional chambers and regional development agencies started to increase when Turkey transitioned to a multi-party system. Again, as underlined in the previous section, a Tocquevillian civil society awareness supervising government policies and trying to influence democratic decision-making mechanisms started to become apparent, first in the field of human rights, in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

In the wake of the Marmara earthquake in 1999, a different type of civil society organization emerged, aiming to contribute to the development of all fields of social life, more capable of taking initiative as compared to other assistance-based associations and foundations. Both qualitative and quantitative development of civil society organizations with a wide range of operations, from disability rights to combattig the climate crisis, from the prevention of hate speech to the protection of the sea and coasts, continued until the start of the shrinkage of the civic space in Turkey in the early 2010s. The gains of this roughly 10-year period

increased hopes for the possibility of civil society organizations to have a say in issues concerning the common interest and welfare of society and to defend the people against the priorities of political power and capital groups. When Turkey's EU accession process started, the funds provided by EU institutions and other international organizations played a big role in strengthening civil society in Turkey. Thanks to such financial and technical support, CSOs are able to continue their activities today, under pressure from legal regulations (starting in 2008, still in force today) that limit their areas of operation.

Reasons behind negative perceptions and skepticism about civil society

This short synopsis demonstrates how young and vulnerable civil society in Turkey is as a concept based on involvement in all decision-making processes shaping social life for the sake of social benefit. In this context, Bekir Ağırdır, director general of KONDA Research and Consultancy, reminds us of the reality that the words 'organization' and 'organizing' have negative connotations in the eyes of society. Having stated that there are around 130,000 associations and foundations in Turkey, Ağırdır points out that 100,000 of these serve the purposes of solidarity and charity. This can be interpreted in the following way: among those that are organized following all administrative procedures in Turkey, very few CSOs conduct rights-based activities involving actionality. As indicated by Ağırdır, the negative opinion towards 'organization' in society in general turns into polarization when CSOs' working methods are in question. Solidarity and charity-based organizations are considered legitimate while those who come together under an organized structure to conduct rights-based activities are met with suspicion and prejudice.

There are multiple reasons behind this contrast in society with regard to the purpose and legitimacy of civil society. According to Zeynep Meydanoğlu, who has dedicated years of her life to civil society and acted as the country representative for Turkey at Ashoka Foundation, an important social entrepreneurship support channel, one of the most visible reasons behind the polarization in civil society is that the people cannot gather around one common dream of civil society. Meydanoğlu argues that we can approach civil society in Turkey from three different perspectives. The first is the perspective of an ensemble of organizations comprising unions, associations and foundations; the second is an areal perspective,

clustering active and operational CSOs such as citizen solidarity, rights advocacy and neighborhood cooperation movements that focus on actionality on top of the work of the aforementioned organizations; and finally, a perspective whose framework is drawn by the answers to the question "What kind of society do we want to be?"

Meydanoğlu explains that these perspectives create three different Turkeys, three different levels of civil society and three different definitions of civil society; she goes on to say that one's perception of civil society depends on which one of these nine boxes one inhabits. These divisions make it harder for citizens to find common ground in terms of their dreams for civil society. What's more, tribalism, communitarianism, over-attachment to those in the same box, skepticism, and even enmity towards those outside of it are deepening the gaps that already divide civil society. Meydanoğlu cites as an example of this division the Law on the Prevention of the Financing of the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction that was adopted in the Turkish Grand National Assembly in the final days of 2020 and, in a way, had the effect of subduing civil society organizations. The fact that 130,000 civil society organizations could not come together to object to a law that so critically limited civil society activities is an important indicator of this polarization.

According to Meydanoğlu, there is a price attached to stepping out of these boxes and to intervening in the other boxes and the issues inside them. Those who generate discourse or express opinions on them are often perceived as a threat and are duly punished. Charities and solidarity institutions can be cited as exceptions to this observation. Organizations, institutions or individuals who donate or issue grants are generally free of sanctions. Bekir Ağırdır evokes that there is a historically negative relationship between sanctions and the instinct to organize, that rights struggles are chopped one way or another on this geography, and that there is a metaphorical handbrake in the social memory against civil organization.

Ibrahim Betil has made important contributions to the development of civil society in Turkey, since 1994 playing an active role in the process of organizing for many CSOs in Turkey, and serving on the executive boards of these initiatives. He states that the "reflex to expect everything from the state" prevailing in society, as much as the oppressive attitude, is one of the reasons the number of CSOs stagnates around 100,000 in a country with a population of nearly 84 million. Betil specifies that the number of CSOs in countries such as Germany and

France, whose populations are similar to that of Turkey, is around 600,000; he states that the people who are afraid of government pressure in our country try to categorize the need for organizing as "under the counter" initiatives and that civil society is built on this non-transparent foundation. According to Betil, even those CSOs that the public knows and hears about very frequently lag behind their European equivalents to a great extent in terms of transparency. Having stated that most of these organizations do not even share their financial statements on their web pages, Betil believes that this can only be corrected through self-criticism by the CSOs themselves.

This problem of transparency expressed by Betil exposes a greater obstacle affecting civil society's existence and activities in Turkey: a general mistrust of civil movements. According to Hacer Foggo, who formed significant public opinion on poverty accumulating in Turkey since the outbreak of the pandemic through the Deep Poverty Solidarity Network she established, uneasiness, lack of awareness and an indifference stemming from that lack of awareness are the three main arteries feeding public mistrust of civil initiatives. Foggo states that people abstain from taking part in civil initiatives in a reality where laws and regulations aiming to blockade civil initiatives result in the closure of associations and appointment of trustees.

We take this observation to mean that people who have an idea about associations and foundations that focus on charity and solidarity tend to trust these institutions but put a distance between themselves and the rights-based organizations whose functions and benefits they know little about. Rights-based organizations such as the Deep Poverty Solidarity Network are trying to remove this spiral of unawareness causing mistrust, and the ensuing indifference, by making visible the rights violations suffered by vulnerable groups, that people cannot-- or do not want to--see. Foggo says, "We are trying to make violations visible. If a child from a home to which we provide heaters cannot go to school, we are also trying to make visible, from the rights-based perspective, the violation this child endures in terms of access to education". Her words summarize the actions of voluntary initiatives like the Deep Poverty Solidarity Network to best eliminate the problems of lack of awareness and indifference.

Perhps the only silver lining of the pandemic may be the increased public awareness of the challenges that low-income families, women and children, as violence victims, as ethnic and cultural minorities, face every day. Looking at the experiences of the Deep Poverty Solidarity Network and other such civil initiatives,

Foggo says that thanks to this awareness being raised, different segments of society can now reach out to each other through social collectives. The tragedies of almost 4,000 families that the Network supported have led to an awakening in different segments of society on how the rights of women, of the chronically and extremely ill struggling with poverty, of children and other vulnerable groups are violated. Foggo's current challenge is to raise the same awareness in the public sector and with local administrations.

Where should we look for hope?

The will of civil initiatives in Turkey to pursue their activities for the improvement of society while standing up to the challenges of negative perceptions, shrinking civic space, and political and economic pressure can be found in cherishing hope. However, it should be kept in mind that a future where civil structures are a main actor there is no certainty about who will have a say in building the policies that represent the social interest and in political, social and economic decision-making processes. The experts whose experiences and ideas we have shared in this section also emphasize the fact that civil society culture must change in order for such a future to come to pass.

Civil society must free itself of institutional burdens

In the previous section we touched upon how outdated bureaucratic structures at most CSOs harmed civil society's work during the pandemic. As frequently mentioned in the analysis of grassroots movements, deep-seated decision-making hierarchies and other governance practices at civil society organizations have deepened the gap between beneficiaries and organizations and caused many CSOs to deviate from their purposes in order to survive. Foggo states that, as compared to 20 years ago, more CSOs put visibility at the forefront and push their purpose and philosophy to the background because of financial concerns. She further emphasizes that the words uttered by many CSOs today are left hanging in the air as compared to the past. Even though today's organizations generate information and data-based policies more than ever, we realize that such reports and outputs find fewer and fewer buyers.

It would be a right step to take for civil initiatives to prioritize their locality and get rid of outdated bureaucratic practices in order to free themselves, as mentioned before. Bekir Ağırdır and Zeynep Meydanoğlu agree that a civil organization model that is capable of mobilizing rapidly and dispersing with the same level of agility when necessary is much more suitable for coping with the problems of today and in the foreseeable future, as compared to slow, cumbersome structures. The Deep Poverty Solidarity Network is one of the most effective examples of this model and, thanks to the group of volunteers it organized through a WhatsApp group, it has not only answered to the needs of citizens in poverty, but also spread the fact that accumulating poverty is a basic rights violation, through the research and digital content it generated, to a very large group in Turkey.

As the experience of the Deep Poverty Solidarity Network shows, another critical problem that civil society needs to solve in order to have an impact on the future and protect the civic space in the long run is the issue of communication. As emphasized by Ağırdır, in civil society—and especially in CSOs that struggle for rights—there is a serious problem of communication. They have difficulties in explaining their work to the public. They avoid generating data-based studies. They do not even descend to answering the incoming requests related to their work much of the time, as stated by Ibrahim Betil. The area that will require the highest level of self-improvement from most CSOs, in the necessary process of transformation in the wake of the pandemic, will be the efficient use of digital channels and the adoption of effective communication strategies and tactics. Meydanoğlu emphasizes that CSOs must be delicate and selective while using certain terms in the process of developing new communication methods, practices and language, in order not to repeat past mistakes. From this perspective, it is better to stay away from words that glorify donors while reducing right owners to the lesser position of 'target group, beneficiary, stakeholder', terms borrowed from militarism and the private sector. The adoption of more ethically sound communication methods by CSOs rather than such expressions, will prevent the alienation of the public vis-à-vis civil society.

Does the solution lie with Generation Z?

All four experts are hopeful that the youth will carry forward the activities of civil society in Turkey. It would not be too ambitious to say that the new generations hold the key to a more flexible, agile and effective civil society as they can generate as many outputs in five hours as was generated in five days in the

past thanks to their digital literacy, education level, technological equipment and appeal to large masses through digital channels. However, for this key to find its lock, civil society must get rid of its current lethargy. As predicted by both Meydanoğlu and Ağırdır, young people can smell out the current bureaucratic problems of civil society from a long distance and do not want to pursue their activities within outdated organizational systems that no longer serve any function other than serving the interests of certain groups. In order to overcome this problem and to attract the talents and skills of the new generation considered to be civil movements' future, civil society 2.0 must blend the important advantages presented by customary institutional practice, such as continuity and experience, with the informal models in which young people can express themselves more effectively and make a difference, and it must do so as soon as possible.

WHERE IS THE SOURCE? – RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CIVIL SOCIETY AND PHILANTHROPY

The economic turmoil caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and by the measures employed for countering it, have put the topic of the delicate relationship between civil society and limited funding sources back on the agenda. As emphasized in the previous sections, the measures taken against the pandemic brought much of the crucial work of CSOs to a halt while the economic shrinkage triggered by Covid-19 has led to a serious problem with philanthropic sources. Government interventions around the world were inadequate in the face of the sudden outbreak and rapid spread of a pandemic that took millions of lives in a matter of months. In this process, while governments' political and economic actions remained limited, grassroots communities of solidarity rooted deep in society, capable of organizing rapidly through digital channels, came to the rescue of people working especially in the critical sectors of health, social services and education.

In this same period, a duality emerged from among the foundations, associations, international and supranational institutions that issue grants: due to the growing distance over time between cumbersome decision-making processes and beneficiaries in grassroots and central management staff, a number of the traditional and well-establisheded funding institutions failed to get a holistic understanding of local challenges and needs. The lack of full understanding of local needs resulted in the distribution of grants in the same conventional way, in line
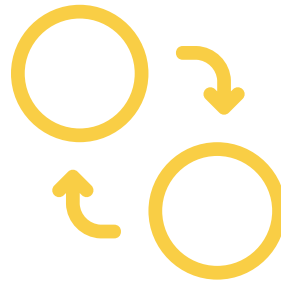
with policies set forth before the pandemic. This led to CSOs dependent on these funds, while they countered the pandemic from the front lines, being deprived of vital resources. Meanwhile, many other philanthropy funds, donors and companies increased their efforts in this period and proved that they could be flexible, attentive and fast. These behaviors brought these actors to the front lines.

Challenges faced by the philanthropy—civil society relationship today

Philanthropy--an individual, institution or organization devoting resources for the good of others, even of society in general——forms the backbone of civil society along with the rule of law, the right to assembly, individual liberties and the principle of common interest. Although these resources are generally thought of as monetary values, such as grants, funds and donations, other philanthropic resources include expertise, voluntary work, personal time and in-kind contributions. Beginning from the 19th century, traditional charity focusing on humanitarian aid and uplifting a certain class in need was replaced with philanthropic work based on the strategic and organized distribution of resources built for the solution of problems in the fields that concern the entire society such as health, shelter, access to food, social services and rights.

The criticisms of the trajectory of philanthropy are related to how the sector of philanthropy has professionalized and institutionalized over the past two centuries, drifting away from its objectives, becoming estranged from the problems it aimed to solve, and even acting based on the "profit and loss" model now attributed to the private sector. We can say that the Covid-19 crisis both accelerated these criticisms and raised new questions about the future of philanthropy. New questions should be added to the existing ones. For instance, will people approach philanthropy from a more global or more local perspective? In a conjuncture where the pandemic forces us to focus more on our close circle, will the attitudes towards balancing donations made for local and international purposes change in the long term? In a period where criticisms related to philanthropy's relationship with inequality and its detrimental impact on democracy, in addition to the challenging ethical and moral problems that come with donations, increase, and if the global crisis caused by the pandemic continues, will these concerns and criticisms become stronger or weaker?

Although it is difficult today to predict the answers to these questions, the speculations of experts about the future direction of philanthropy are meaningful. One of these experts, Rana Kotan, secretary general of the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV), states that philanthropy has started to concentrate on solving the new problems revealed by the pandemic at the international level and that, in this direction, it has begun to focus on areas that were relatively neglected in the past, such as the climate crisis, gender inequality and technological literacy. Kotan says that in the specific context of Turkey, where the public sector does not provide adequate support to CSOs and does not consider civil society as a stakeholder, the importance of philanthropy is even greater. Kotan states that foreign resources such as the European Union (EU) funds attach importance to the shrinkage of civil society in Turkey; she goes on to point out that these funds concentrate on human rights, technology and rights-based activities. We observe that the concerns of CSOs in Turkey about the continuity of funds increase because of both the adverse economic effects of the pandemic and the negative perceptions about foreign resources in Turkey (specifically by the party in power). In light of these developments, Kotan underlines the importance of mobilizing local and smaller funds over forcing CSOs into competition with each other for increasingly scarce foreign funds.

Özen Pulat, programs manager at Sabancı Foundation—one of the granting organizations that has predicted the negative effects of the pandemic on civil society in Turkey—states that the foundation has been issuing grants for 15 years so that everyone can benefit from basic rights, and has adapted both its priorities and its implementation methods in step with pandemic-related needs. Pulat specifies that funds were directed towards health and refugee programs along with the pandemic and that CSOs focusing on women's studies were able to benefit less from these funds when especially foreign resources were channeled into these two fields. In light of this data, Pulat says that the Sabancı Foundation adapted its work to the changing conditions and points out that the foundation did not only content itself with just giving money to CSOs; on the contrary, it accompanied the institutions it supports on this difficult journey by organizing training sessions on access to foreign funds and diversification of resources.

International philanthropy's approach to civil society

According to Benjamin Bellergy, president of Worldwide Initiatives for Grantmaker Support (WINGS), an international organization that globally supports granting organizations, the most significant problem that philanthropy faces today is that

organizations often miss out on solution and action opportunities with a capacity to create a big impact, because they continue to focus on specific problems based on their own priorities. Bellergy states that the net income of philanthropic institutions in the world is almost $1.5 trillion only $150 billion of which is effectively distributed; he goes on to point out that a balanced distribution of these resources is an issue that philanthropy needs to resolve.

According to Bellergy, the existing problems in the distribution of resources are also causing a deterioration of trust between philanthropic organizations and civil society. Grant organizations and CSOs speak to each other and learn about each other's work much less today compared to the past. From the perspective of grass-roots movements, we observe that these important movements get only crumbs out of this significant pie of $1.5 trillion. Likewise, the philanthropy sector was late to put the urgent issue of climate crisis on its agenda leading to the fact that its contribution in this field currently stands at only 2% of its resources. Sevda Kılıçalp, Policy and Incubation Manager at the European Foundation Center headquartered in Brussels, believes that there are up to 300,000 international foundations in the world that need to search for methods to effectively transfer their resources particularly to civil society organizations working at the local level.

New support models

Covid-19 salgınıyla birlikte kısıtlı hale gelen hibe imkân-larının sivil toplum için yeni destek modelleri oluştur-duğuna dikkat çeken Rana Kotan, Türkiye'de özellikle afetlerin ve ekonomik çöküntünün bireysel bağışçılığı tetiklediğini paylaşıyor. Bu bağlamda, 2019 ve 2020 yıl-larında art arda yaşanan depremler sonrasında enformel olarak bir araya gelen sivil toplum dayanışma platformlarının önemli miktarda ayni ve nakdi bağış topladığı, gönüllü çektiği biliniyor. Yine uluslararası düzeyde, kurulan yerel dayanışma ağlarının pandemi mağdurlarına yönelik bireysel bağışları artırdığı kaydedilmiştir. Bu oluşumların Türkiye'deki örnekleri arasında İhtiyaç Haritası, Derin Yoksulluk Ağı ve Yurttaş Dayanışma Ağı sayılabilir.
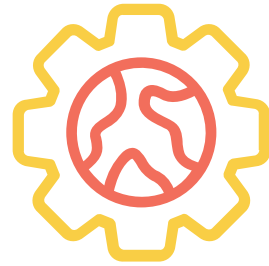
Rana Kotan points out that the dwindling of available grants along with the Covid-19 pandemic has given way to new support models for civil society and

specifies that especially disasters and economic depressions trigger individual donations in Turkey. In this context, it is known that civil society solidarity platforms that informally came together following the successive earthquakes in 2019 and 2020 collected a significant amount of in-kind and cash donation and attracted volunteers. It is also observed that local networks of solidarity have increased the amount of individual donations for victims of the pandemic, at a global level as well. The Needs Map, Deep Poverty Solidarity Network and Citizens' Solidarity Network can be cited as examples of such platforms in Turkey.

Despite these positive developments, Kotan indicates that there is still a significant distance between individuals and civil society in Turkey. TÜSEV's research in recent years shows that society does not trust civil initiatives –especially rights-based organizations—as we indicated in the previous section. Kotan cites the promises fatigue and civil society's high-frequency and interest-focused relationship with the public as among the reasons behind this attitude; she believes that CSOs must engage individual members of the public in their cause, rather than approaching them just to collect donations. In this sense, underlining and publicly appreciating the role of individuals for CSOs' impact and success will create a significant increase in individual support.

Another factor that would facilitate a more efficient transfer of philanthropic resources to civil society is the timely completion of a digital transformation within civil society. From this point of view, there are critical gaps related to the data collected through digital channels on which civil society activities depend. Kotan underlines that democratization and technology must go forward simultaneously and specifies that the legal gaps related to the use of data constitute an important problem especially for rights-based CSOs. Özen Pulat reminds us that many CSOs, especially in Turkey, are deprived of even the most basic technological tools and infrastructure even though technological transformation has already begun. Pulat evokes that hundreds of thousands of children were deprived of their right to education as they did not have access to tablets, mobile phones or internet; he goes on to note that the problem cannot be eliminated merely through the procurement of technological means and that grants must be allocated for technology literacy training.

In conclusion, civil society is crossing a critical threshold where the continuity of philanthropic resources on which it has been feeding for the past 200 years is under increasing threat. Evidently, grant organizations enjoying the means of a large sector and pool of resources cannot efficiently nor effectively transfer their

resources to civil society. Both the sector of philanthropy and civil society have very important responsibilities to overcome this deadlock. Funding organizations must first abandon their outdated, centralized decision-making practices and reestablish their dialogue with civil society organizations. In this sense, they must focus on listening rather than speaking and responding rather than making demands in their new communication strategies. The only way for CSOs to emerge from this process stronger is to diversify their sources of funding and to turn towards individual and local resources that are smaller but higher in number. If, meanwhile, they improve their technological capacity and review their governance principles and methods in line with local needs, they will become leaders of social transformation and common interest once again.

TRANSFORMATION, DIGITALIZATION, RESISTANCE: THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF CIVIL SOCIETY 2.0

During the pandemic period, which has lasted for over two years, various meetings were held, research was conducted and publications published on the future of civil society. In various parts of our study, we also covered, from time to time, how the pandemic has affected the operations of civil society, and what kinds of opportunities, as well as dangers, it presented to the civil sector. When we examine the conclusions of this and similar studies, we can see that all of them reach the following consensus: If civil society wishes to survive in a post-pandemic world, it must transform, digitalize, and resist the shrinking of the civic space.

In this context, it does not go unnoticed that the concept of 'transformation' is especially being emphasized, with the economic side effects of the pandemic spreading to the third sector. Serious concerns are being voiced in local and international meetings and reports by many civil society experts over the future of NGOs unable to 'transform' during and after the pandemic. It should be noted that during this period no concrete definitions have been set for this concept of 'transformation'. It would not be wrong to say that there is no consensus about the type of actions that need to be taken by NGOs in order to implement this transformation. Similarly, 'digitalization', like transformation, has also been recommended many times; however, no actual progress has been made, aside from bringing to the attention of organizations the need to strengthen digital literacy and technological infrastructures. The 'shrinking civic space' on the other hand, has been considered, for all intents and purposes, as a threat surrounding civil society since the mid-2000s. Moreover, despite all the efforts at global and local scales, the civic space keeps shrinking at an increasing pace.

Slowly leaving behind the days of pandemic isolation, which revealed acute issues regarding civil society, we are at the threshold of a normalization process where life is getting closer to its previous natural flow. During this transition period, the basis for providing concrete definitions for, and taking actions to resolve, the issues that surround civil society is also slowly being formed. In this context, both the sector itself and its stakeholders need to have a solid understanding of the needs and risks associated with transformation, digitalization and shrinking civic space, already identified in past years, for non-governmental civil society organizations. In order for NGOs to fulfill their responsibilities under these concepts and implement the necessary actions, they need to have a clear strategy regarding how to achieve the aforementioned transformation, digitalization and the fight for the preservation of a shrinking civic space.

How does civil society transform?

SHearing the words of Yörük Kurtaran, one of the founders of Support Foundation for Civil Society and an essential figure in Turkish civil society, we realize that this transformation has both internal and external aspects. Kurtaran states that the pandemic has led to significant changes in the conventional governance practices of NGOs, the most important one being that younger employees, who are more tech-savvy and knowledgeable about IT as compared to the previous generations, have become more visible in organizations and management platforms. Additionally, it is notable that NGOs that employ those from the younger generation tend to foster the creativity and opinion sharing of their young employees by providing them with flexible working conditions. It is noted that concrete steps are being taken by organizations to structure management to be more inclusive and to bring diversity to the forefront.
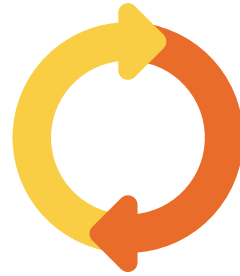
Uygar Özesmi, founder of Change.org Turkey and Good4Trust, highlights the importance of individuals who break away from conventional NGOs to develop their own networks and organizational models as among the critical factors that shape civil society from the outside. Özesmi tells us that professionals who are unable to fully utilize their creativity and expertise due to deep-seated hierarchical structures within conventional NGOs decide to leave these conventional structures to establish more flexible networks and unincorporated

associations. These newer models include inclusive management mechanisms and especially provide the opportunity for younger employees to use their creativity and other potentials. In such organizations, it is notable that instead of a work ethic that rewards employees for exerting themselves in their work, management strategies that emphasize the 'well-being' of the organization are being implemented.

Among the organizations to adopt these new principles of governance, social initiatives are particularly notable. According to Özesmi, social initiatives support a 'prosumer' economy, rather than a consumer economy. Social initiatives such as Good4Trust bring together individuals and organizations that produce by paying regard to ecological and social rights with investors they call 'prosumers'. The interaction between these two actors paves the way for a new system in which ecological resources are not consumed absentmindedly, thus protecting nature and people and fostering long-term economic benefits.

Funding programs that support such initiatives, and networks with flexible grant policies, are also among the main actors in this transformation process. Dilek Ertükel, team leader for the Think Civil program, one such organization, shares that within the past 18 months they have supported close to 700 organizations. The fact that 80% of the organizations supported by Think Civil are small, recently established NGOs that focus on rights-based efforts, is a trend that gives Ertükel hope. It had been previously stated that a substantial portion of the financial aid and in-kind support provided to civil society organizations with the pandemic focused on fields such as healthcare, education and social services, whereas resources allocated to rights-based and advocacy-focused efforts had decreased.

The limits of digitalization within the context of civil society

One of the most important changes brought about by the pandemic was a previously unprecedented speed and efficiency in transferring our work lives and social lives to digital platforms. As in other sectors, certain large and well-established organizations from the civic space managed to adapt more easily to this process of digitalization, while many small and medium-scale organizations encountered serious issues in fulfilling their financial and administrative obligations on account of not having the necessary digital infrastructure and hardware in place. The digitalization process for organizations that operate in such areas as access to education, healthcare, social services, and protection of vulnerable groups was especially troublesome.

Noting these developments, while emphasizing the importance of digitalization for civil society, experts nevertheless draw the boundaries of this concept as ambiguously as possible. In the days following the pandemic, digitalization was considered as equivalent to the provision of necessary infrastructure for meetings that were required to be held via online platforms. Institutions that provide grants established technological and corporate donation funds to meet the requirements of small and medium-scale non-governmental civil society organizations for computer and internet hardware. In addition, an educational campaign was initiated to develop the skills necessary to use digital tools and media. Many large foundations and associations, using their own human and technological resources, assumed and conducted the operations of NGOs that were unable to take advantage of these infrastructure funds and educational opportunities.

Even so, it would not be right to reduce the digital campaigns that resulted from the pandemic to the supply of technological tools and communications infrastructure alone. As highlighted by Mouna Ben Garga, innovation leader of CIVICUS, during the lockdown and isolation period of the pandemic, digital platforms created a vital space for rights-based and advocacy-focused NGOs to continue their operations and reach larger communities as compared to the audiences they were influencing in the physical environment. Flexible and local initiatives that organized through digital platforms helped prevent the destructive impact of the pandemic from causing harm to disadvantaged groups. Initiatives organized through online and social platforms played a crucial role in delivering food, clean water, medical supplies and other hygiene products to the relevant beneficiaries. In countries where meetings, gatherings, street demonstrations and marches were banned due to health measures, social media and internet-based tools helped rights-based NGOs transfer their awareness and advocacy activities from the physical environment to the digital one, and contributed greatly to their continuing operations in monitoring and reporting on human rights.

Where we are today, it is possible to interpret digitalization in a broader sense. With the advent of cryptocurrencies and blockchain technologies, we can see the possibilities of using these innovations for the purpose of increasing the efficiency, visibility and accountability of social initiatives. As stated by Özesmi, although not yet that common in civil society, blockchain technology provides

various conveniences of payment for civil initiatives that operate in the field of humanitarian aid, and in areas of conflict where the financial infrastructure is vulnerable. The innovations brought by blockchain in terms of documentation and transparency could make NGOs more accountable, while giving us the opportunity to audit these organizations to see whether they have done their part in protecting ecological rights and social justice.

Civil Society 2.0: Can the civic space be expanded again?

According to Ben Garga, the shrinking of civic space is not a new phenomenon. According to the CIVICUS expert, the civic space has been shrinking steadily since the mid-2000s, which is inversely proportional to the growing trend of authoritarianism around the world. Like Ben Garga, other experts also admit that with the new laws being enacted in many countries around the world under the guise of fighting the pandemic, civil society is becoming increasingly limited in its ability to have a voice in both the physical and the digital environments. Similarly, with the disinformation and security laws enacted by authoritarian regimes in various parts of the world, the legal basis is being formed for many practices that will further subdue the operations of civil society and subject them to the tyranny of governments.
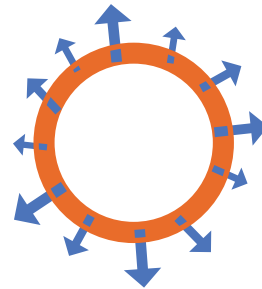
Stating that despite everything there is still hope, Dilek Ertükel, team leader at Think Civil, counts the establishment of new NGOs every day, and the people's unwavering support for civil initiatives that contribute to the development of their communities, as among the reasons that reaffirm her courage and optimism. She underlines that in order to take these steps to the next level, instead of conventional and stationary NGOs, we need agile organizational models that are able to respond in real time to the demands of the public. In this context, Uygar Özesmi highlights the concept of active citizenship. Both Özesmi and Ben Garga advocate that in order to expand the shrinking civic space once again, the people need to get visibly behind their opinions, increase their presence in the streets and boldly stand tall against power. Yörük Kurtaran touches on the fact that in order to pave the way for such initiatives and behaviors, deep expertise and horizontal organizational models established by civil soci-

ety professionals who are capable of cooperating with each other are now more important than ever. Kurtaran predicts that in the future, corporate and other grants will mainly go to these new organizational models that bring different networks together.

Onur Sazak

Onur Sazak is the 2021/2022 Mercator-IPC Fellow at the Istanbul Policy Center-Sabancı University-Stiftung Mercator Initiative. Prior to the fellowship, Sazak worked as an independent consultant for the International Press Institute (IPI), coordinating its Turkey program. Between 2019 and 2021 he worked at Open Society Foundations Turkey, Istanbul Policy Center at Sabancı University, Hudson Institute and Brookings Institution in different capacities ranging from research manager to program associate for over a decade and a half. He headed the Philanthropy Infrastructure Development in Turkey project at the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV). He holds a BA and MA in International Relations and International Economic Policy from American University. He received his PhD in Political Science from Sabancı University in Istanbul.

Samuel Moyn

Samuel Moyn is the Henry R. Luce Professor of Jurisprudence at Yale Law School and a professor of history at Yale University. He has worked on a diverse range of subjects, specializing in 20th century European moral and political theory. He has written several books on European intellectual history and human rights history.

Nilgün Arısan Eralp

Nilgün Arısan Eralp holds a B.Sc. degree in economics from Middle East Technical University, a masters degree in economic development from Leicester University and an M.Sc. degree in European Studies from London School of Economics. From 1990 to 1992, she worked as an expert in State Planning Organization, Directorate General for EU Affairs. From 1997-2000, she worked in the Directorate General for the EU Affairs at State Planning Organization. She later served as Director of National Program in the Secretariat General for the European Union Affairs (EUSG) until 2009. Eralp has been working at TEPAV since 2009 as director of the European Union Institute.

Mahmut Can İsal

Mahmut Can Isal is an Istanbul Bar Association lawyer who has been providing legal and programmatic consultancy in the fields of refugee protection, child protection and similar areas for four years. Isal has been working as the Legal Sector Manager of the Support to Life Association for several years and has served on

the Baskent University Migration Research Center Advisory Board for nearly a year. He received his undergraduate degree from Istanbul Bilgi University Faculty of Law and is currently pursuing his Master's Degree in Human Rights Law at Bilgi university.

Elmas Arus

Elmas Arus completed her associate degree in the Radio-Television Department at Trakya University. She received her bachelor's degree in Journalism from Istanbul University. She directed the documentary Buçuk (2010) and many other award-winning documentaries. Since 2009 she has been president and founder of the Zero Discrimination Association. She is coordinator of many projects and the director of Another School of Politics, an association established in 2017 to support Roma youth. She is also the Turkey coordinator of the Council of Europe ROMACTED program.

Hakan Ataman

Hakan Ataman received his undergraduate education in the Department of Philosophy at the Faculty of Literature, Ege University. Within the scope of the Human Rights Advocates Program by the Institute for Study of Human Rights at Columbia University in New York, he worked on human rights advocacy with the support of the Witney M. Young, Jr. Memorial Fund. He was one of the founding members of Amnesty International Turkey. After his experience in Citizen's Assembly, he has been working on "The Freedom of Association and Right to Participation", conducted by the Civil Society Development Centre based in Ankara.

Metin Bakkalcı

After graduating from Hacettepe University Faculty of Medicine, Metin Bakkalcı worked in many different health institutions. Between 1996 and 2020 he was project coordinator of the Turkey Human Rights Foundation (TIHV) for the Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers for Victims of Torture. Between 2006 and 2020, he served as general secretary of the Human Rights Foundation (HRFT). Since November 2020 he has been president of the foundation. Bakkalcı has also contributed to the preparation of the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Effective Investigation and Documentation of the Guide (Istanbul Protocol), which is the accepted standard in forensic examination and recommended by the United Nations (UN) and

government of Turkey for use in the world. He has been a member of the Council of the International Council on Tortured Persons since 2016. He served as a member of the Central Council of the Turkish Medical Association from 1992-1994 and 1998-2006, and as vice president of the Turkish Medical Association between 2000 and 2006.

Goran Miletić

Goran Miletić is the Director for Europe at the Stockholm-based human rights organization Civil Rights Defenders. Since 2004 he has helped to lead the organisation's efforts in the Western Balkans, cooperating and providing the capacity for human rights organisations across the region. He has been particularly engaged in drafting and lobbying for the adoption of inclusive anti-discrimination legislation in the Western Balkans and is a member of the European Commission of Sexual Orientation Law (ECSOL) and Expert Council of NGO Law within the Council of Europe. Since its establishment, he has been a board member of Heartefact Foundation.

Feray Salman

Feray Salman graduated from Middle East Technical University, Department of City and Regional Planning in 1981. Between 1984 and1986 she attended the lectures of the Town Economics department at South Bank Polytechnic in England. From 1987-2000, she worked at the European Union Delegation of Turkey. In 1996, she volunteered at the Turkey Democracy Conference of Turkey Union of Chambers of Engineers and Architects and continued her work within TMMOB. Between 1996 and 2000, she contributed to the establishment process of Bianet by participating in the efforts of TMMOB, Turkish Medical Association and IPS Communication Foundation to create an "alternative communication network". She took part in the Board of Directors of the Human Rights Association (İHD) between 1998 and 2004. Since 2005 she has been general coordinator of the Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP).

Ahmet İnsel

Ahmet Insel received his bachelor's and doctorate degrees in economics from Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. He has lectured at Galatasaray and Panthéon-Sorbonne Universities. He worked as a columnist in Radikal and Cumhuriyet newspapers. He is an editor and writer at İletişim Publishing House and Birikim Magazine, and hosts a program at Açık Radyo.

Emrah Gürsel

Emrah Gürsel is Director for International Partnerships at KIgA e.V., a German non-profit addressing different forms of hatred, and coordinates a European network addressing antisemitism. He is a founding member of the Karakutu Association that was established in 2014. He served on the Board of Ali Ismail Korkmaz Foundation. He has worked at organizations such as Bilgi University's Center for Civil Society, German-Turkish Youth Bridge, Hafıza Merkezi and TOG. Since 2005 he has been organizing or facilitating high-level international activities and editing several publications on memory and human rights issues. He holds a bachelor's degree in Industrial Engineering from ITU and a master's in development economics from Marmara University.

Yıldız Tar

Yıldız Tar is a journalist and Media Coordinator of Kaos GL Association. The author of the book "Comrade I am a faggot: The Test of the Left with LGBT" published by Ceylan Publications. They prepared the talk books "Dönmelere Doyamadık" (We Can't Get To Get Up With The Turns) and "Translar Vardır" (There Are Trans), published by Kaos GL and Pembe Hayat. Theycoordinate the Oral History Study of the association. The author of the oral history book "Patikalar: Notch to Official History". They prepare the annual Media Monitoring reports of the association and is the editor of the KaosGL.org internet newspaper.

Işık Tüzün

Işık Tüzün holds a master's degree in development studies from the International Institute of Social Studies of Erasmus University Rotterdam (ISS) majoring in Politics of Alternative Development and minoring in Poverty Studies. Before joining the Education Reform Initiative (ERG) in Istanbul in 2007, she worked as a researcher at the History Foundation. From 2013-2016 she served as ERG's Advocacy and Training Programmes Coordinator, Acting Director and Education Observatory Director. In 2013 she was granted a Marshall Memorial Fellow. Besides authoring research and/or policy reports on gender equality in education and refugee children's right to education, she worked in several NGO projects, including Ashoka Foundation's Changemaker Classrooms Project, CEID's Monitoring Gender Equality Project and BBOM Association's Participatory and Peaceful Classrooms Project. She rejoined the ERG team in September 2019.

Ferhat Kentel

Ferhat Kentel studied in the Department of Management at Middle East Technical University, received his graduate degree from the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University and his PhD in sociology at École des Hautes Études (EHESS) in Paris. He worked at the French Department of Political Science of Marmara University, the Department of Sociology of Istanbul Bilgi University and the Department of Sociology at Istanbul Şehir University. His articles on the sociology of everyday life, the sociology of emotions, modernity, new social movements, religion, Islamic movements, intellectuals, and ethnic communities have been published in different journals and books in Turkey and abroad.

Ayşe Köse Badur

A graduate of Istanbul University, Faculty of Political Sciences, Department of International Relations. Ayşe Köse Badur now works as the Urbanization and Local Governance Coordinator at Istanbul Policy Center (IPC). She teaches History of Modern Turkey at Işık University. She received her master's degree from Boğaziçi University's Atatürk Institute and continues her doctoral studies in the same department covering the Late Ottoman Early Republic Period. Among her previously published book studies are "Kurdish Issue Local Dynamics and Conflict Resolution" (Ayrıntı Publications), published in 2019 jointly with Prof. E. Fuat Keyman and "Women of 68" (Doğan Kitap). In addition, she has several articles and translations in publications such as "Toplumsal Tarih", "Birikim", "Müteferrika", "Foreign Policy" about the history of modern Turkey and the '68 movement. Köse Badur is also an Açık Radyo programmer.

Bertha Tobias

An international award winning speaker, MC and youth leader, Bertha Tobias has wide-reaching experience in strategic socio-political relations and youth development. A graduate of the United World College Changshu China, she is currently pursuing an International Relations and Economics dual major at Claremont Mckenna College. Bertha has been serving as #BeFree Ambassador since 2017 and has interned at the United Nations Population Fund to facilitate national social progress for women in Namibia and beyond. In her school community Bertha served as chair of the student government as well as the College Management Committee student representative. Most recently she has been at the forefront of the #ShutItAllDown protests, with a combined social and non-social

reach of 11 million, in her country of Namibia, highlighting the importance of meaningful youth participation in political activity.

Leonid Drabkin

Leonid Drabkin is general manager of OVD-Info, a Moscow-based human rights organization dealing with issues of freedom of assembly and political prosecutions. Drabkin joined OVD-Info in 2018 as Crowdfunding Manager.

Furkan Dabanıyastı

Furkan Dabanıyastı completed his undergraduate education in mechanical engineering at Boğaziçi University in 2018. He took part in the establishment of Boğaziçi University's LGBTI+ Club with the experiences he had gained in student clubs. He continued his education in the field of digital media and marketing in Los Angeles. He has participated in projects for the visibility of queer creatives in the culture, arts and entertainment sector and in graduate and student formations in the struggle against the appointment of the trustee rector to Boğaziçi University. He still broadcasts with the initiative #ResistBogazici. Their broadcasts are listened to by thousands of people all over the world.

Philip Gamaghelyan

Philip Gamaghelyan is PhD and assistant professor at the Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies at the University of San Diego where he teaches courses in conflict analysis & resolution, mediation, media, nationalism & conflict, program design, monitoring & evaluation. Gamaghelyan is also a Conflict Resolution Scholar-Practitioner, a board member of the Imagine Center for Conflict Transformation and managing editor of the Caucasus Edition: Journal of Conflict Transformation.

Ali Bayramoğlu

Ali Baramoğlu completed his undergraduate degree from the Faculty of Political Sciences of Grenoble University in France. He received his master's and doctorate degrees from Istanbul University Faculty of Economics. Between 1981 and 1999 he worked as a faculty member at Marmara University, Department of Public Administration. He has conducted research and written books on the political role of the armed forces, the Kurdish issue, Islamic movements, democracy and state sociology. Between 1998 and 2001 he worked as coordinator of the "New Tactics

in the Human Rights Struggle''. He carried out studies in the Marmara Region within the scope of his membership in the Wise People Commission which was established in 2013 to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem. He chaired the International Hrant Dink Award Committee from 2009-2015.

Hacer Foggo

Foggo worked as a reporter for 15 years in various newspapers and magazines focusing mainly on human rights. In 2012 she founded Turkey Roma Rights (ROM-FO) with the participation of nearly 80 Roma associations from Turkey. She established the Çimenev Science and Art Center in 2016 for children who couldn't attend school and had dropped out due to socio-economical reasons. The center transformed into Şişli Municipality İnönü Neighborhood House in 2021. During the pandemic period she established the Deep Poverty Solidarity Network with her friends to provide food, tablets, etc. to those unable to meet their basic needs. She was also selected as Ashoka Fellow in 2015 and as one of the ten leading women from Turkey at the Wow World Women's Festival in 2021. She is the author of a review book "Red Tassel".

İbrahim Betil

İbrahim Betil graduated from Boğaziçi University. Until 1994, he worked in several positions such as general manager, chairman of the board, and founding member in industrial and financial organizations and commercial banks, both in Turkey and abroad. After 1994 he worked on and managed education studies and non-governmental organizations' activities both in Turkey and abroad. He still works voluntarily as a board member and provides supervision and consultancy to various non-governmental organizations, and serves as a member of the board of directors in various industrial companies.

Zeynep Meydanoğlu

Zeynep Meydanoğlu is the Turkey Co-Director of Ashoka, a global social entrepreneurship network, and leader in the field of global gender equality. Before joining Ashoka, Meydanoğlu contributed to the strengthening of civil society in Turkey in institutions such as the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV) and the women's movement with her volunteer work in institutions such as KAMER and Purple Roof. She also serves on the board of Support Foundation for Civil Society and

Greenpeace Akdeniz. She holds a bachelor's degree in political science and cultural studies from McGill University and a master's degree in Human Rights Law from Istanbul Bilgi University.

Bekir Ağırdır

Bekir Ağırdır graduated from METU Faculty of Administrative Sciences, Department of Business Administration in 1979. Between 1979 and 2003 he worked as a manager in various industrial companies. From 2003-2005 he worked as the general manager at the History Foundation. He has been serving as the general manager and member of the Board of Directors at KONDA Research and Consulting Limited Company since 2005. He is a founding member of the Democratic Republic Program, a member of the board of TESEV and a writer and commentator at T24. He is also a board member of the Hrant Dink Foundation.

Benjamin Bellegy

Benjamin Bellegy is executive director at WINGS. Previously he led international programs in a variety of fields including local civil society strengthening, sustainable development and post-disaster reconstruction. Prior to WINGS, Bellegy managed international programs at Fondation de France, where he launched and led several pooled funds and collaborations with other foundations and supported philanthropy development in the Global South. He earned a political science diploma and a master's degree in non-profit management from the Institut d'Études Politiques of Grenoble and a master's degree in communication and information sciences from Stendhal University in Grenoble.

Özen Pulat

Özen Pulat completed her undergraduate education at Boğaziçi University, Department of Translation Studies and her master's degree at Bilgi University, Department of Social Projects and NGO Management. She worked as a volunteer in student clubs and various non-governmental organizations throughout her university life. Pulat, who has been working at the Sabancı Foundation for nine years, is currently its programs manager. She is responsible for the Foundation's social change programs, especially grant programs, Changemakers program and international relations.

Rana Kotan

Rana Kotan has more than 20 years of work experience in finance and civil society. She graduated from Boğaziçi University, Department of Business Administration in 1999, then received her MBA from Yale University. Starting her professional career in the audit department at Arthur Andersen's, Kotan served as a Manager at EFG Istanbul Securities and Sabancı Holding Strategy and Business Development Group Presidency. From 2013-2019, she worked at Sabancı Foundation as the Director of Programs and International Relations. Since January 2020 she has been working as the general secretary of the Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (TÜSEV), whose aim is making civil society stronger, participatory and reputable. She is also a board member of the Balkan Civil Society Development Network (BCSDN).

Sevda Kılıçalp

Sevda Kılıçalp is policy and incubation manager at the European Foundation Center in Brussels. She has worked for many years for civil societies, social enterprises and social investment in Turkey as a trainer, researcher, consultant and manager. She holds a PhD in philanthropic studies from the Indiana University and a master's degree in philanthropic studies and social entrepreneurship from the University of Bologna, Italy.

Dilek Ertükel

Dilek Ertükel has worked throughout her career to mobilize individuals, organizations and resources in support of democracy, good governance, women's empowerment and human rights. Ertükel has been a consultant to civic leaders and organizations in Turkey, the United States, Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, Brazil, Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Georgia, Macedonia and Pakistan in organization development, strategic communications and advocacy. She is now directing the European Union's "Sivil Düşün" Program in Turkey. During her career, she has served as a consultant to many international institutions.

Mouna Ben Garga

Mouna Ben Gaega is a human rights activist and community organizer. As the Innovations Lead at CIVICUS, she is working on testing and managing new civil society formations and models of organizing and collaborating focusing on

supporting social movements, enhancing civic engagement of youth, women, and LGBTQ+ and the use of technologies for human rights and civic space. She currently heads a multi-stakeholder partnership that supports the I4C network.

Uygar Özesmi

An environmental scientist and Ashoka Senior Fellow, Uygar Özesmi founded Good4Trust.org to create a derivative economy for ecological and social justice. He is chair of Tüketim Ekonomisi Association. He teaches sustainable energy, ecological economics and social entrepreneurship at Turkish universities. He completed his master's degree as a Fulbright Scholar at Ohio State University and his PhD as a MacArthur Scholar at the University of Minnesota. He established Erciyes University's Environmental Engineering Department. Turkey's first crowdsourcing platform KusBank.org was launched by him in 2001. He was the founding chairman of Doğa Foundation, BirdLife's Turkey representative in 2002. He worked as an environmental specialist for the United Nations Development Program in New York, as well as general manager of TEMA Foundation and general director of Greenpeace Mediterranean. He launched Change.org in Turkey in 2012 and continues to serve as the organization's general director. He served on the board of the World Union for Civic Participation (CIVICUS) for two terms and was one of the founding members of the Civil Society Development Center (STGM). He was also a board member of the Ashoka Foundation and the ENIVA Foundation. He has over 100 scientific papers, countless popular pieces, a book, and a daily program.

Yörük Kurtaran

Yoruk Kurtaran has worked in TESEV, Willows Foundation and TUSIAD. He was general manager of Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG), one of the leading youth work related organisations in Turkey and a board member of the Center for Civil Society Studies of Istanbul, Bilgi University. He is an undergraduate and masters level lecturer on civil society, civil society theory, youth policy and the history of video games. A board member of several organisations in Turkey including Ali Ismail Korkmaz Foundation, Anadolu Kultur and Mother Child Education Foundation (ACEV), he is also a founding member and trustee of Support for Civil Society Foundation (Sivil Toplum için Destek Vakfi) a granting organization supporting grassroots initiatives in Turkey. He is also a trustee of Turkey Mozaik Foundation, a diaspora granting organization in London, supporting innovative grassroots organizations in Turkey.

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