



# **Public Pulse Analysis**

## **Perceptions of Civil Society in Kosovo**

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## 1 Executive Summary

The analysis that you are reading presents the findings on the public perceptions of civil society in Kosovo<sup>1</sup>. The quantitative part of the analysis is based on the data collected by the Public Pulse survey while the qualitative context is provided from three focus groups held in; Prishtinë/Priština, Ferizaj/Uroševac, and Prizren.

Civil society, in the survey questions to the respondents, is either defined as a non-governmental organization or posed as a broad definition 'civil society'. Similarly, during focus group discussions civil society is to be understood as non-governmental organizations, and more specifically the organizations that are operating and vocal in the respective localities where the interviews were conducted.

The survey results reveal that 15 percent of respondents perceive that the role of non-governmental organizations is in offering humanitarian aid, while holding the government accountable comes as a close second. Other roles that the respondents have pointed out are awareness raising, gateway into a political career, collecting donor funds and promoting gender equality.

When it comes to trust in civil society, 59 percent of the respondents trust the sector while 61 percent believe that the civil society does good work, marking an increase from the Public Pulse results of October 2014 when trust in civil society was below 50 percent. However, when asked about the role of civil society as a 'watchdog' to democratic processes in the country, 50 percent of the respondents believe that it does not act as a 'watchdog'.

Perceptions on the presence of corruption in the civil society sector show that 16 percent of the respondents believe that corruption is present in large scale. The perceptions are formed mainly from media and talks with relatives and friends (59 percent) while less than 10 percent of the respondents reported personal experience based on which they perceived the presence of corruption.

Volunteerism and other forms of civic engagement (which constitute an important part of an active and vibrant civil society) remain extremely low. Around 90 percent of the respondents have never participated in public discussions and community based initiatives or activities organized by civil society.

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<sup>1</sup> For UNDP, references to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999)

## 2 Introduction

An active citizenry is undoubtedly a very important part of a strong democracy. Defined as the “third sector”,<sup>2</sup> the civil society is positioned alongside the state actors and private industry and includes all groups and organizations that operate in the public realm for a common purpose and interest. Civil society<sup>3</sup> is broad and very diverse in its composition; from the most commonly found non-governmental/non-profit organizations to community-based organizations, labor unions, religious-based organizations, think tanks, development organizations and many more. Moreover, any voluntary association (non-formally registered) of individuals gathered to further a common interest, shape the rules that govern social life or transform the rules in entirety is part of civil society.

The Public Pulse survey gathers information on citizens' perceptions on various socio-political issues such as: the current political situation, satisfaction with the work of central and local institutions, various socioeconomic indicators, and issues that are prevalent at the time the data is gathered. As such, the results obtained serve as an important barometer of general citizen satisfaction, which can be useful to both policy makers on the one hand, and the general public on the other. Similarly, the questions pertaining to civil society and various forms of civic engagement posed to respondents offer a picture on how citizens judge the work of the civil society, their willingness to participate in events organized by civil society organizations, voluntary activity, as well as willingness to mobilize to respond to the stated dissatisfactions. The results of the survey reveal a bleak picture of Kosovo's civic engagement. Civic activism as well as volunteerism seems to be very low with less than 4 percent of the respondents having volunteered for any civil society organization during their recent past. Likewise, participation and engagement in community based events such as neighborhood gatherings (which would be easier to mobilize due to its direct impact in the lives of residents) is also particularly low.

When it comes to the assessment of additional aspects of civil society in Kosovo, the respondents' answers to the surveys' closed-ended question reveal that more than 50 percent of them have trust in civil society and believe that they do good work. Such results would be particularly important in the context of a general popular distrust and dissatisfaction with the work of central institutions.<sup>4</sup> However, when asked about a specific line of work of civil society, namely their work in monitoring democratic development, 58 percent of the respondents believe that civil society does not act as a truthful ‘watchdog’. This represents an increase of approximately 8 percent from the April 2015 results.

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<sup>2</sup> A Guide to Civil Society Organizations working on Democratic Governance. UNDP (2005). Retrieved at: [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/democratic-governance/oslo-governance-center/civic-engagement/a-guide-to-civil-society-organizations-working-on-democratic-governance-/3665%20Booklet\\_heleWEB\\_.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/democratic-governance/oslo-governance-center/civic-engagement/a-guide-to-civil-society-organizations-working-on-democratic-governance-/3665%20Booklet_heleWEB_.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> For more elaborate accounts on civil society in Kosovo see the following: KIPRED (2005) on the NGO sector after the conflict, UNDP (2008) on civil society and development and KCSF (2011) on the civil society index.

<sup>4</sup> See Public Pulse Report X. UNDP (2015).

Three focus group discussions were held with the aim providing more context on the perceptions of civil society (understood in this context as formally registered non-governmental organizations). An underlying theme that emerged across the three focus group discussions was the high level of distrust towards civil society as an independent sector that ought to serve and represent the needs and concerns of the citizens in general. The explanation for the distrust lies primarily in the perceived direct link between the members of the civil society and mainstream political parties representing various other interests. For instance, the fact that several civil society members joined these mainstream political parties shortly prior to the national elections of 2014 has cast a negative light in the motives of civil society organizations and their members. Moreover, the distrust led to an overall feeling of dejection among participants, particularly regarding their power to voice concerns and for these concerns to be heard. Among other emerging themes in focus groups that will be discussed in detail in part 5 of this analysis are the politicization of civil society, the knowledge of what constitutes civil society, participation and volunteerism, and expectations of civil society.

### **3 Objective and methodology**

This analysis aims to present the public perceptions that citizens of Kosovo have towards civil society. In order to do so, both quantitative and qualitative methods and sources were used. The quantitative part of the analysis is based on the survey data collected for the bi-annual Public Pulse opinion poll of UNDP. The data used for this report stems from two Public Pulse surveys collected during the period of October 2014 – March 2015 and that of April 2015 – October 2015. Both opinion polls are representative of the Kosovo population for which 1,306 citizens were surveyed. The survey respondents were 50 percent male and 50 percent female with the average age of 42. The survey questions that are subject to analysis are closed-ended and ask the respondents to give their opinion on the work of 'civil society' without specifying the form of association or specific civil society organization. Similarly, the questions assessing the role as a watchdog or trust in civil society have been posed in the same manner. The results derived are indicative of the prevalent public opinion, however, for closer investigation on perceptions of civil society and the work that they do, more pointed and detailed questions would provide more information.

The qualitative analysis for this paper is based on the information gathered from three focus groups held with members of civil society, former activists, university students, citizens, representatives of the media, and university professors. The focus groups were held in Prishtina/Priština, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Prizren.

## 4 The concept of civil society and situational analysis

The emphasis on the importance of civil society for a functioning democracy has gained traction over the past decades, especially in the context of emerging democracies and developing countries. The concept of civil society has become ubiquitous and permeates the discourse in academia and the development and aid industry as well as politics. While a strong and vibrant civil society is touted as an important prescription for democratization processes, the definition and conceptualization of civil society remains vague and is to be analyzed within specific socio-cultural contexts. Broadly speaking, civil society is defined as a voluntary association of individuals who have come together to further a common interest outside of the state and private industry. CIVICUS, an alliance of civil society organizations, in collaboration with Kosovo Civil Society Foundation<sup>5</sup> define civil society as follows:

*'The space of society, outside of the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, not for profit organizations and institutions, which do not run for office, but advance common interests.'*

This definition is concentrated on the activities of civil society which focus on the advancement of a common interest through individual and collective action and includes different forms of civic engagement including, but not limited to, protests and citizen participation. Moreover, by specifically mentioning 'which do not run for office', political parties are excluded from civil society, in contrast to some definitions which include political parties and their role in gathering people, especially at the local level, to further their joint interests.

Civil society in Kosovo has undergone different phases over the last quarter century and played different roles. During the 1990s, civil society played an important role in the resistance against the Serbian regime through grassroots organization of communities and provision of humanitarian aid and social services as part of the parallel system. The period immediately after the conflict saw an increase in the number of international NGOs, and the need to offer humanitarian assistance and reconstruction aid led to the emergence of a high number of local NGOs to absorb the funds.<sup>6</sup> Not all NGOs exist today, as many were registered solely for the absorption of available funds at the time, while a smaller number of NGOs evolved and tried to adapt to the changing circumstances. To date, civil society is still

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<sup>5</sup> *Better Governance for a Greater Impact* – CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Analytical Country Report Kosovo. (2011). Kosovo Civil Society Foundation. Retrieved at: [http://www.kcsfoundation.org/repository/docs/26\\_02\\_2014\\_9442560\\_KCSF\\_2011\\_KCSF\\_CIVICUS\\_CSI\\_Analytical\\_Country\\_Report\\_Kosovo.pdf](http://www.kcsfoundation.org/repository/docs/26_02_2014_9442560_KCSF_2011_KCSF_CIVICUS_CSI_Analytical_Country_Report_Kosovo.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> *Who Guards the Guardians? Research study on the accountability of civil society in Kosova*. (2013). Forum 2015. Retrieved at: <http://kfos.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Kush-mbik%C3%ABqyr-mbik%C3%ABqyr%C3%ABsit-en.pdf>

comprised mostly of formally registered NGOs<sup>7</sup>. The period after Kosovo's independence saw civil society establish a role in state-building processes and focus their activities on building transparent and accountable public institutions, fighting corruption, overseeing elections, and contributing to the EU Accession process. Various think tanks have been active in influencing policy and decision-making while other NGOs continue their work in the advancement of women, youth, LGBTIQ, and minority rights, and advocating on their behalf. NGOs whose advocacy and awareness raising relate to issues of energy and environment are also active and vocal.

Public perceptions have been negatively impacted due to NGO reliance on foreign donor funds, which often drive NGO agendas, as society believes that this work does not necessarily reflect the priority needs of citizens. Moreover, engagement of citizens by NGOs as well as volunteering remains very low as does the understanding of the role of civil society by the public. An important finding of the Civil Society Index, an international index that assesses the vitality of national civil societies published every two years in Kosovo, is the level of interpersonal trust among the general public. According to the findings, only around 10 percent of the respondents believe that when dealing with others there is no need to be careful. Such a high level of interpersonal distrust inevitably has ramifications for the creation of a strong civil society and for forming associations of citizens or maintaining joint initiatives that further common interests.

## **5 Results of the survey**

### **5.1 The role of the NGOs**

In order to get a better understanding of citizens' perceptions of NGOs, the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Public Pulse survey added a question that asks respondents to mention three roles they believe the NGOs in Kosovo fulfill. The figure below presents the cumulated answers across respondents. Around 15 percent<sup>8</sup> of the respondents believe that the role of NGOs is to provide humanitarian aid to people in need. The association of the work of NGOs with humanitarian aid is not very surprising, considering that the majority of NGOs work in post-conflict years was aid provision and charitable organizations. When inspecting the answers of the respondents by ethnicity, we see that the provision of humanitarian aid was the first response for 46 percent of the non-Serb minority in Kosovo, compared to 17 percent of the Kosovo Serb respondents and 13 percent of the Kosovo Albanian respondents. The responses indicate that for the non-Serb minority areas in Kosovo, the onus of NGOs' work still remains in the humanitarian aid provision compared to the other respondents.

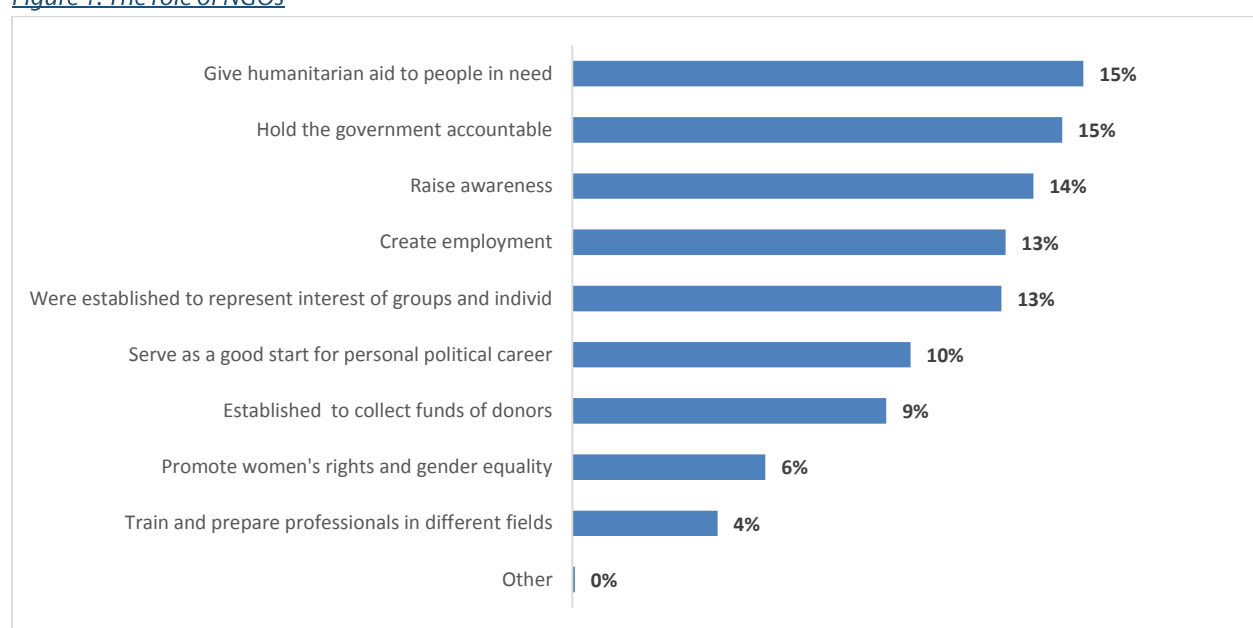
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<sup>7</sup> *Kosovar Civil Society Index*. (2014). Kosovo Civil Society Foundation (KCSF).

<sup>8</sup> All percentages presented in the paper have been rounded to whole numbers (integers) for ease of exposition.

For slightly less than 15 percent of the respondents the role of NGOs is to monitor the work of the public institutions and ensure their accountability to the citizens. The results also show that 14 percent of the respondents have listed raising of awareness as a signifier of the work of NGOs, while 13 percent believe that the role of NGOs is to provide jobs. Additionally, 10 percent of the respondents have stated that the role of NGOs is to serve as a good start for a political career, a point that reflects the larger public discourse surrounding many prominent figures from civil society joining various political parties usually before elections, which was something even more prevalent in the wake of the 2014 national elections. Absorbing donor funds was mentioned by less than 9 percent of the respondents as a purpose for establishing of an NGO, while only around 6 percent perceive the role of NGOs being the promotion of gender equality and women's rights.

*Figure 1: The role of NGOs*

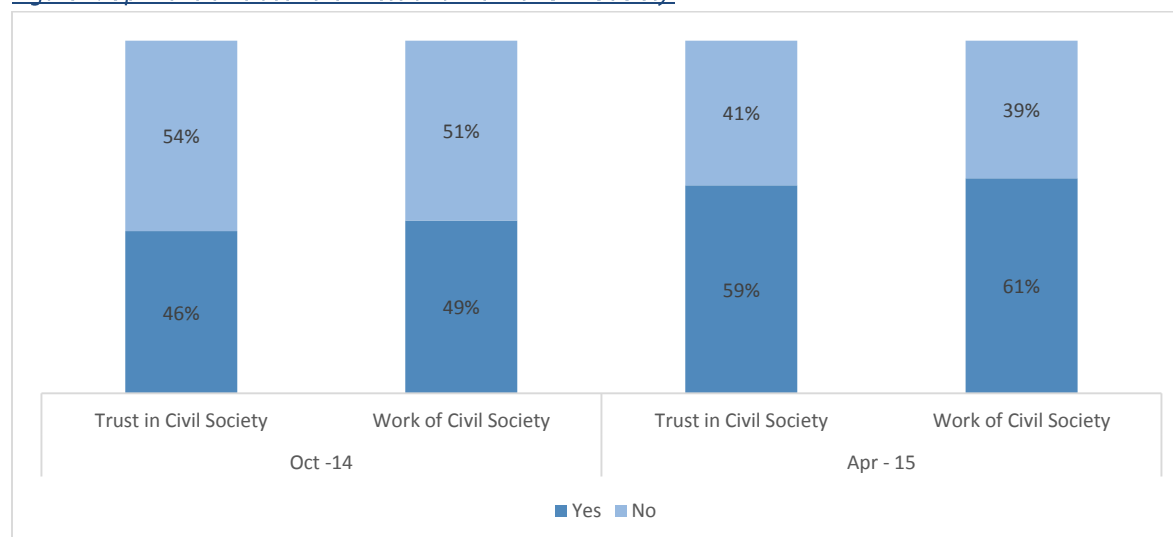


## 5.2 Perceptions of civil society

Respondents were asked to provide opinions on civil society, focusing on trustworthiness and the overall work that it does. The results show that 59 percent claimed that civil society can be trusted, while 41 percent believed the opposite. When asked whether they believe civil society is doing good work overall, 61 percent responded affirmatively, while 39 percent disagreed with the statement. The question did not specify what kind of work it was asking the respondents to assess; the respondents were just asked about their overall perceptions. It is worth noting that there is an improvement of the overall respondent perceptions of civil society compared to the results of the October 2014 survey (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2: Opinions on trustworthiness and work of Civil Society*



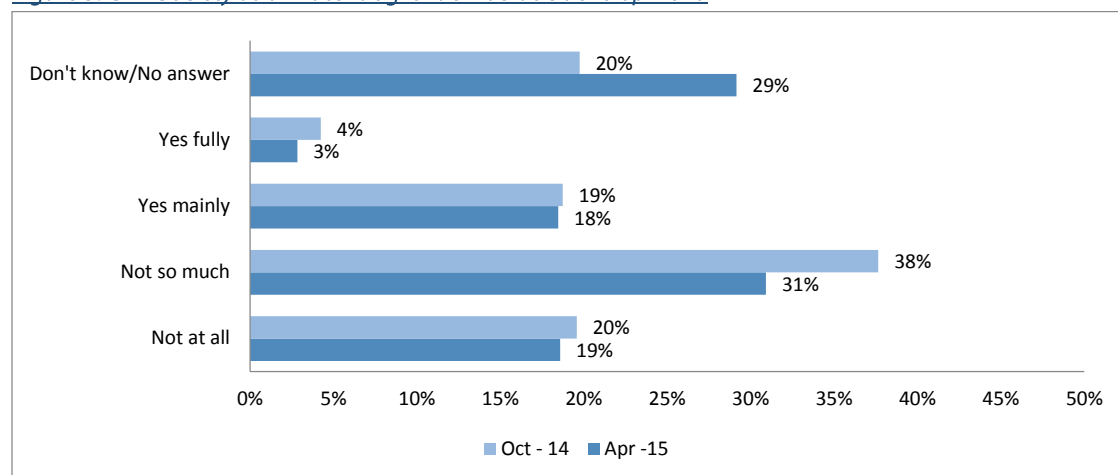
According to the Civil Society Index<sup>9</sup>, the level of trust in civil society depends on the area of operation of civil society organizations. Humanitarian and charity organizations enjoy the highest level of trust among citizens, followed by youth organizations and organizations that deal with education and human rights.

A regression analysis (with trust in civil society as a dependent variable) reveals that demographic characteristics such as age, education, employment status, and salary are not significant in explaining trust in civil society. Satisfaction with the political and economic direction and participation in protests due to the political situation were also used as explanatory variables with only the latter variable being significant. A statistically significant relationship between trust in civil society and the willingness to join a political protest exists and a two-way table reveals that 52 percent of the respondents who trust civil society would also protest against the current political situation.

However, when the respondents were asked to provide their opinion on whether they believe that civil society is a truthful monitor of democratic development and processes in Kosovo, an area that civil society has been particularly active in during the past years, 31 percent of the respondents claimed that civil society does not really fulfill that role. Moreover, the results show that 19 percent of the respondents perceived civil society as not at all a truthful monitor of such developments and processes, with only 3 percent believing that this is the case. As can be discerned from the results, a total of 50 percent of the respondents perceived that the role of civil society in overseeing the work of state institutions is negligible, compared to 21 percent who thought otherwise (see Figure 3).

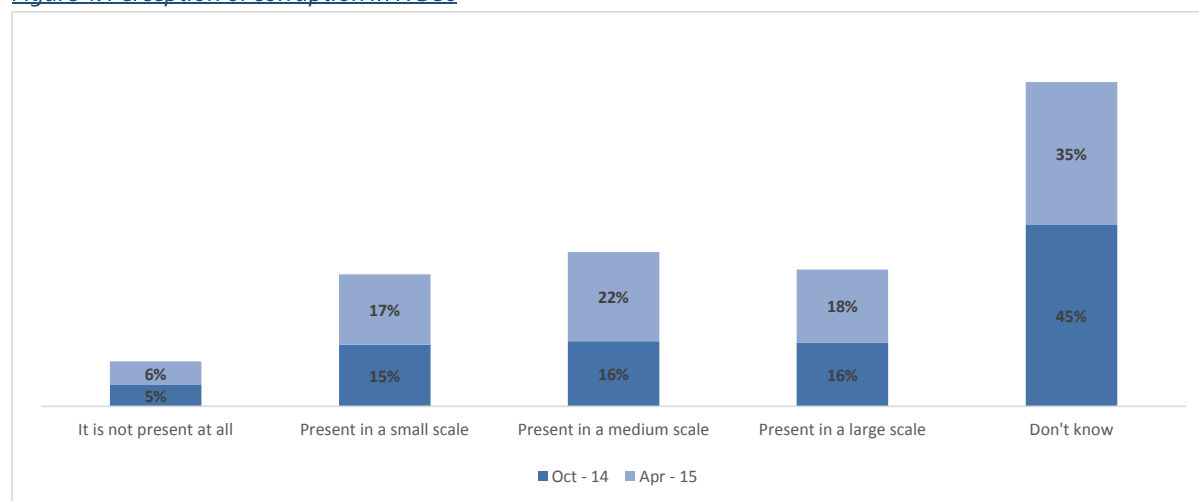
<sup>9</sup> Better Governance for a Greater Impact – CIVICUS Civil Society Index – Analytical Country Report Kosovo. (2011). Kosovo Civil Society Foundation. Retrieved at: [http://www.kcsfoundation.org/repository/docs/26\\_02\\_2014\\_9442560\\_KCSF\\_2011\\_KCSF\\_CIVICUS\\_CSI\\_Analytical\\_Country\\_Report\\_Kosovo.pdf](http://www.kcsfoundation.org/repository/docs/26_02_2014_9442560_KCSF_2011_KCSF_CIVICUS_CSI_Analytical_Country_Report_Kosovo.pdf)

*Figure 3: Civil Society as a 'watchdog' of democratic development*



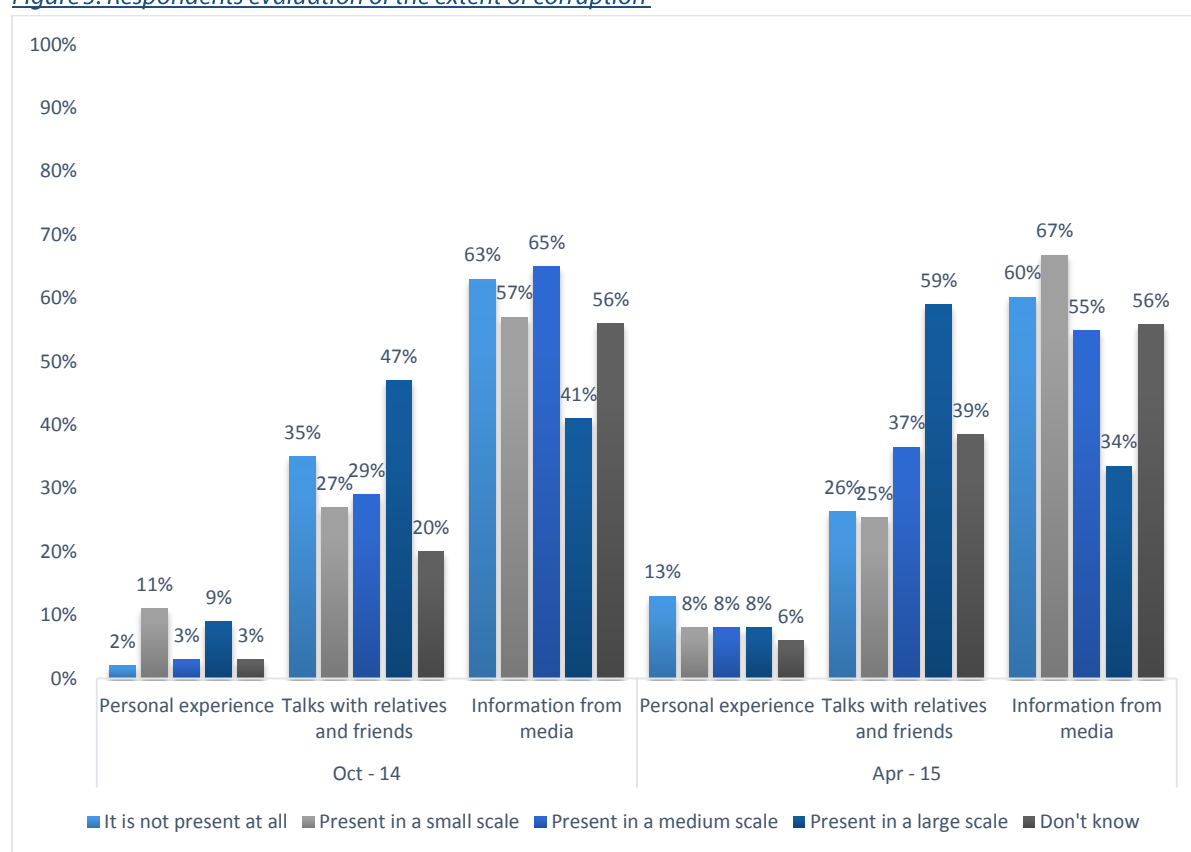
The respondents of the survey were also provided with a list of institutions and sectors to gather their opinions on the levels of corruption, by rating respective institutions/sectors on a scale. Figure 4 presents the perceptions of respondents with respect to corruption in non-governmental organizations for two surveying periods, that of October 2014 and that of April 2015. The respondents of the April survey perceive corruption as more present in NGOs than the respondents in October 2014. Of all the respondents, 22 percent perceive that corruption is present in a medium scale while 18 percent believe that it is present in a large scale. This perception is disconcerting, considering that many civil society organizations in Kosovo have made it their mission to combat corruption. When we disaggregate by demographic data we note that there are no significant differences of opinion on the perceived corruption between men and women. The respondents who declared themselves as unemployed and looking for work were the largest group that perceived that corruption is present in a medium (30 percent) and large scale (29 percent) followed by respondents employed in the private sector with 18 and 13 percent respectively.

*Figure 4: Perception of corruption in NGOs*



The respondents were asked on what basis they evaluated the extent of corruption in civil society. As can be seen from Figure 5, information from the media and talks with relatives and friends are the most cited sources on how the perceptions of corruption were formed. Fifty nine percent of respondents who believe that corruption is present to a large extent in civil society organizations have formed their beliefs through discussions with friends and relatives. Information from the media is mentioned from respondents who cited medium to large extent of corruption present, as well as from respondents who believe that corruption is not present at all (around 60 percent of the respondents reported that in the April 2015 survey). Personal experience of corruption related to civil society organizations has been mentioned by less than 10 percent of the respondents surveyed.

*Figure 5: Respondents evaluation of the extent of corruption*

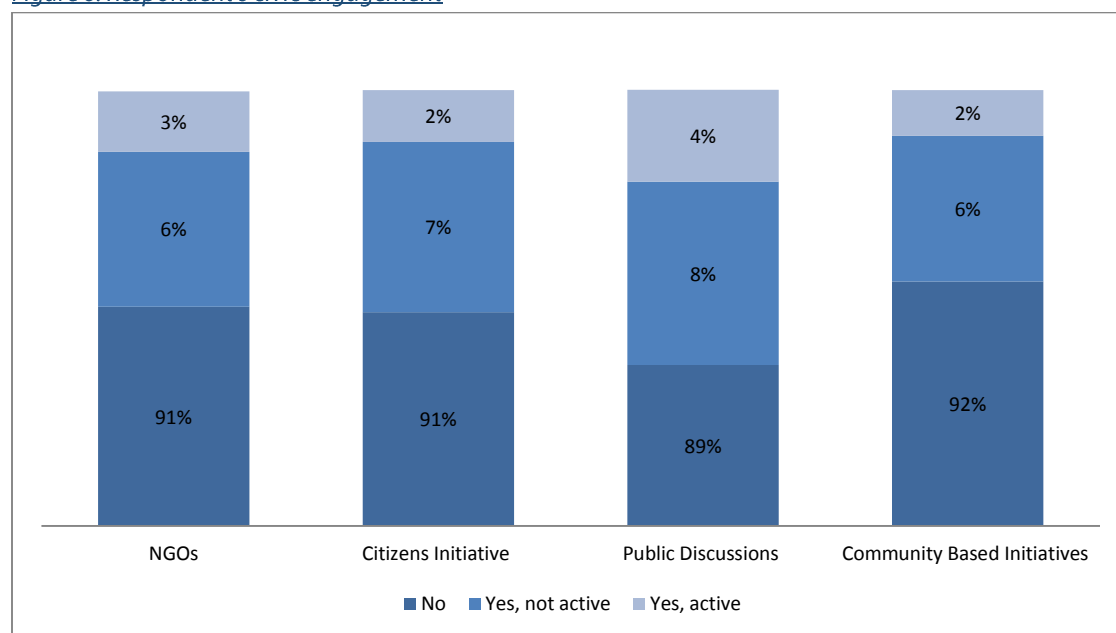


### 5.3 Civic engagement

Civic engagement, or lack thereof, has been continuously lamented in post-conflict Kosovo. Public Pulse surveys repeatedly assess the degree of public engagement and participation in various activities and organizations. The question posed to the respondents lists a range of different activities and asks them to answer whether they have participated in any of them during the past six months. The questionnaire gives the option of differentiating between active and non-active participation. According to the results, the level of public engagement

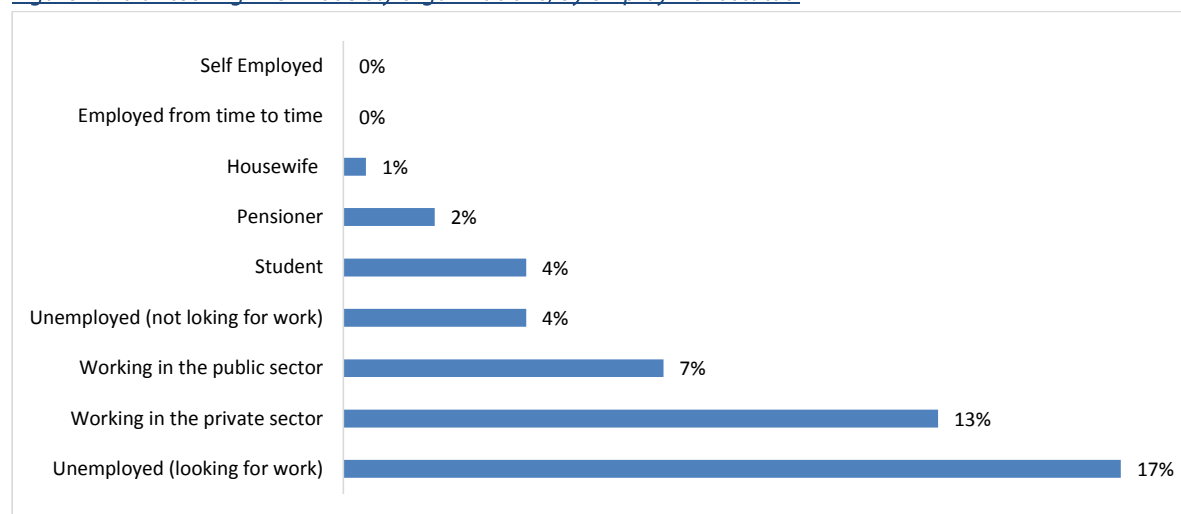
is extremely low. During the past six months, 91 percent of the respondents did not participate in any citizen initiatives or in any NGOs. Public discussions seem to fare slightly better, with 12 percent of the respondents claiming to have participated in such an activity. Community-based initiatives, which include initiatives organized by neighborhoods or religious organizations, and initiatives related to women, had a participation of only 8 percent of the respondents, out of which only 2 percent were active participants.

*Figure 6: Respondent's civic engagement*



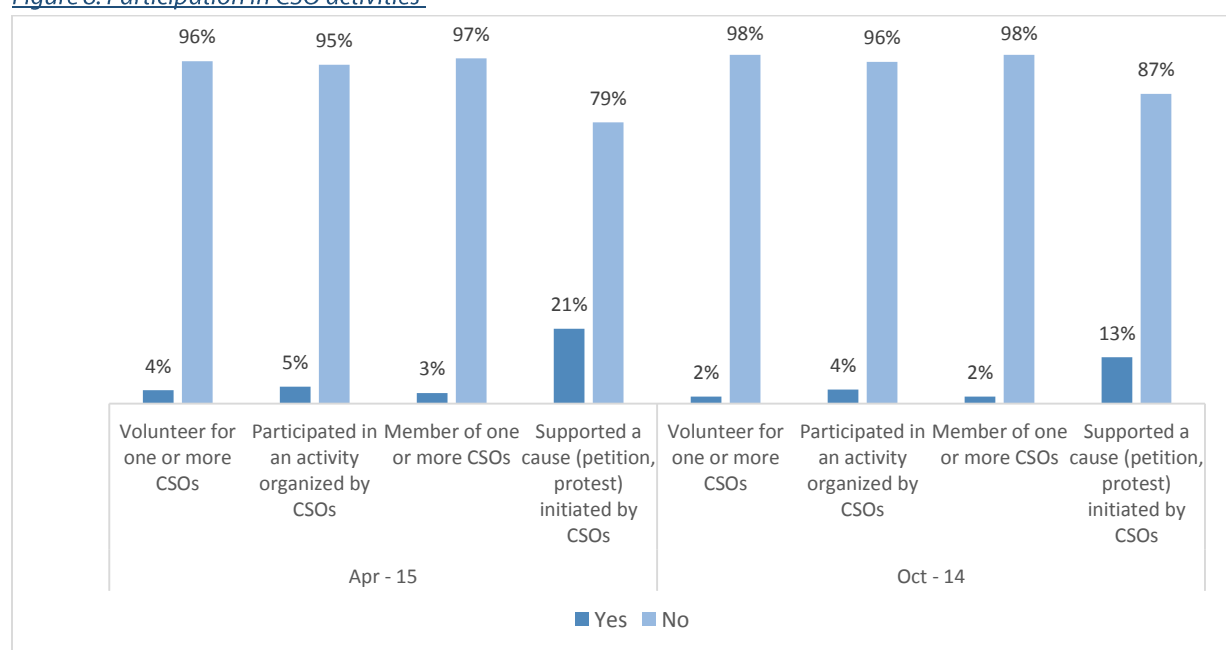
Furthermore, the respondents were asked whether they have ever volunteered for one or more civil society organization. While the number of the respondents who answered affirmatively is still very low, an increase of 2 percent from the past year when the respondents were surveyed is noticed. A similar increase, albeit small, can be observed in the respondents' participation in activities organized by civil society and membership in civil society organizations. The results show that only 4 percent of the respondents have answered affirmatively, while 96 percent have claimed that they did not volunteer for any civil society organization.

*Figure 7: Volunteering in civil society organizations, by employment status*



When taking a closer look at the demographics of the respondents who have volunteered for a civil society organization, it is noticed that men have volunteered more than women (5 percent and 2.5 percent respectively). A correlation analysis reveals a statistically significant relationship between employment status and volunteering. Disaggregating by employment status shows that the highest number of the volunteers (17 percent) are unemployed and looking for a job (see Figure 7). Similarly, when disaggregating the respondents who volunteer by age most, 13 percent belong to the age group of 18-24 years old (a group that suffers the most from unemployment) while 17 percent of respondents are older than 46.

*Figure 8: Participation in CSO activities*



In addition, the respondents were asked whether they are a member of any organization, in which only 3 percent claimed to be a member of a civil society organization. Finally, the respondents were also asked whether they have participated in any activity organized by civil society in the past two years. The results on participation are very low; around 95 percent of the respondents claimed that they have not taken part in any activity in the past two years. The highest number of respondents who have participated in an activity organized by civil society come from Prishtina/Priština (10 percent) with respondents from Peja/Peč, Ferizaj/Uroševac and Prizren having the lowest participation at less than 2 percent each.

As can be seen in Figure 8, civil society initiatives such as petitions or protests have garnered the most support from the surveyed respondents. 21 percent of the respondents said that they have either signed a petition or participated in a protest organized by civil society which also marks an increase from the 13 percent reported during the survey conducted in October of 2014. Of the respondents that have participated in a civil society initiative, 32 percent have claimed that they would join a protest because of the current political situation. When looking at the educational background of the respondents that have participated in a protest or signed a petition, 43 percent of them are university educated (either attending or completed), 42 percent have completed their secondary education and 15 percent have up to 8 years of education. When we look at the educational background of the respondents that have not participated in a protest or signed a petition we see that 20 of the respondents are in university (either attending or completed), 42 percent have completed their secondary education and 37 percent have completed 8 years or less of education.

## **6 Focus group results**

In addition to the quantitative analysis of public perceptions for the civil society in Kosovo, three focus groups were held with the aim to get the participants' opinions for a contextual and more in-depth analysis of the results obtained in the Public Pulse survey. The focus groups were organized in three major cities in Kosovo – Prishtinë/Priština, Ferizaj/Uroševac, and Prizren. 9 participants attended the focus group in Prishtinë/Priština and 5 participants attended each of the focus groups in Ferizaj/Uroševac and Prizren. The participants of the focus groups came from various professional backgrounds and had varying degrees of information and knowledge regarding the work of the civil society.

In all three focus groups the participants were asked to give their opinions on what they think constitutes civil society. The participants in Prishtinë/Priština identified civil society as a sector that is comprised of non-governmental organizations formed with the aim of representing the citizens and advocating on behalf of them. Very few participants, however, were aware and informed about the actual work of the civil society organizations. The lack of knowledge about tangible projects and issues that civil society deals with led many participants to suspect the actual motives of civil society organizations. The majority of

participants believed that one of the most important reasons for the existence of civil society organizations today is to provide a gateway into politics. Participants in both Prishtinë/Priština and Ferizaj/Uroševac viewed the joining of political parties by prominent civil society members prior to the national election of 2014 as detrimental to the image and credibility of the civil society organizations as an independent critical voice. Moreover, the majority of participants asserted that they do not trust civil society organizations due to the perception that they are not impartial and unbiased and that they are implicitly in service to some mainstream political party. Similarly, in Prizren, the participants voiced their concerns of civil society activists joining the public institutions or political parties but the overall perception was not as negative as in the other two focus groups. The participants asserted that as long as the former activists continued to work and lobby for the betterment of the conditions of the citizens as part of a political party or central institutions, this should not impact their image negatively.

When the participants were asked whether the work of the civil society had any direct impact in their lives, the majority of the participants cited that they lacked information and were unaware of what civil society does. The participants from Prizren posited that the work of the civil society and citizens had tangible results for their city, citing the mobilization of civil society to protect the cinema premises of "Kino Lumbardhi" from being torn down as part of the privatization bid. Generally, the participants in Prizren were much more informed about the work of the civil society in their community and perceived their work as very important for the city and citizens. As a result, compared to Prishtinë/Priština and Ferizaj/Uroševac, the participants in Prizren had overall favorable opinions of civil society.

The participants were also asked whether they believed that civil society represents the concerns and interests of the citizens. The majority thought that civil society represents some narrower political interests or the interests of a specific group rather than the interests of the citizens and the general public. Financial dependency on foreign donors was also repeatedly mentioned as driving the work and the focus of civil society instead of more pressing issues that affect the citizens. Financial transparency and the perception of the civil society being corrupt were mentioned during the focus group discussions, with a special emphasis in Prishtinë/Priština. The perception is tied to the many NGOs that were established after 1999 when financial accountability was lax and many individuals benefitted from the absence of regulation. Moreover, the lack of transparency related to spending activities of NGOs feeds into the perception that there is no accountability and that the funds of the organizations are used for private gain rather than the stated goals and objectives of the organization.

When the participants were asked about the reasons behind the low level of volunteerism and disengaged citizenry, the overall distrust in civil society and in their work was mentioned as a reason. Once again, insufficient information regarding the work of many

civil society organizations was brought up. However, the majority perceived that it is a remnant of a legacy where the state took the major decisions and the role of the citizen was not important aside from following and blindly believing what one was told. The general feeling of inability for one to have an impact and make change, as well as the perception that one is not an important agent in any socio-political decision making processes, affects the incentive to volunteer or become engaged.

Finally, when asked about the civil society's mobilizing power of citizens in order to voice their opinions and potential discontents regarding various pressing issues, the participants' responses were characterized by general distrust towards the people who would lead such protests or events, which in turn leads to their disengagement. The participants asserted that another contributing factor for low citizen trust and turnout is the overall perception that civil society organizations do not take their projects and initiatives to the very end. For instance, the protests against the price increase of electricity bills in 2013 were mentioned as an example of citizens joining forces with civil society, but it was also noted that in the end they did not achieve their goal, because the citizens and CSOs eventually stopped their initiative and protests.

## **7 Conclusions and recommendations**

As the Public Pulse results and the subsequent focus group discussions have shown, Kosovo's civic engagement remains rather low. Less than 4 percent of the respondents have volunteered for a civil society organization. The results have also shown that participation and engagement in community-based initiatives is particularly low. While the majority is shown to still trust civil society in Kosovo, there remains a considerable percentage of the respondents that distrust the sector. Qualitative research and analysis conducted for the purposes of this report shows that the high level of distrust towards civil society stems from the fact that the sector is not seen as an independent arbiter of citizens' concerns; rather, it is viewed that its members primarily seek their own political ends, especially by joining various mainstream political parties. The survey results also show that respondents perceive the sector as corrupt. Focus group participants also discussed the lack of transparency related to where the funds are spent, which feeds into the perception of corrupt activities driving spending decisions.

A number of recommendations can be drawn from the results of the report:

- Civil society organizations in Kosovo should make their intentions more transparent. Acting as an independent member of civil society while consciously aware of one's own intentions otherwise (i.e. non-transparent political association or affiliation with political parties or various interests groups), does great harm to citizens' trust in the sector, and their potential engagement with it;



- CSOs in Kosovo, as the results of this research show, have been viewed negatively given that many of its prominent members have used their involvement in CSOs to build a political career. While the Constitution of Kosovo and liberal democracy in general does not, and should not, prohibit individuals' political choices, current and new members of the CSOs in Kosovo should be aware, nevertheless, of the consequences that the CSO-to-political party transfer has for the sector itself in the context of Kosovo;
- CSOs should make their goals clearer when engaged in various initiatives. As a result, their initiatives should be seen through until the end, as much as possible. It is beneficial to have narrower, but achievable, goals and objectives, as reaching the goal is much more important for citizens than simply claiming them;
- CSOs should make attempts for direct engagement with citizens and respond genuinely to their concerns. Therefore more grass-root activities should be pursued;
- CSOs should invest more efforts into promoting their causes and activities, while consistently, vigorously, and sincerely attempting to reach them. Engaging and communicating with media outlets should be made a priority as a necessary tool for outreach to citizens about the work that civil society organizations do;
- When their initiatives or goals seem to eventually be unattainable for various reasons, civil society organizations should be more communicative and transparent in explaining the obstacles in achieving the stated goals, especially in initiatives such as protests where citizens' participation is called upon;
- CSOs should make their financial reports more transparent in terms of their spending.

### **Recommendations for media:**

- Depending on their capability, the media should focus more on the activities of CSOs involved in grassroots activities. This will necessarily impact the way the public perceives the work of CSOs, meaning that CSOs are not only the ones who provide policy recommendations in media, but that there are also CSO activities involved in making actual change on the ground;
- When reporting on CSO activities, and more specifically their research findings, journalists should spend more time scrutinizing the results, and report them objectively. There should be a more critical engagement of the media on CSO work.