

Side Event of the
Brussels VII Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region

LOCALLY-LED HUMANITARIAN, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING MODELS IN SYRIA: EMPOWERING CIVIL SOCIETY AND EXPANDING THE OPERATIONAL SPACE

Date: **Wednesday, 7th of June, 2023**

Time: **2:00-4:00 pm CET**

Venue: online event on Zoom

Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87426676898?pwd=eEptb1lHO1d6L0xxeGNFcUhzclJMUt09>

Languages: English and Arabic



Syria grapples with one of the most complex humanitarian crises of our time, magnified by the aftermath of war, economic downturn, the water crisis and impact of the earthquake. The limited capacity of local institutions to generate development and cater to the needs of the most vulnerable necessitates medium-term strategies. **Here, the role of local civil society actors is paramount to develop sustainable, locally-owned responses and foster an environment for tolerance and dialogue.**

With a particular focus on North East Syria, this event seeks to emphasize the importance of strengthening local civil society, identify challenges and opportunities for local NGOs, explore measures by the international community to support them, while promoting the triple nexus between humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding action. **Widening the operational space for Syrian civil society is an urgent priority.** The current humanitarian response is not in line with the Grand Bargain Agenda, but fortifying Syrian civil society organizations could facilitate advocacy towards institutions, participatory dialogues on social change, peacebuilding processes which would support a culture of democracy. This is particularly crucial in NES, where the space for autonomous civil society has a strong potential to grow. Despite challenges, Syrian CSOs are leveraging innovative interventions, promoting a shift towards sustainable approaches and valuing local resources. These organizations have proven to be best equipped to assess needs and identify potential solutions within their communities. During the event, successful locally-led initiatives will be presented, showcasing the democratization efforts of Syrian CSOs amidst the ongoing conflict.

Agenda:

- Welcome and introduction to the event
- Keynote speech on the importance of strengthening Syrian civil society in NES
- Presentation of successful locally-led initiatives in NES, organizational needs of local NGOs and equal partnerships with INGOs
- CSOs cross-line networking experiences and future scenarios
- Challenges and opportunities for localization of humanitarian response in NES
- Discussion on strategies for supporting local civil society actors in NES
- Summary of recommendations emerging from the discussion and next steps

Facilitator:

Martina Pignatti Morano, Director of Programs, Un Ponte Per

Speakers:

Helga Pender, (EEAS-DAMASCUS);

Shevan Faisal Rasoul, NES NGOs Platform Coordinator;

Abd Al-Muhsin sulaiman Al-Muhammad, NES NGOs Coalition Coordinator;

Robyn Savage, NES NGOs Forum Director;

Organized by Un Ponte Per (UPP) in cooperation with NES NGOs Platform, NES NGOs Coalition and NES Forum