

# Local Community Empowerment

Activity Report V  
January-December  
2019



**Local Development and  
Small-Projects Support**



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#### **Acronyms**

**CSO(s):** Civil Society Organization(s)  
**HTS:** Hay'at Tahrir al Sham, previously Al-Nusra Front  
**IDP(s):** Internally Displaced Person (People)  
**ISIS:** Islamic State in Iraq and Syria  
**LC(s):** Local Council(s)  
**LCE:** Local Community Empowerment  
**LDSPS:** Local Development and Small-Projects Support  
**M&E:** Monitoring and Evaluation  
**MoFA:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
**NEAC:** North-Eastern Aleppo Countryside  
**NGO(s):** None Governmental Organization(s)  
**SDF:** Syrian Democratic Forces  
**WAC:** Western Aleppo Countryside

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***To the tens of thousands of civil  
activists inside and outside of Syria  
devoted to helping their  
communities...***

## Section 1:

### Executive Summary

2019 for LDSPS has been a year of observation and attention. This came after a very intense year in 2018, in which the team of LDSPS knew very severe impact (death, injuries, forced displacement) added to the sudden ending of one of its main funding sources (the decision at the end of 2018 of the MoFA of The Netherlands to stop all of its funding for non-humanitarian action inside of Syria, resulting in the abrupt termination of the contract with LDSPS) and the shrinkage of its geographical operating areas with the Syrian regime forces backed by their Russian and Iranian allies taking control of Eastern Ghouta and Daraa in the south of the country.

#### « 2019, a year of observation »

In addition, 2018 had been the year where LDSPS had managed to do the most of its history in terms of supporting projects and activities empowering the local communities in the non-regime-held areas inside of Syria, LDSPS had grown in 2018 to be able to meet the needs of helping the local communities in very challenging environment.

The reactivity that the team showed in face of the changes, risks and obstacles in 2018 had allowed the action of LDSPS to continue with quick re-adaptation and a high sense of the duty of care, whether towards the members of the staff or towards our local partners.

In 2019, in addition to the shrunken operating space on the ground, combined with a major decrease in funding, the year started with the forces of Hay'at Tahrir al Sham (HTS) taking full control of Western Aleppo Countryside and imposing local councils that

are appointed by HTS's civil arm, the Salvation Government. In addition, starting the last quarter of 2018, the Turkish authorities increased its level of scrutiny on the operation of the Syrian NGOs/CSOs registered in Turkey and operating inside of Syria, focusing in particular on the money flows from Turkey to Syria. This added additional constraints on these organizations, including LDSPS, preventing them from using the Hawala system that had been useful and rather not expensive. In parallel, the Turkish authorities decreased even more the number of work permits that it delivered to the Syrians working in the Syrian NGOs/CSOs which strongly impacted our team despite different (and expensive) attempts made to find solutions to this time-consuming and risk-generating problem. All these combined factors led LDSPS to slow down its activities and leave some time to observe the evolution of the whole situation in Syria in general and the operational situation for LDSPS's activities in particular.

During this observation year and while the activity decreased, LDSPS took a decision to maintain its staff members both inside and outside of Syria, even at the price of cutting the salaries of the members of the team that are outside the country in order to reduce the cost, and compensate in part to the important extra cost that came from the various attempts to find legal solutions to the work permit issues in Turkey

It was also important to see on the ground in Western Aleppo Countryside the evolution of the control by HTS and whether, on one hand, the Russian-Turkish agreements on cease-fire, that included clear indications that Turkey was in charge of removing

HTS from the northwest of Syria, were going to be implemented, thus resulting in the exit of HTS from Western Aleppo Countryside, and/or, on the other hand, if HTS was to remain in this region and to what extent its grip on the local civil action was going to be hard.

This situation in Western Aleppo Countryside impacted in particular the implementation of the duty of care initiatives that LDSPS had negotiated with the Dutch MoFA after their abrupt decision to stop all funding of non-humanitarian action inside of Syria including that of LDSPS. LDSPS had managed to reach an understanding with the MoFA to cover the costs of all ongoing engagements with local partners (local councils and local civil society) and the severance costs of all workers contracted by the local councils allowing these engagements (in Western Aleppo Countryside that was the region where the funding from the MoFA covered). The control by HTS prevented LDSPS from implementing the major parts of this understanding. The amount corresponding to these unachieved activities remained with LDSPS at the end of 2019.

### **« Yet, 67 projects were supported »**

Despite this observation position, the team of LDSPS managed to support 67 local projects, mostly in the region of North-Eastern Aleppo Countryside and has other 37 projects in the pipeline for 2020. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2019, LDSPS participated in the accelerated work of the platform of the Governance Program Implementers, during which LDSPS prepared reports on its previous work with local councils (reports published in April 2020).



## Section 2:

### Syrian context in 2019

In 2019, the Syrian dire situation continued. The military operations, the forced displacement and the suffering of millions of Syrians did not stop, although, in all relative matter, 2019 was still less disastrous than the year before.

#### **« In 2019, the Syrian dire situation continued. »**

On the military front, the first few months of the year saw the final attacks of the international coalition against ISIS resulting in its final collapse at the hands of the SDF forces backed by the coalition. While some fighters of ISIS escaped into the desert and formed small pockets of threat, the vast majority of the fighters in addition to tens of thousands of women and children of « ISIS believers » are since held in detention camps representing a potential explosive bomb of hatred and extremism in the future.

On another hand, the 2018 advances of the regime forces backed by the Russian and Iranian forces has halted to a large extent in 2019 (before a build-up of these forces in the northwest around the region of Idlib that later translated into a massive attack in late 2019/early 2020). Families living in non-regime held areas in the south/southeast of Idlib started to leave their homes at the end of 2019 worried about these preparations (later on, the attack in late 2019/early 2020 resulted in the forced displacement of about one million people towards the northern parts of Idlib and Aleppo, close to the borders with Turkey).

As for the northeast of Syria, the unexplained and sudden decision of the USA to withdraw its forces

from the area (that was then changed into « minimal presence around the oil fields »), invited the Turkish forces and their Syrian allied forces (now named « The National Army ») to capture the area between Raas Al Ein and Tal Abiad with a depth of around 30km from the Turkey-Syria border in October 2019. The operation and the human right violations instances that happened during it resulted in yet another exodus of several hundreds of thousands of Syrians (mainly Kurdish) from the captured area towards the regions of Hassakeh and in some cases to Raqqa. As a reaction to this, the SDF forces struck a deal with Russia and the regime that allowed for forces loyal to the regime to be redeployed partially to the northeast of Syria (mainly border points with Turkey and the region around Manbij).

#### **« The suffering increased by the growing number of IDPs and also the continuous destruction by the regime forces and the Russian military aviation of the health infrastructures in the non-regime held areas. »**

From a humanitarian perspective, the suffering increased by the increase in the number of IDPs and also the continuous destruction by the regime forces and the Russian military aviation of the health infrastructures in the non-regime held areas.

The end of 2019 also witnessed a strong devaluation of the Syrian currency (over 60% of its value was lost

during the month of November) caused by the unrest that started in Lebanon (serving as the « banking solution » for Syria). This made the already catastrophic humanitarian situation even worse and at the end of 2019, the Russian veto in the UNSC forced the continuation of the cross-border humanitarian aid resolution to be reduced, to become effective only through two crossing points (only with Turkey) after that the crossing points with Jordan and Iraq were vetoed-out.

From a political point of view, one step forward was made by the first meetings of the Constitutional Committee (50 people representing the regime, 50 people representing the opposition and 50 people named as “civil society representatives” half accepted by the regime and half by the opposition). No major advances were made in two sessions before the meetings were stopped because of the regime’s forces attack on Idlib that started at the end of 2019 (in December).

**« In summary, Syria in 2019 remained a divided country controlled by several de facto powers. Its population remained victim of warfare, forced displacement and poor economical conditions, all leading to the continuation of a massive humanitarian crisis. »**



**Section 3:**  
**Our vision,  
mission and  
strategy**

The analysis of the Syrian situation that LDSPS made lead to the following conclusions (since 2013):

1. Syrians need support to start rebuilding their future
2. In all areas, de facto rulers backed by armed factions want to control the local civil life
3. The future of Syria is secured by reinforcing the role of the local civil structures (local civil society organizations and local councils when possible)
4. A “bottom-up” approach (starting from the local community) for spreading democratic values has more chances of success
5. The current diversity of the Syrian situation has to be taken into account (different conditions in different areas)
6. As a priority the population in the areas outside of the control of the regime is suffering the most
7. Creative local initiatives aiming at inclusiveness of marginalized groups (mainly women and IDPs) in the local decision-making processes must be supported.

**« Our vision: Promoting democratic citizenship at the level of local communities is key towards achieving stability and a sustainable democracy.  
The future of Syria is secured by reinforcing the role of the local civil society.  
Syrian NGOs must be empowered to achieve this vision. »**

LDSPS was born in 2013, derived from the Local Coordination Committees (LCC) to support the local structures in the areas out of the control of the Syrian regime. Based on its vision it has set itself an objective of empowering the local community inside these areas and then throughout Syria.

**« Our mission:  
Empower sustainable local civil structures to serve, represent and advocate for all community members. »**

We support local communities to define their own needs, set their priorities and decide on the adequate approaches to respond to those needs as they evolve, thus developing a strong sense of ownership and involving the local communities in the development process of Syria.

Our Local Community Empowerment (LCE) strategy is driven by the local action. On a local level, a virtuous cycle of change can be activated if support is timely given to the local community. This local cycle of change is described in the figure on the side.

Supporting the local civil structures (local councils and civil society organizations) will contribute to the rehabilitation of the infrastructure and the provision of basic services, which on one hand will strengthen the local civil society and increase the awareness of the local population and then their participation in the local public life and on another hand will

contribute to restarting the local economic cycle that should create local financing resources. Both elements will contribute to strengthen the local civil structures allowing a virtuous cycle to start on the local level that carries with it the empowerment of the local community and that of the local structures in an inclusive and democratic manner.

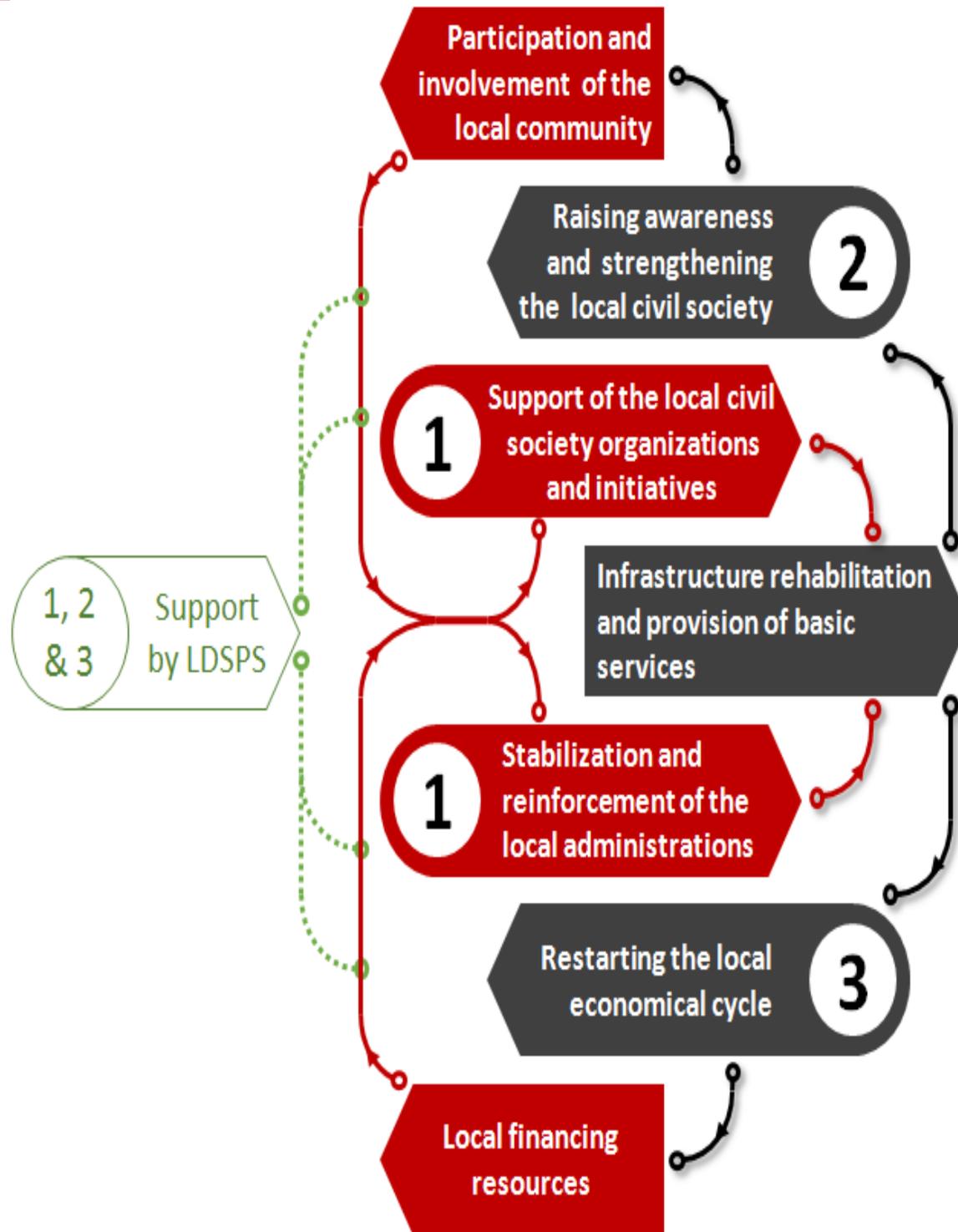
**« Our Local Community Empowerment (LCE) strategy: Contribute to a virtuous cycle of change at the local level. »**

LDSPS intends to contribute to this local cycle of change in the areas in which it operates (to start in the areas out of the control of the regime).

Our organization is structured around local offices that are supported by a central team under the guidance of a Board of Trustees.

Our principles of action:

- Local presence in all the areas supported
- Local support in three fields: local coordination and capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, and funding of local projects
- Emphasis on the efficiency and the values of local partners, not on their size or the sector of activity of their project
- When possible, tight coordination with the elected/consensual local councils



**Section 4:**

**A story from  
Western  
Aleppo  
Countryside**

**Establishing  
a league for  
people with  
special  
needs**

Since its start, LDSPS has given special attention to professional and specialized gatherings/leagues, as they are considered essential means for guaranteeing rights and achieving specific demands.

At the beginning of the year 2019, and based on some local studies by local civil society organizations on the number of people with disabilities in WAC as a result of war-related and non-war-related injuries (work injuries, traffic accidents, etc.) as well as congenital disabilities, discussions started about the idea of establishing an association for people with disabilities.

The objective was to respond to their needs and support their access to job opportunities and strengthening their participation in public life.

Several meetings were held with associations and organizations concerned with people with disabilities, in addition to several sessions held with a number of people with disabilities to find out their most important needs as well as the difficulties and challenges they face in light of the harsh conditions in the region and its instability.

As a result of these meetings, an invitation was launched to establish a League for People with Disabilities through the formation of a general assembly whose members are from different regions in WAC.

Eventually, the number of members reached 25 representing all of these regions, and then the election mechanism was discussed with the aim of electing a Board of Directors (BoD) for the League. Subsequently, elections took place and five

members were elected to the BoD: the President of the League, the Vice President, the Financial Director, the Activities Officer and the Logistic Officer.

After the elections were held, it was decided that the League's action was to represent people with disabilities, to defend their rights, and to work on communicating their needs to local decision-makers, in addition to striving to make people with disabilities more effective and productive by putting pressure on formal and informal institutions to secure adapted job opportunities for them.

The League started its effective work in WAC after signing a partnership with LDSPS allowing it to cover its setup and operational costs as well as the costs of various activities, including training workshops to teach the sign-language, and the rehabilitation of some public facilities to suit those with disabilities. In addition, the League took as a permanent mission to maintain updated lists of the numbers and needs of its beneficiaries/members.

The League's work has been stalled later due to the bombing of the region and the displacement of the people with the beginning of 2020, but after the bombing stopped and the return began, the League resumed its activities and held several meetings with institutions and organizations working to support people with disabilities in WAC to increase coordination, networking and activating programs in a way that achieves the required high and sustainable benefits to the needs of the beneficiaries.

**« The importance of cooperating with LDSPS in this project came from its effective contribution with us in preparing the elections of BoD, preparing the internal papers of the League, and creating better spaces for communication with the local community. »**

*Director of the League for People with Disabilities*

The members of the League have a great ambition in achieving goals in supporting men and women with disabilities, serving them, and helping them in improving their life conditions.

The story of establishing the League and the commitment of its members and their determination to work despite the obstacles was an inspiring one worthy of motivating all those concerned in supporting it to achieve more goals and successes.



**Section 5:**  
**A story from**  
**North-**  
**Eastern**  
**Aleppo**  
**Countryside**

**Baladna**  
**Kulna (Our**  
**country, All)**

**Initiative by**  
**Hooz Center**  
**(local CSO)**

Hooz Center is a civil society organization working on Community Development. The center is mostly made up of young women and men from among the displaced communities and works within the Azaz and Al-Bab regions. Hooz started in 2017 in Al-Bab region which has been a refuge for an important number of IDPs, making it a fertile environment for working on enhancing community participation while at the same time this region has seen little civic/civil society action. The center started working on local-conflicts resolution, youth training and skills-building, as well as various cultural and social activities targeting host and IDP communities.

Over the past years, the region of Al-Bab had witnessed growing tensions between host community and the IDPs themselves gathered in different region-of-origin-based groups. Conflicts started to appear.

Hooz members were some of the most important local actors that had the ability and skill to play mediating roles to settle disputes based on their previous expertise and experiences. The center designed intervention plans in its programs based on its analysis of the following contextual elements:

- Differences in customs, traditions and social cultures between the IDPs the host communities, are inducing the emergence of persistent sensitivities.
- The actions of local civil society are weak, in particular lack of social cohesion initiatives.
- The role and action of the local council in relation to social cohesion are also weak.
- There is an absence of the role of local community leaders / notables usually effective in resolving disputes and absorbing tension.

- There is no gathering framework for these different components (host communities and IDPs) overcoming the tendency of regrouping under regionally-based factions.
- There is a proliferation of weapons among civilians.

To respond to these challenges, Hooz launched the initiative "Baladna Kulna" aiming at strengthening the relationship between the host communities and the IDPs in the region, building familiarity and trust, and enhancing the role of community leaders in resolving local disputes. LDSPS provided technical and financial support to Hooz's initiative for its importance and its authenticity in this field in the NEAC region

A number of local residents, notables, teachers and various segments of society were included in the initiative. Women from various communities were also present.

"Baladna Kulna" included a set of cultural and artistic activities aimed at introducing the different parties to the cultures of the others in positive-atmosphere settings; thus facilitating the openness to and the acceptance of the other by learning about her/his culture, heritage and singularity. The initiative focused on showing the most important points of commonality between the regions of origin by sharing the lyrical heritage in singing events and by sharing traditional meals from the different regions. The cultures and experiences of people from the host community of Al-Bab were exposed along with those of IDPs coming from the governorates of Deir-Azzor, Damascus, Rural Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo.

This was done in parallel to holding discussion sessions focusing on sharing the experiences of the suffering and the memories of the displacement and the bombing, and on the challenges of settling in new regions. In addition, meetings were organized to introduce community leaders and notables from the host community and the IDPs to each other and to create links and partnerships to reach a greater activation of the role of these leaders in conflict-resolution and in strengthening civil peace.

This initiative had a good resonance within the Al-Bab region. Encouraging positive results emerged as reflected during the discussion sessions that Hooz members held with the participants to get their feedback about the initiative. The majority of the opinions mentioned that knowing the cultures and experiences of others has had the effect of changing prejudices, decreasing tensions, and breaking the psychological and social barriers. The artistic and singing sessions have had a positive impact on the general mood and on being open to accepting the different other, as the participants said.

As a young man from Al-Bab described it:

**« The most beautiful thing about the Baladna Kulna initiative is the lovely gathering with people we had previously contact with and spending some agreeable time with them and getting to know our IDP neighbors. »**



**Section 5:**  
**A story from**  
**North-**  
**Eastern**  
**Aleppo**  
**Countryside**

**Improving**  
**the Central**  
**versus Sub**  
**local**  
**councils**  
**cooperation,**  
**Akhtareen -**  
**Telaar**

Local councils in NEAC play a fundamental role and continue to seek legitimacy and acceptance within their local communities. These institutions are currently divided into Central and Subsidiary (Sub) local councils (LCs), with each Sub-LC reporting administratively and financially to one of the Central LCs. The relationship between these two levels of LCs varies for many reasons, including the extent to which the Sub-LCs are able to negotiate with their Central LC to obtain greater administrative independence and / or ability to dispose of financial revenues. Overall, one can note the absence of a comprehensive or strategic approach in most of the Central LCs, expected to be more advanced administratively speaking, towards their role towards and responsibility-sharing with their Sub-LCs, those being less advanced and resourceful.

LDSPS has set itself an objective of stimulating a new type of relationship, positive-communication channels and effective sharing of resources and expertise between these two levels of local councils, where the most capable Central LCs can help Sub-LCs in capacity building, providing services and improving work procedures, while putting in place the necessary delegation of authorities.

As an example of this contribution by LDSPS is the cooperation and coordination work done with the LC of Akhtareen (Central LC) and the LC of Talaar (affiliated Sub-LC). Through this cooperation, the LC of Akhtareen was able to create a positive, supportive relationship with the LC of Talaar, strengthening it and consolidating its legitimacy within its local community.

Previously, the LC of Talaar was witnessing some difficulties in securing funding for the delivery of basic services to its local community. Talaar being a center for the gathering of IDPs from different regions, additional burdens fell upon its LC.

The Central-LC of Akhtareen stepped-in to secure sources of funding for the LC of Talaar to provide services to the village. It played an intermediary role by using its network of NGOs already helping the LC of Akhtareen in providing services and encouraging them to provide support to the LC of Talaar. As an example, the cooperation between LDSPS and the Akhtareen LC in the services provision field was translated into supporting the purchase of a garbage collection vehicle by Talaar funded by LDSPS.

**« LDSPS was courageous in its approach to the project and its work on strengthening the link between our LC and the LC of Talaar. They are the appropriate partner in difficult times and for important projects. »**

*Head of the LC of Akhtareen*

In terms of administrative development, the LC of Akhtareen provided administrative and financial advice to the LC of Talaar during the implementation period focusing on project management and fine-tuning a process of garbage-removal-fees collection securing the LC of Talaar with a certain level of monthly returns that help the LC in covering some of its monthly expenses in a more sustainable manner.

When the project ended, the LC of Talaar was able to operate the garbage-collection service for its community and to start collecting fees for the first time. In parallel, it participated in the multi-LC training project supported by LDSPS that had an output of the LCs writing internal policies and procedures; and the LC of Talaar was keen and committed to implementing them.

**« The cooperation between the two LCs was based of the effective local need not on preconceived ideas. Here was the importance of the cooperation with LDSPS because it supports work on the basis of local needs defined by the LCs, and this is what we have not seen with other partners. »**

*Head of the LC of Akhtareen*

Despite the absence of an organizational experience, the lack of a structured institutional environment and the relative lack of knowledge within its cadres, the LC of Talaar was one of the councils that managed to significantly improve communication with its Central LC as well as with the CSOs/NGOs operating in its area while paying high attention to the satisfaction of its local community. It is a good example to follow, showing the Sub-LCs' readiness and ability to rapidly develop and improve their performances and legitimacy towards their communities, if and



**Section 5:**  
**A story from**  
**North-**  
**Eastern**  
**Aleppo**  
**Countryside**

**Multi-level**  
**support of**  
**some local**  
**councils**

In order to perform their role as alternative local administration bodies, LCs in NEAC rely mainly on grants from several NGOs/INGOs and some local self-financing resources, to provide several public services to their communities. Managing these LCs is not an easy task due to the great challenges they face in terms of the low levels of funding and financial resources, the low availability of the required competencies and expertise, the lack of administrative and organizational framework, and changing security and political environments.

Despite these challenges, and fueled by the desire to develop their work and their commitment to meeting the needs of their local communities, many LCs worked on improving the provision of services in the region, performed needs assessments to define priorities and intervention plans, established broader partnerships with civil society organizations and local initiatives and managed to expand their cooperation with international donors (INGOs).

In this field, LDSPS provides a comprehensive multi-level support to some LCs in the region through a long-term engagement program that includes:

- Helping their stabilization and their sustainability by funding the hiring of fixed skilled staff.
- Encouraging these LCs to benefit from the locally available IDPs' competencies (men and women).
- Funding income-generating projects of these LCs contributing to their self-sufficiency.
- Contributing to building their administrative capacity through trainings, advisory sessions and continuous follow-up.

LDSPS has currently partnerships of this type with

four LCs: Arshaf, Rael, Turkman-Bareh and Dabeq. In these partnerships, focus was on building the organizational capacity of the LCs and also on enabling them to be more transparent towards their community, thus increasing their levels of confidence and legitimacy as local administrative institutions. Several types of support were provided during 2019. On one hand, these LCs had the funding to pay the salaries of required employees to improve their administrative and management capacities; on the other hand, support through a 3-phases training project was provided with the aim of developing the necessary policies and procedures for the LCs and then of training their staff members on how to implement these policies and procedures to achieve more professionalism and good governance in the work of these councils.

The training project had a noticeable contribution to the development of the administrative organization of the LCs. Their staff gained experience in managing records and administrative and financial archiving of the entire work of the LCs. As a result, the LCs reflected a more institutional, professional and transparent image and some even became capable of undergoing comprehensive financial and administrative audits. The LC of Turkman-Bareh, for example, invited members of its local community to a public review of its financial and administrative records and declared its readiness to answer any questions or inquiries in this regard.

The hiring process of the required skilled staff was another example of the progress made. It required clear policies and procedures and new/redefined organizational structures.

With the absence of a “legal/legitimate” administrative framework/regulation in the region, the LCs, supported by LDSPS, had multiple consultations from specialists, to review the management structures of the LCs to adapt them to the new needs. As a result, the LCs modified their management organization, defined the necessary level of staffing to improve their work and designed internal communication channels to achieve greater effectiveness in the flow of tasks and the distribution of responsibilities between different departments.

During this experience of hiring, the LCs also gained an opportunity to involve several groups of society and to raise their level of transparency by publishing job advertisements, forming selection committees conducting interviews and selecting employees according to employment standards. Members of the community felt that they could contribute to the development of the LCs work mechanisms and to their decision-making processes. In particular, IDPs and women became part of the LCs as employees.

**« I, an IDP, was hired in the LC’s public relations office. This illustrates how the LC improved its relations with the community and allowed IDPs to participate. »**

*Employee at the public relations office, LC of Arshaf*

And as a culmination of these efforts, these LCs prepared financial and narrative reports about their actions at the end of 2019 and publicly shared them with their communities on social media for the first time since the establishment of these LCs (in 2016).



**Section 5:**  
**A story from**  
**North-**  
**Eastern**  
**Aleppo**  
**Countryside**

**Bringing**  
**knowledge**  
**and hope to**  
**Youth in**  
**IDP camps**

**Shamal**  
**Cultural**  
**Center in**  
**Sejjo Camp**

Shamal Cultural Center is a local CSO whose mission is creating spaces for dialogue, exchange of ideas, and capacity development for young men and women within the local community of the IDP camp near the city of Sejjo in Northern Aleppo Countryside. The center works to provide a cultural environment for the camp's young men and women and to develop their knowledge, as well as to provide them with practical tools enabling them to face the challenges of displacement and strive for a better and more stable future.

The camp of Sejjo is one of the densely populated IDP camps in the north of Syria. Since civil organizations operating in the camp have almost exclusively limited their action to humanitarian relief; there was a growing need to have organizations working with the population, specifically with the youth, on capacity building, entertainment, and artistic and cultural knowledge.

Shamal Center is distinguished by its unique service to the camp community, as the center continuously organizes educational and cultural activities and offers a safe space for young men and women from of the camp to exchange ideas, get to know each other and learn together. The center also offers a public library, training in languages, CV-preparation, computer skills, and basic journalistic writing skills.

Currently, 70 young men and women visit the center per month (this number is limited by the actual capacity of the Center), a number of which managing to have real job opportunities after attending some of the offered trainings.

LDSPS supported Shamal Center as part of the Youth Centers Project thus contributing to enhancing the outreach towards youth in the camps. LDSPS's cooperation came at a crucial moment where Shamal Center needed financial and capacity building support.

**« LDSPS believed in the Shamal Center's project which enabled us to achieve a lot with young men and women within the camp. »**

*Director of Shamal Center*

The center also built on its cooperation with LDSPS to launch the project named Nukat Ala Al Huroof (Dots on the i's), which aims to work with male and female students wishing to join the University of Gaziantep providing them with support that could facilitate their entry to the university including the necessary information, preparations for the academic year and a set of basic trainings such as data analysis, accounting programs and English.

In addition, the support of LDSPS helped Shamal Center in developing its financial and administrative procedures, its communication policies, its ability to communicate with the community and with the local media, and to expand its network of contacts with other local organizations and volunteer teams.

LDSPS also paved the way for the development of multiple cooperation opportunities between Shamal Center, Hooz Center and Soriana Al Amal team, all partners of LDSPS.

This cooperation included training and capacity building projects for young people, as well as providing specific training for women in accounting, archiving, reporting, and scientific research basics (for university students).

**« The relationship and constant communication with LDSPS led to not only the success of the project, but also to the development of the center and improvement of its performance. »**

*Director of Shamal Center*

In addition, this cooperation created the opportunity for young people to volunteer with these centers to gain practical experience and knowledge thus facilitating their entry into the labor market.

Shamal's success was reflected in the positive change that these projects made within the camp whose community had previously no access to adequate youth-support programs and could not attract any development of civil society activities.

Young men and women in the Sejjo IDP camp have the support to learn and acquire capabilities to reach better opportunities in their lives and achieve the successes they aspire to.

Another success came from the change within Shamal Center itself as it managed to build-up its capabilities reaching a better sustainability and a higher ability to pursue work within the camp and provide more opportunities for the youth.



LDSPS has been working on increasing its own capacity to be able to provide the necessary support to the local partners while securing the right level of reporting and transparency towards the funders and the public.

So far, LDSPS has issued five activity reports (including this one) covering the period since its start-up in 2013 to date.

The team has managed to support/implement over 270 local projects/ activities in that period, with a total engaged budgets of over 6.6M USD (excluding operating costs of LDSPS and with an implementation rate of around 93%).

In addition, LDSPS has built its M&E capacities. In the period from 2017 to 2019, the team conducted three community surveys (more than 2300 people interviewed) and is monitoring more than 20 outcome indicators and more than 45 output indicators.

**« 3 community surveys conducted. Over 65 indicators followed. »**

The figures shown on the side give a quick overview of the repartition of the 273 projects/activities that were supported since the start-up of LDSPS in 2013.

**Section 6:  
Key figures**

**« 5 activity-reports since 2013. Audited accounts since 2017. »**

LDSPS has had its financial accounts (as presented here) audited in the past three years (starting 2017).

During that period, the team has signed over 200 different MoUs with over 100 different local partners in the different regions LDSPS operated/ operates in.

**« In the last 3 years, over 200 MoUs were signed with over 100 local partners. »**

	2019	2018	2017
Funding obtained during the period	\$2 614 850	\$1 514 250	\$2 129 700
Incoming funds (delayed payments)		\$102 200	
Other income (mainly currency gains)	<b>-\$23 700</b>	<b>-\$6 000</b>	\$22 150
<b>Total income during the period</b>	<b>\$2 591 150</b>	<b>\$1 610 450</b>	<b>\$2 151 850</b>
Projects implemented during the period	\$768 000	\$1 458 600	\$886 150
Funded in current year	\$520 300	\$953 600	\$757 550
Partner projects	\$403 700	\$785 250	\$628 850
Activities implemented by LDSPS	\$116 600	\$168 350	\$128 700
Funded and started in previous year	\$247 700	\$505 000	\$128 600
Partner projects	\$237 250	\$427 900	\$128 600
Activities implemented by LDSPS	\$10 450	\$77 100	
Operating expenses of LDSPS	\$577 300	\$750 100	\$483 100
Payroll costs	\$449 400	\$438 300	\$267 800
Offices Expenses	\$81 050	\$185 350	\$75 000
Consulting and professional services	\$28 550	\$16 900	\$21 850
M&E	\$0	\$66 350	\$72 200
Money transfer cost	\$18 300	\$43 200	\$46 250
Provisions (accruals and releases)	\$1 245 850	<b>-\$598 250</b>	\$782 600
Accrual for ongoing projects and activities	\$248 850	\$249 250	\$185 550
Accrual for future projects and activities (backlog)	\$343 000	\$0	\$465 100
Accrual for future operating expenses	\$200 500	\$63 700	\$238 400
Accrual for unplanned expenses (using currency gains)	\$0	\$0	\$22 150
Accrual for closing the contract with the Dutch MoFA	\$664 250		
Released past provisions before the period	<b>-\$210 750</b>	<b>-\$911 200</b>	<b>-\$128 600</b>
<b>Total expenses and provisions</b>	<b>\$2 591 150</b>	<b>\$1 610 450</b>	<b>\$2 151 850</b>
<b>Net result</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

These figures show the diversity of types of projects supported (all subscribing to the holistic approach of the local cycle of change that is explained above in section 3, about the vision and the mission of LDSPS) and the split per region (although currently, LDSPS is only implementing in the two regions of North-Eastern Aleppo countryside and Western Aleppo countryside).

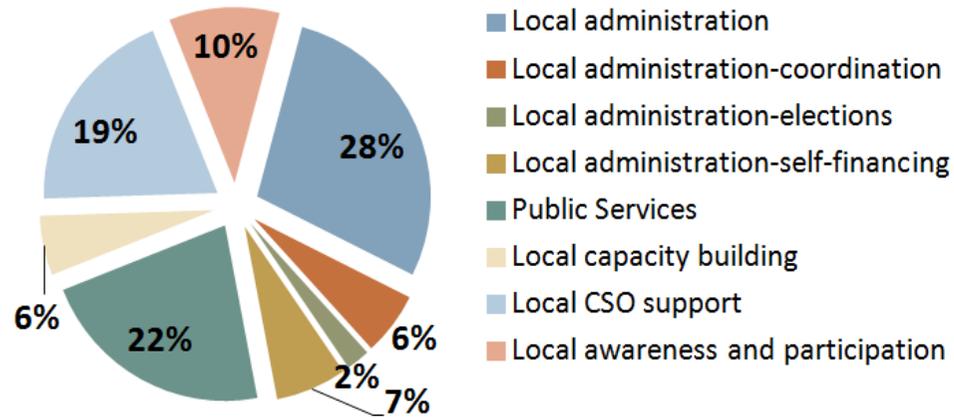
**« 273 projects/activities supported since our start in 2013. »**

43% of the projects/activities were related to empowering local administration (in the majority of cases support was given to local councils), 22% for public service provision, 25% for local capacity building and local CSO support and 10% for increasing local awareness and participation.

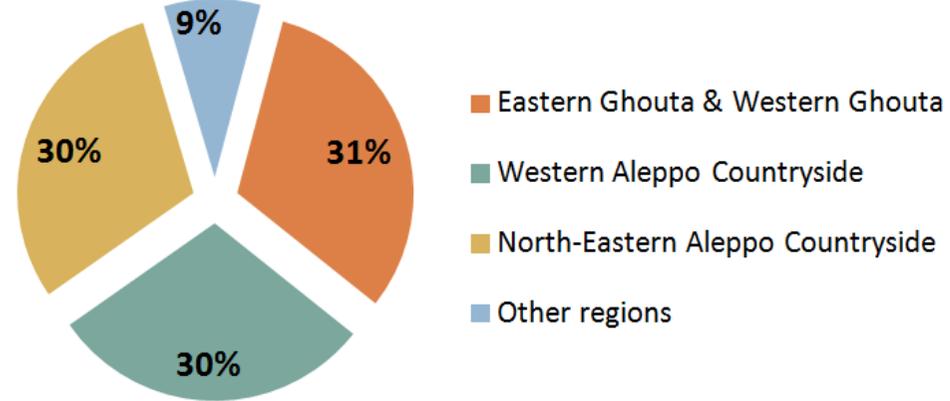
The regional split over the 6 years has become equal between the suburbs of Damascus (both Western and Eastern Ghouta, where activities stopped in 2018), Western Aleppo countryside (where activities started reducing in 2019) and North-Eastern Aleppo countryside (where activities started in 2018 and are on the rise).

The yearly repartition of these 273 projects/activities as well as the repartition of the engaged budgets (excluding the operating costs of LDSPS) are also shown. We can see there the decrease in 2019 (excluding the backlog for 2020) relatively to 2018.

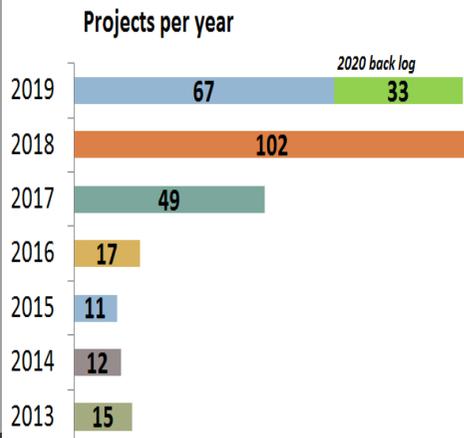
**Projects per type**



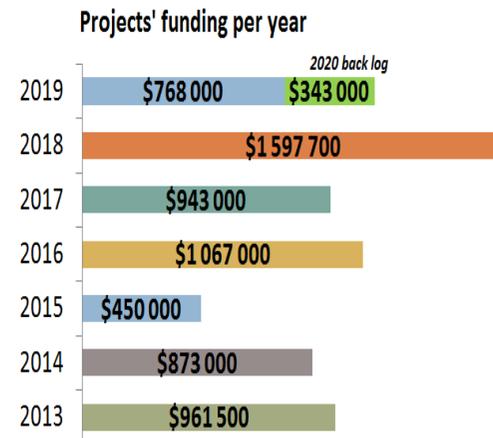
**Projects per region**



Projects supported by LDSPS (number, excluding backlog): 273



Projects supported by LDSPS (amount, excluding backlog): \$ 6 660 200



## Section 7:

### Our partners and our team

To all our partners with whom we share the results of a collective work, we say: “THANK YOU! We hope that our collaboration and combined action have effectively helped to empower the local communities in Syria”.

Our main local partners (for 2019):

- Local councils (LCs) in North-Eastern Aleppo Countryside: Aikideh LC, Akhtareen LC, Al-Bab LC, Al-Rai LC, Al-Zyadieh LC, Arshaf LC, Azaz LC, Bzaah LC, Dabeq LC, Ehtemlat LC, Kafr Ghan LC, Kafr Kalbeen LC, Kafra LC, Kaljbreen LC, Marea LC, Qabaseen LC, Rael LC, Sejjo/Salameh LC, Shamarekh LC, Telaar LC, Turkman-Bareh LC
- Free Aleppo University in North-Eastern Aleppo Countryside
- Local CSOs: in Western Aleppo countryside: Administration Development Center, Atareb Women Association, Civil Center, Engineers Union, Irtaqi, Itharar, Mada, Okool Mubdeaa, Roua, Sanabel al Amal, Disabilities Association, Tatawoo Li Nabni Gathering, Youth Binaa al Nahda Gathering, Youth Gathering; in North-Eastern Aleppo countryside: Azaz Youth Initiative, Bassmet Wattan, Hooz, Shamal, Souriana Al Amal, The Stabilization Commission, Women Empowerment Unit.
- Syrian NGOs based outside of Syria: Kesh Malek, RMTTeam, LACU (Local Administration Coordination Unit), LDO (Local Development Organization).

Our funding partners in 2019 were:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands (through a program ending settlement contract)
- The Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation, GIZ)

LDSPS is a founding member of the Shaml Syrian CSOs Coalition aiming at coordinating the action and the cooperation between its members sharing the same values.

LDSPS is also the coordinator of the Working Group for Building Free Syria, a group of Syrian CSOs working on a framework and principles for policies for the Rebuilding of Syria.

**« THANK YOU »**

# OUR TEAM



# Supporting Syrians Helping themselves



LDSPS