

Civil Society in Armenia

Empowering citizens to hold their government accountable.

5,000+

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)



< 20%

of CSOs are active



Armenia's Civil Society Participation Index



Civic Education

Without wide public understanding of democracy, opinions can be manipulated or frustrations exploited and support for Armenia's nascent democracy diminished.



- Promote civic education so the public understands & embraces the values of democracy & democratic systems, such as:

- Real vs. ideal democratic principles & processes
- Democracy in Armenia today
- Information sources to assess evidence, & understand responsible media



82%

view recent government changes as positive



- The new government is largely supported by citizens. This optimism may be a useful entryway to building understanding of what constitutes a democratic culture.
- However, Armenian society is affected by decades of non-democratic rule that have embedded perspectives that are sometimes antithetical to democratic norms.

Civic initiatives are typically spontaneous grassroots efforts based on social concerns, but lack activism on underlying issues. CSO activities may be influenced by donor interests.

Enabling Environment

- Model CSOs after organizations that already have the public's trust.
- Remove legal barriers for CSOs to work on public interest issues.
- Implement legal reforms for government oversight of CSOs to improve public perception.
- Promote coalition building & conduct an advocacy skills training.

- CSO leaders may be recognized and trusted, but their organizations may not be.
- CSO dependence on donors creates legitimacy & agenda constraints.
- CSOs often work together to pursue legal reforms, but are not willing to create long term coalitions.

- Assist civic initiatives in areas such as legal representation, monitoring, & dialogue.
- Establish a dialogue between civil society actors to determine what donor support they are comfortable accepting.



46%

have a positive opinion of CSOs



- Civil society relies on informal instead of formal mechanisms.

Advocacy

CSO participation in policy-making is limited, but citizen participation in local governance is robust.



84%

believe they can influence decisions



- Build CSO capacity with formal training on sector/cross-sector issues.
- Develop a database for CSOs to fill expertise gaps.
- Establish a policy research & resource center.

- There is a research gap in civil society issues.

- There is increased collaboration between government & CSOs, but formal mechanisms are insufficient or non-existent.

- Establish a quick grant mechanism for reforms as initiatives arise.
- Support a government-CSO dialogue to reform participation mechanisms.
- Provide support to government institutions responsible for responding to advocacy initiatives.

- Support initiatives that focus on cross-community concerns.
- Build local to national policy links for effective grassroots advocacy.

- Citizens are active in local governance, but power & finances are concentrated.



Resources: Learning, Evaluation and Research Activity II (LER II) Research—Governance in Armenia: Evidence Review <https://bit.ly/3217F3P>
Civil Society & Media in Armenia: Evidence Review <https://bit.ly/34YapCb> • Civil Society & Media in Armenia: Field Assessment <https://bit.ly/2Qh4Nlc>
European Union <https://bit.ly/2KcklRz> • IRI <https://bit.ly/2MfldUE> Oct. 9-29, 2018 • V-Dem <https://bit.ly/2wgc20B> • Media Sustainability Index <https://bit.ly/2ASIUx2>

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