

CSSR Survey: Feedback Report

Condensed Version

September 2024

Summary Report

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents key findings from the CSSR survey conducted between September 4 and 13, 2024, with 205 participants. The survey aimed to gather insights from Syrian civil society members about their priorities, critical issues, and suggestions for improvement. This condensed version focuses on highlighting the key civil society feedback to guide CSSR's future strategies toward more inclusive, transparent, and effective support for Syrian civil society.

Background and Objectives:

The CSSR survey was conducted to understand the perspectives and concerns of Syrian civil society actors, both inside Syria and in the diaspora. The main objectives of the survey were:

- *To identify priority issues for civil society as well as key areas of concern that should be addressed within the CSSR.*
- *To provide actionable recommendations for enhancing inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness to the diverse needs of Syrian civil society.*
- *To support advocacy efforts by amplifying the voices of Syrian civil society members in national and international forums.*

Methodology:

The CSSR survey employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data on demographic characteristics with qualitative insights on community priorities and critical issues. The survey was conducted over a period of ten days and included responses from 205 participants:

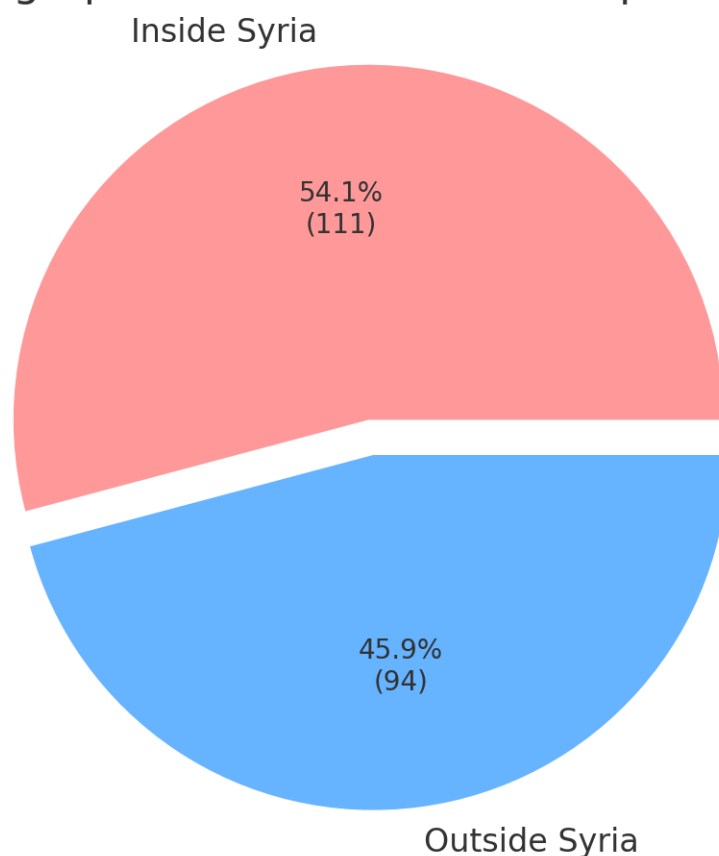
- *111 respondents (54%) inside Syria and 94 respondents (46%) outside Syria, 67% of respondents were male and 33% female.*
- *Analysis included both quantitative assessments to identify demographic trends and qualitative analysis to capture key themes and recommendations.*

2. DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

The survey participants were diverse in terms of geography, gender, age, and regional affiliation, reflecting a broad cross-section of Syrian civil society:

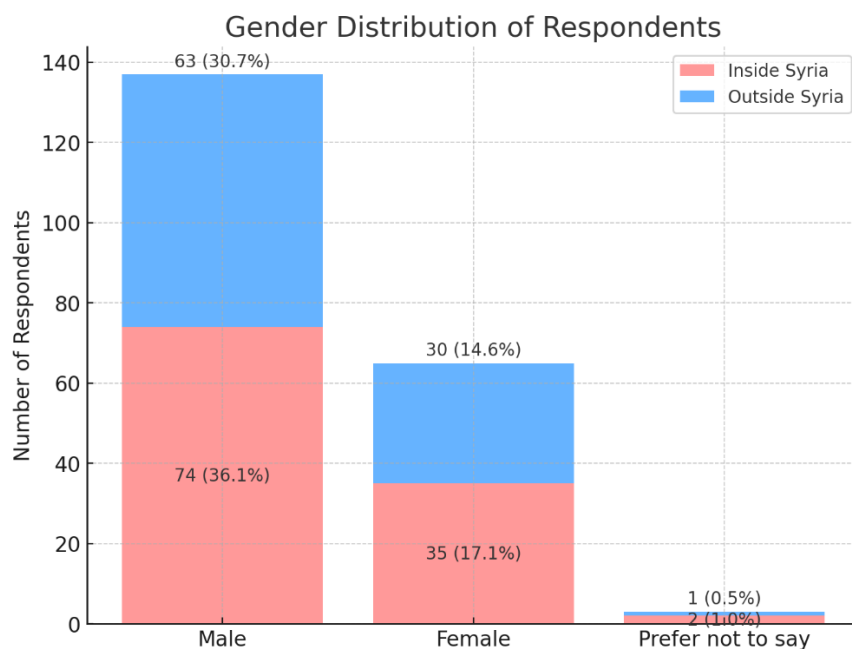
Geographical Distribution of Respondents:

Geographical Distribution of Respondents



- **Total Respondents:** 205
- **Inside Syria:** 111 respondents (54%)
- **Outside Syria:** 94 respondents (46%)

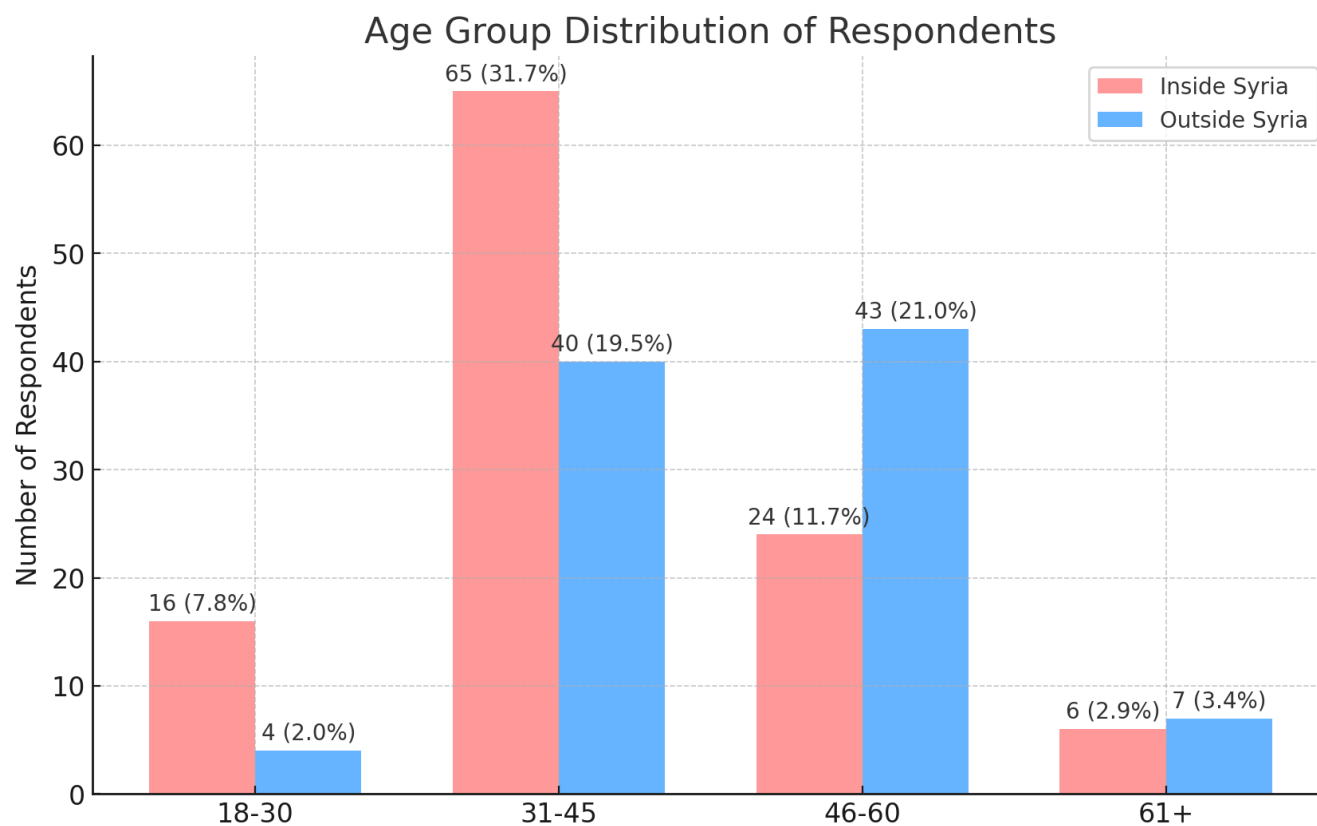
Gender Distribution:



Inside Syria:

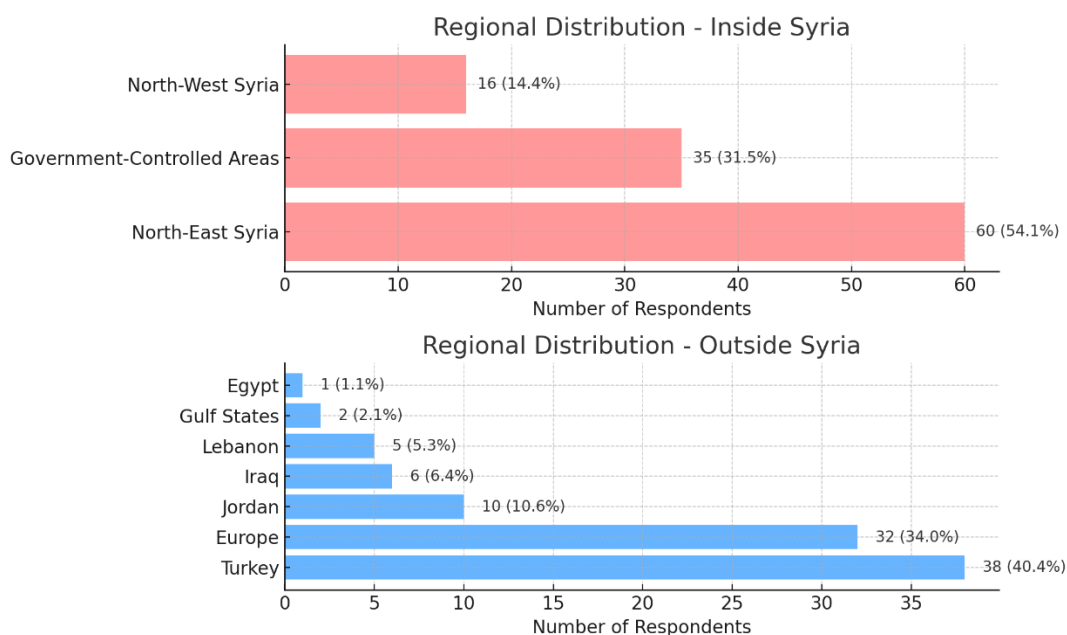
- **Male:** 74 (67%)
- **Female:** 35 (32%)
- **Prefer not to say:** 2 (2%)
- **Outside Syria:**
 - **Male:** 63 (67%)
 - **Female:** 30 (32%)
 - **Prefer not to say:** 1 (1%)

Age Group Distribution:



	Inside Syria	Outside Syria
18-30 years	14%	4%
31-45 years	59%	43%
46-60 years	22%	46%
61 years and above	5%	7%

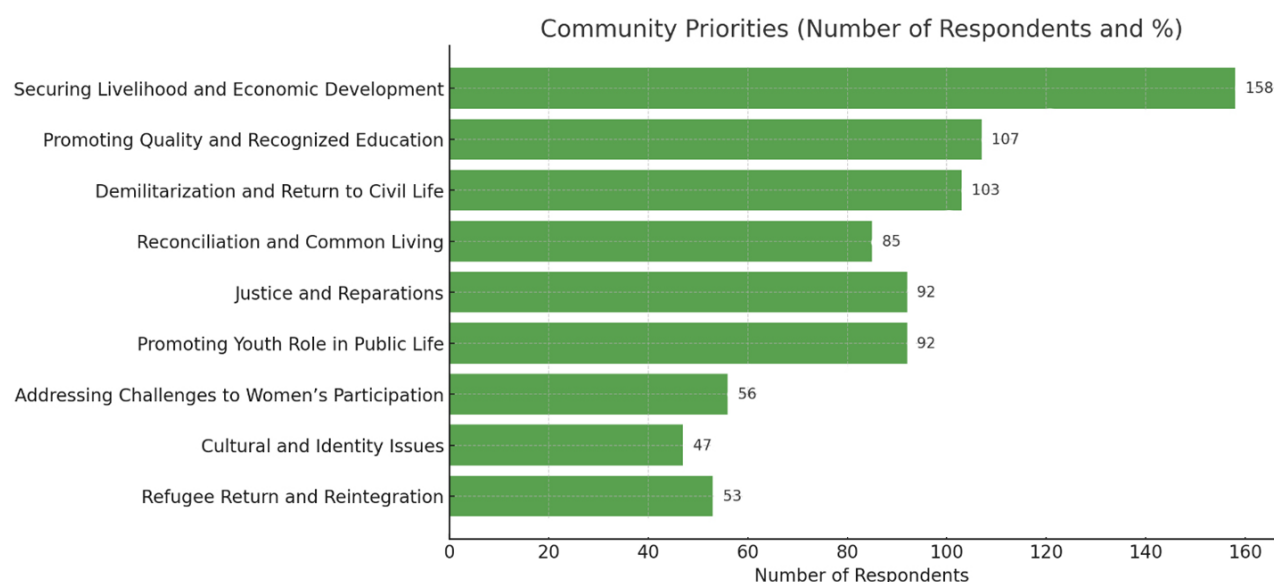
Regional Distribution:



- **Inside Syria:**
 - **North-East Syria:** 60 respondents (54%)
 - **Government-controlled Areas:** 35 respondents (32%)
 - **North-West Syria:** 16 respondents (14%)
- **Outside Syria:**
 - **Türkiye:** 38 respondents (40%)
 - **Europe:** 32 respondents (34%)
 - **Jordan:** 10 respondents (11%)
 - **Iraq:** 6 respondents (6%)
 - **Lebanon:** 5 respondents (5%)
 - **Gulf States:** 2 respondents (2%)
 - **Egypt:** 1 respondent (1%)

3. KEY FINDINGS: COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

Community Priorities (respondents can choose multiple options):



The survey identified several priority areas for respondents:

- **Securing Livelihood and Economic Development:** The most significant priority for **158 respondents (77%)** was job creation, economic growth, and stability. This priority was particularly emphasized by those inside Syria and by male respondents.
- **Promoting Quality and Recognized Education:** **107 respondents (52%)** identified this as a critical area, reflecting a strong demand for improved educational opportunities and recognition of qualifications, especially among female and younger respondents.
- **Demilitarization and Return to Civil Life:** A priority for **103 respondents (50%)**, particularly those inside Syria, who highlighted the need to reduce militarization and promote a return to civilian governance.
- **Promoting Youth Role in Public Life:** **92 respondents (45%)** called for greater youth engagement in decision-making processes, particularly among younger respondents and those outside Syria.
- **Justice and Reparations:** **92 respondents (45%)** prioritized justice and reparative measures, particularly males and those aged 31-45, indicating a demand for accountability for conflict-related harms.

CRITICAL ISSUES IDENTIFIED BY RESPONDENTS (MULTIPLE CHOICE POSSIBLE):

The survey revealed several critical issues that need urgent attention:

- **Representation and Inclusion in the Political Process:** Cited by **164 respondents**, this was the most frequently mentioned issue, emphasizing the need for broader representation in political negotiations.
- **Protecting and Expanding Civic Space:** With **160 mentions**, respondents expressed concerns over the shrinking space for civil society activities and advocacy.
- **Advocacy for Civil Society Input in Reforms:** **157 mentions** highlighted the importance of including civil society's voice in political reforms and negotiations.
- **Amplifying Voices of Refugees and IDPs:** **156 mentions** stressed the need to ensure that the concerns of displaced persons and refugees are considered in political discussions.
- **Facilitate Dialogue and Build Trust:** **156 mentions** indicated a need to bridge gaps between relevant stakeholders.

4. SUGGESTIONS FOR BETTER INCLUSION AND ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The feedback provided several suggestions for enhancing CSSR's role in supporting Syrian civil society:

- **Improved Communication and Engagement:** Respondents called for clearer and more transparent communication including regular updates, newsletters, and more dynamic engagement strategies using modern communication tools like social media.
- **Broader Representation and Inclusion:** Emphasis was placed on ensuring diverse voices, particularly those of women, youth, minorities, and people from all geographic regions, are represented in CSSR activities.
- **Transparent and Inclusive Decision-Making:** A recurring theme was the need for transparency in decision-making processes, with suggestions for creating formal frameworks and criteria for participation.

- **Localized and Practical Support:** Respondents stressed the need for support tailored to local contexts including capacity-building resources and culturally sensitive approaches.

5. KEY INSIGHTS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

- **Enhancing Representation and Inclusion:** There is a strong demand for CSSR to foster more inclusive participation of all demographic groups, ensuring that underrepresented voices are amplified in all decision-making processes.
- **Protecting Civic Space and Rights:** CSSR should prioritize efforts to protect civic spaces and advocate for civil society's rights, including freedom of expression and protection from harassment.
- **Strengthening Local Capacity and Resilience:** Support should focus on practical, localized actions that empower civil society organizations to operate effectively within their unique contexts, particularly in areas where they face significant challenges.
- **Promoting Collaboration and Coordination:** CSSR should encourage greater cooperation among civil society organizations, both within Syria and in the diaspora, to enhance their collective impact and advocacy efforts.
- **Facilitating Dialogue and Trust Building:** Facilitating dialogue and trust-building initiatives is essential to improve cooperation and advance shared goals among relevant stakeholders.

CSSR, 2024

The Civil Society Support Room (CSSR) was established in January 2016 by the Office of the Special Envoy for Syria as a mechanism to consult with a broad and diverse range of civil society actors. Through the CSSR, civil society actors can meet, interact and provide their insights and ideas to the Office of the Special Envoy, relevant United Nations actors, as well as international stakeholders.

This mechanism aims at rendering the UN mediation process more inclusive.

The overall supervision and guidance of the CSSR rests with the OSE-Syria. swisspeace Foundation has been mandated by the OSE to provide methodological expertise, operational and technical support to the process.

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