



2019 CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

Azerbaijan
July 2020

Cover Photo: Members of the Beresan Youth Bank present their achievements at the 2018 Annual Civil Society Development Forum, an event organized by Ednannia with support from USAID. The Forum is the largest national platform for learning, communication, and experience sharing among nonprofit organizations in Ukraine, typically bringing together approximately 2,500 participants from the non-profit and private sectors, donor community, media, governmental bodies, and local authorities.

Photo Credit: Ednannia, Ukraine

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For Azerbaijan
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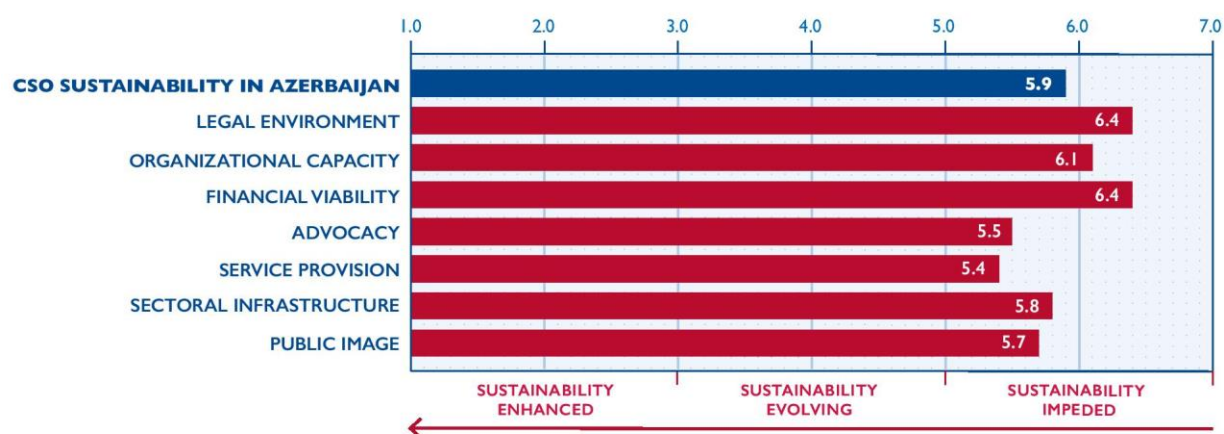
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AZERBAIJAN

Capital: Baku
Population: 10,205,810
GDP per capita (PPP): \$17,500
Human Development Index: High (0.754)
Freedom in the World: Not Free (10/100)

OVERALL CSO SUSTAINABILITY: 5.9¹



Civic freedoms continued to be highly restricted in Azerbaijan in 2019. According to Amnesty International, “The rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly remained suppressed [in Azerbaijan] as dissenting voices were silenced and imprisoned, and peaceful protests were violently dispersed by police.” Human Rights Watch notes that, “The space for independent activism, critical journalism, and opposition political activity [in Azerbaijan] has been virtually extinguished as so many activists, human rights defenders, and journalists have been arrested and jailed, and laws and regulations restricting the activities of independent groups and their ability to secure funding adopted.”

At the same time, several positive developments took place in 2019. In March, for example, President Ilham Aliyev pardoned more than 400 people convicted of crimes, including more than fifty members of the opposition, human rights defenders, journalists, and others considered by international rights organizations to be political prisoners. However, according to Human Rights Watch, at least thirty others remained wrongfully imprisoned, while authorities regularly targeted its critics and other dissenting voices. Also in March, the Supreme Court lifted the probation conditions and travel ban imposed on Ilgar Mammadov, a political activist. President Aliyev also initiated several changes in the government aimed at economic and political modernization, including replacing the prime minister and the minister of economy.

Overall CSO sustainability in Azerbaijan did not change significantly in 2019 and remains highly impeded. However, the government’s relationship with CSOs improved somewhat, contributing to positive developments in the financial viability and advocacy dimensions. CSOs had more access to public funding and the government continued to register grants, donations, and foreign service contracts, which had a positive impact on the sector’s financial viability. While still limited, CSO advocacy improved, with some government entities demonstrating increased willingness to collaborate with CSOs, enabling a broader range of CSOs to participate in decision-making processes. In addition, CSO leaders were registered as candidates for the parliamentary elections in February 2020. Meanwhile, CSOs continued to operate in a restrictive environment in which they find it difficult to obtain legal status and register foreign grants and are required to receive permission from the authorities to organize public events in the regions.

According to official information, in 2019 the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) registered one branch of a foreign NGO and 109 local CSOs (compared to 169 in 2018), bringing the total number of registered non-commercial entities to more than 4,500. There are also several hundred unregistered groups in the country. During the year, five CSOs voluntarily suspended their activity and seven, including one branch of a foreign NGO, voluntarily terminated their legal status.

¹ Parts of the introduction and legal environment section were not authored by the implementing partner and contain text inserted by other contributors during the editing process.

LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 6.4



The legal environment governing CSOs in Azerbaijan did not change significantly in 2019. CSOs continue to operate under a restrictive environment in which they face many obstacles to their operations. Key legal acts regulating CSOs in Azerbaijan include the Civil Code, Law on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Law on State Registration of Legal Entities and State Registry, the Tax Code, and various decisions of the Cabinet of Ministers.

The registration of CSOs, including foreign CSOs, continues to be difficult. The process is lengthy, sometimes taking months, and MoJ often takes a subjective approach based on the mission of an organization or its founders. While an online government services portal created in 2018 contains detailed

information on how to register a CSO with MoJ, it did not result in any measurable improvements to the registration process in 2019.

Rules adopted in 2015 require CSOs to register foreign grants, domestic and foreign donations, and foreign service contracts with MoJ. CSOs continue to register grants through the one-stop shop system introduced in 2017. According to official statistics from MoJ, 1,177 grants, 86 service contracts, and 692 donations were registered during 2019, a decrease from a total of 2,289 grants, service contracts, and donations registered in 2018. No data is available on the precise sources of this funding or amounts of these awards. The registration of foreign service contracts continues to be much easier and faster than the registration of foreign grants. The registration of grants from the state budget is a straightforward process and CSOs have no problems with it. Some CSOs register independent businesses in order to avoid grant registration requirements.

In 2019, MoJ opened a new CSO service center in Baku in which CSOs can receive consultations on legal matters, submit applications for funding approvals and changes in the organization using e-templates, and meet with ministry officials. In 2019, the USAID-funded Empowering Civil Society Organizations for Transparency (ECSOFT) project and MoJ organized information sessions for CSOs in the regions of Ganja, Guba, Gabala, Shirvan, and Baku on the obligations of CSOs stemming from legislation on money laundering. These events marked the first time that MoJ's chief of unit on work with CSOs personally travelled to the regions to meet with CSOs and answer their questions related to the legislation and its enforcement.

The NGO Support Council created a new online platform for CSOs called SELIS in 2019. Through this platform, CSOs have access to twenty e-services, including online submission of projects, online evaluation, and online reporting. It also enables citizens to provide feedback on project proposals submitted by CSOs to the NGO Support Council for financing.

According to official data that CSOs confirmed, there were no cases of MoJ involuntarily dissolving a CSO during the year. The so-called NGO Case of 2014, in which several foreign and local CSOs were charged with violations of the criminal code, was closed for many organizations, although it remained open for others, such as the American Bar Association. In addition, the number of inspections conducted by MoJ decreased from eight in 2018 to five in 2019, and there were no instances of local or foreign CSOs being fined by MoJ during the year. However, MoJ issued thirty-four warnings to CSOs in 2019, up from just two in 2018 and thirty-three in 2017. Unwritten rules to obtain approval from the local executive authorities prior to organizing any public events in the regions continue to have a chilling effect on CSOs.

Freedom of expression and assembly continued to be restricted in Azerbaijan in 2019. According to Human Rights Watch, "Azerbaijan effectively imposes a blanket ban on protests in the central areas of Baku and instead offers demonstrators a remote location on the outskirts of the city for rallies." In October, police violently broke up three unsanctioned, peaceful protests in central Baku, and arrested and beat protesters who called for the release of political prisoners and for free and fair elections and protested growing unemployment and economic injustice in the country. According to a report of the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, "no progress has

been made regarding the protection of freedom of expression,” and “journalists and social media activists who express dissent or criticism of the authorities are continuously deprived of their liberty on a variety of charges” that defy credibility.

There were no known cases in 2019 in which a CSO won a case against the government in a local court. However, in July 2019, the European Court of Human Rights issued a decision in the case Jafarov and others v. Azerbaijan, which centered around the denial of CSO registration. The European Court found that MoJ had violated the right to freedom of association and had not complied with the domestic laws’ requirements on registration. In particular, instead of notifying the applicant of all the omissions in its application after the first review, as required by law, MoJ found a new omission with each successive request.

In 2019, simplified legal proceeding were introduced for civil cases in which the cost of claims is less than AZN 2,000 (approximately \$1,200), and the cost of claims for economic disputes is less than AZN 10,000 (approximately \$5,800). This may save CSOs involved in such disputes both money and time. In addition, the Law on Mediation, adopted in March 2019, allows CSOs to become mediator organizations and civil society representatives to become individual mediators. This may help CSOs to improve their public image and resolve legal disputes in a shorter time and at a lower cost without going to court.

CSOs are exempt from income tax on income from grants, donations, and membership fees. In December 2018, changes were made to the Tax Code that introduce a 10 percent income tax deduction for commercial companies making donations to CSOs specialized in science, education, health, sports, or culture. However, the government did not adopt a mechanism to implement this benefit in 2019. These changes also simplified the reports that CSOs must submit to the Tax and Social Protection Fund. A Decision of the Cabinet of Ministers of Azerbaijan in 2019 annulled the exemption that CSO staff received from paying taxes on their salaries if financed through grants received from the state budget; the exemption continues to be valid in relation to foreign grants. Also, beginning January 1, 2019, humanitarian organizations are no longer exempt from paying 15 percent of their local staff salaries to the pension fund.

New accounting rules for CSOs came into effect in 2019. The Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the Young Accountants’ Union, a local CSO, organized pro bono training sessions for CSO accountants to familiarize them with the new accounting rules. CSOs did not raise any major concerns in regard to their enforcement.

CSOs are allowed to earn income through the provision of goods and services, including by charging fees or establishing social enterprises. CSOs can compete for government procurements and engage in fundraising campaigns as long as they follow the rules on donations.

CSOs have various opportunities to receive legal assistance, including through NGO Azerbaijan, a mobile app covering issues related to CSO legislation such as registration, regulation of income, taxation, and reporting; a Facebook page called NGO Legislation (QHT Qanunvericiliyi); www.e-qanun.az, an online portal that includes all legal acts in Azerbaijan; and MoJ’s service center in Baku. In addition, a leading specialist in CSO legislation continues to teach a course called NGOs and Human Rights at the Law Faculty of Baku State University. Every year, five to ten students complete this course before continuing their careers with CSOs or government. There continued to be reported cases of independent advocates facing intimidation and arbitrary disbarment in 2019.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 6.1

CSOs’ organizational capacity did not change in 2019. With the exception of regional NGO resource centers, the organizational capacity of regional CSOs continues to be significantly weaker than that of organizations in the capital because of their more limited access to funding (both foreign and domestic), legal and administrative barriers, and weak human capital.

CSOs find it extremely difficult to establish direct contact with constituencies in the regions due to the need to receive permission from authorities in order to organize public events. CSOs make broad use of social media, which provides an opportunity to communicate with their constituents freely.

Active CSOs in Baku, as well as some larger CSOs in the regions, adhere to their missions to the extent that funding allows. Smaller organizations pay less attention to their missions. As CSOs have few long-term funding prospects, strategic planning is almost impossible. As a result, very few CSOs develop strategic plans.

While the majority of CSOs have some written policies to guide their work, these are rarely implemented in practice. As such, few CSOs have a true separation of powers. The roles of boards or councils of trustees are often limited to satisfying reporting requirements.

Because they have limited funding, most CSOs operate without full-time staff and have limited access to lawyers, accountants, IT managers, and other key personnel. Instead, CSO leaders often perform several of these functions. The number of volunteers continuously increases. According to the Charities Aid Foundation's 2019 World Giving Index, which aggregates data over the past ten years, an average of 20 percent of respondents in Azerbaijan reported volunteering. A growing number of state bodies involve volunteers in their work. In 2019, the Youth Fund organized more than 100 events with the participation of 15,000 volunteers, many of which were mobilized through youth CSOs, throughout the country. Subsequently, 2020 was announced as a "year of volunteerism" in Azerbaijan.

CSO leaders often use their private residences as their offices, particularly in the regions. Possession of vehicles is a luxury that only a few CSOs can afford. Organizations operating in towns with functioning and reasonably equipped NGO Resource Centers can use their facilities for events and their day-to-day work free of charge. Although CSOs' equipment is generally outdated, they make broad use of the internet, which is available in Baku and the regions, to learn about legislative changes, new funding opportunities, and other important information affecting their work.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN AZERBAIJAN



FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 6.4

FINANCIAL VIABILITY IN AZERBAIJAN



CSO financial viability improved slightly in 2019 as public funding opportunities increased and the government continued to register foreign funding.

MoJ continued to register foreign grants, service contracts, and donations in 2019. While no official data is available on the source of these funds, according to CSOs, MoJ registered grants from the Embassy of Japan valued at \$1.7 million, seven grants from the United Nations worth a total of \$1 million, six grants from the European Union (EU), and two from USAID. Grants from the Black Sea Trust, the Embassy of Canada, and the Eurasia Foundation were also registered. Some of these grants involve sub-grants to other CSOs.

Over the past few years, many CSOs have started to receive foreign funding through affiliated commercial

entities and individual service contracts. Some CSOs note that their grant history has suffered as a result of this practice, making them ineligible for large donor grants.

Funding from the NGO Support Council and Youth Fund continue to be the key funding sources for most active organizations. In 2019, the NGO Support Council financed 568 projects valued at nearly AZN 4 million (approximately \$2.3 million), approximately the same amount it awarded in 2018. The Youth Fund did not provide statistics about its funding of CSOs in 2019. Other significant government donors include the State Fund for Support to the Development of Mass Media (which ran four funding competitions for journalists on its own, as well as six joint competitions with other state authorities in 2019) and the Science Development Fund. In 2019, a total of eighteen government bodies awarded grants to CSOs, compared to twelve in 2018. New agencies included the Baku Transportation Agency and Baku International Multiculturalism Center. In 2019, grant competitions were

held in areas including civil society strengthening, cultural diversity, human rights, human trafficking, women's rights, rights of internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees, rights of the disabled, environmental protection, education, culture, and history.

In general, the government advertises calls for funding online and shares them in the media. The NGO Support Council has the most transparent grant procedures. In 2019, it continued to implement a number of electronic novelties in its grant application and administration procedures, including an e-system to schedule contract signing; e-submission of project reports; and e-communication between the project team and the NGO Support Council's staff. In addition, the NGO Support Council often organizes public discussions with CSOs in order to collect ideas for grant topics. It also involves three independent experts to review the project proposals submitted by CSOs. In practice, funding from the NGO Support Council is available to all CSOs, with the exception of unregistered groups that are not eligible to apply as they do not have bank accounts. However, large CSOs are generally not interested in the small grants offered by the NGO Support Council.

The government continues to introduce the use of social contracting—outsourcing of social services—to CSOs. The Ministry of Labor and Social Protection of the Population (MLSPP) is still the only ministry awarding social contracts. In 2018, it awarded eighteen social contracts to CSOs; it did not disclose how many social contracts it awarded to CSOs in 2019.

CSOs' income from membership fees, local donations, commercial tenders, and local and international business continues to be low. There is no legal regulation of cash boxes, which discourages many CSOs from using them. However, some CSOs still do so at their own risk.

The majority of CSOs, particularly regional CSOs, do not have strong financial management systems. Few CSOs publish annual financial reports with financial statements, despite the fact that they must submit this information to MoF.

In 2019, some CSOs continued to have issues with banks. For example, some banks requested copies of contracts for all wires received and proof of funding registration from MoJ and refused to issue debit and credit cards to CSOs.

Under ECSOFT, an international workshop on Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards related to CSOs' obligations stemming from money laundering and financing of terrorism was held in 2019 with the participation of dozens of CSOs. MoJ and ECSOFT also published a special publication explaining this legislation to CSOs and providing sample documents for compliance.

ADVOCACY: 5.5

CSO advocacy improved slightly in 2019 as CSOs had more opportunities to interact with the government on policy issues. However, CSOs that the government views as affiliated with the opposition or that focus on issues such as political prisoners and government corruption are still largely unable to engage in advocacy.

CSO-government cooperation channels widened during the year, with CSOs providing more policy recommendations and participating in public councils, discussions, and working groups. For example, a new unit on work with CSOs and the media was set up in the President's Office in 2019. CSOs view this office as a potentially effective mechanism to raise their concerns at the highest level. Some government entities also demonstrated increased willingness to collaborate with CSOs, enabling a broader range of CSOs to participate in decision-making processes. For example, for the first time ever, representatives of MoJ traveled to the regions to meet with CSOs and increase their awareness of the legislation regarding money laundering and grant registration; they also consulted with CSOs on several occasions.



The 2014 Law on Public Participation provides a legal basis for citizens to participate in governance through various mechanisms, including public councils, which serve as consultative bodies to the government. In 2019, more than twelve state bodies—including Azerbaijan Service and Assessment Network (ASAN), MLSPP, MoJ, State Migration Service, and the Committee on Women, Children and Family Affairs—had public councils with CSO members. The process for setting up the public council in the Ministry of Health was completed in 2019. These councils operate with various degrees of efficiency, but in general their capacity continues to increase. In July, the USAID-funded ECSOFT Project organized an international conference on public councils that brought together representatives of fourteen state bodies and all existing public councils to discuss the challenges they face and to formulate recommendations for increasing the effectiveness of public councils in Azerbaijan. President Aliyev noted the importance of public control over activities of state bodies several times in his speeches during the year.

The practice of organizing public discussions of draft laws with the participation of independent experts and CSOs improved to some degree in 2019. For example, the Tax Ministry invited CSOs engaged in the economic field to participate in two events to discuss draft changes to tax legislation; their recommendations were taken into account in the final draft. However, consultations with CSOs regarding draft legislation are still not organized consistently. In particular, the Cabinet of Ministers never holds public discussions with CSOs, even on issues that directly affect them. For example, CSOs were not consulted about the decision to annul the exemption that humanitarian organizations previously received from contributing to the pension fund. However, MG Consulting, a local law company and local implementing partner for the *CSO Sustainability Index*, organized a discussion with relevant stakeholders on this issue and submitted recommendations to the government. The NGO Forum organized two public discussions on CSO issues, including registration of CSOs and grants, and sent a letter to President Aliyev asking for improvements to the legal environment governing CSOs.

Two other advocacy instruments—the possibility for 40,000 citizens to initiate a law and mahalla committees (voluntary unions of local residents under the Law on the Status of Municipalities)—remain underutilized due to the lack of relevant mechanisms and practices.

In 2019, the government of Azerbaijan demonstrated its willingness to re-activate its status in the Open Government Partnership (OGP), which was suspended in 2016 due to unresolved constraints on civil society and actively cooperated with civil society to this end. In 2019, CSOs provided public feedback on government bodies' services and performance, participated in public councils, raised public awareness, and organized public discussions. Azerbaijan's status in OGP had still not been reactivated by the end of 2019.

At the end of 2019, more than twenty CSO leaders submitted their candidacy for the February 2020 parliamentary elections, all of which were registered by the Central Election Commission. This demonstrated the government's greater openness towards CSOs compared to previous elections.

Despite these improvements, CSO advocacy continues to be limited, especially in the regions. Existing CSO advocacy platforms include the National NGO Forum, Anticorruption Coalition, South Caucasus Women Congress, National Platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF), and OGP Platform. Advocacy capacity is limited mostly to Baku-based CSOs. In the regions, CSOs' capacity to advocate is also limited by the de facto requirement to obtain approval from the local executive authorities prior to organizing any public events.

Social media usage is increasing in Azerbaijan, and social networks present great potential as an advocacy tool. However, regional CSOs are not well-versed in the use of social media and even Baku-based CSOs do not make full use of this medium.

While CSOs continue to engage in advocacy on the international arena, including by contributing to various country reports, statements, and articles, a lack of funding continued to limit these efforts in 2019.

On several occasions, largely within the OGP Platform, CSOs discussed and proposed legislative changes aimed at loosening the restrictive environment in which they operate, with an emphasis on increasing access to foreign funding.

SERVICE PROVISION: 5.4



CSO service provision did not change significantly in 2019.

CSOs receive significant support from the government to provide services in the areas of social care, health, education, and legal aid. In addition, CSOs provide services in a diverse range of areas including research, assessment, monitoring, and training services for other CSOs, international and foreign CSOs, businesses, and academia. According to official statistics, CSOs organized a total of 459 trainings on topics such as human rights, awareness raising, and women's leadership under projects implemented with funding from the NGO Support Council in 2019. These events were attended by 12,281 persons. CSOs did not offer any new types of services in 2019.

CSOs prefer to register their funding as service contracts rather than grants due to the relative ease of the registration process for service contracts. Some CSOs also provide services by concluding service contracts with donors or other customers through affiliated commercial organizations or individuals. The number of such contracts was said to increase in 2019 despite the fact that the legislative framework for the registration of service contracts did not change.

Some CSOs are able to offer fee-based services, usually focused on the provision of consultations and technical assistance. The clients for such services are usually academia, international organizations, business agencies, and the government; local communities generally are not financially able to pay for services.

The 2012 Law on Social Services provides a framework for the state to engage in social contracting with CSOs, although it is still not widely used. State orders for the provision of social services are easier than grants in terms of their legalization and registration.

SECTORAL INFRASTRUCTURE: 5.8

The infrastructure supporting the CSO sector did not change significantly in 2019.

NGO Resource Centers in Baku, Guba, Gabala, Mingachevir, Shamkir, and Shirvan continue to provide technical and infrastructure support and arrange training programs for local CSOs. Regional NGO Resource Centers provide fee-based services to Baku-based organizations related to the organization of events and contacts with regional CSOs. The government has noted the efficacy of these centers and in 2019 the NGO Support Council awarded grants of up to AZN 30,000 (approximately \$17,500) for Baku-based resource centers and AZN 20,000 (approximately \$11,500) for region-based centers.

CSOs confirmed that in 2019, a variety of venues, including the International Press Center in Baku, Olympic Complexes, H. Aliyev Centers, Youth Centers, and Baku Congress Center, continued to offer space for CSO events, both in the capital city and the regions. CSOs use these venues either for free or at discounted rates, although the use of these spaces may still be selectively denied to critical voices. The Women Resource Centers (WRC) and Baku NGO Resource Center also offer pro bono meeting facilities for CSO activities.



There are several national CSO platforms, including the National CSO Forum, which was established in 1999 with 675 CSOs, and the independent Azerbaijan National Platform of the EaP CSF, which was established in 2009 and unites sixty-three CSOs. Thematic coalitions also bring together CSOs focused on issues such as children’s rights and the rights of disabled persons.

The NGO Support Council, Azerbaijan Anti-Corruption Academy, Bank Training Center, and MG Consulting all offer local training opportunities and materials in the Azerbaijani language on such topics as proposal writing, report writing, and project management. The NGO Council held twenty-two trainings for CSOs in 2019, mostly on its e-services, with the attendance of more than 600 CSO representatives. The ECSOFT project conducted a survey among the CSO members of the public councils that currently operate under twelve state bodies in order to identify training needs that will be addressed in 2020.

CSOs were able to form some intersectoral partnerships with the government in 2019. Most notably, the OGP Platform unites ten public agencies and forty-four CSOs. In 2019, the Platform organized several discussions between CSOs and state bodies and participated closely in shaping the National Action Plan which was approved by President Aliyev in February 2020. No partnerships between CSOs and businesses or media are known to exist.

PUBLIC IMAGE: 5.7



The CSO sector’s public image did not change significantly in 2019.

In general, civil society activities are not covered on TV, with the exception of one program on civil society that airs on Public TV. Online media, on the other hand, covered many CSO activities in 2019, including awareness raising, training, and publications. In addition, regional newspapers publish a number of articles about CSO activities in the region. Understanding of the concept of social advertising continues to increase, but as a rule, CSOs must pay commercial rates to promote their issues on TV.

Many CSOs still are associated only with the names of their leaders. Media often interview CSO leaders as individual experts rather than as CSO representatives,

furthering the sector’s personality-driven image.

In 2019, specialized CSO media, such as the Civil Society Journal, www.qht.az, and www.qhtxeber.az, received support from the NGO Support Council to cover CSO activities. The NGO Support Council also gave nine awards to journalists for articles related to the e-services available through SELIS. Also with funding from the NGO Support Council, CSOs created a total of fifty-five TV programs, sixty-two social videos, thirty-eight films, and eighteen webpages.

In general, government perception of CSOs continues to be mixed, depending significantly both on the CSO leader, the issue, and the individual state official. In 2019, however, the government displayed a somewhat warmer relationship towards CSOs. In addition to the government’s increasing collaboration with CSOs, described above, at the instruction of the First Lady of Azerbaijan, a private jet was allocated to transport pro-opposition CSO leader Oqtay Gulaliyev for urgent treatment in Turkey after he was hit by a taxi in Baku. The government also covered all expenses related to his treatment in Turkey. These actions were viewed as a strong message to officials to be more tolerant and open to CSOs. In addition, one of the first things the newly appointed Ombudsperson did was to meet with CSOs.

According to an online survey of twenty-two respondents conducted by MG Consulting to collect information for the CSO Sustainability Index, 52 percent of respondents noted that CSO relations with the business sector did not change in 2019. Two-thirds (67 percent) of respondents noted that the public perception of CSOs improved.

As CSOs cannot afford to hire dedicated public relations (PR) staff, they rely on volunteers or leaders to develop and implement PR strategies. CSOs use social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, more than TV or print media to share information about their work. Online NGO TV (www.qhttv.az) regularly posts videos and news related to CSOs; more than 2,400 people subscribe to this portal. In addition, there is a webpage, www.qhtfilm.az, that posts films developed by CSOs on topics such as youth, social issues, IDPs, and the disabled. Online OGP TV had several programs devoted to CSO issues in 2019. In one of them, the CSO Sustainability Index was discussed.

Many CSOs still lack webpages and fail to publish annual reports. To address these problems, two online portals enable CSOs to post information about their activities pro bono. One of these portals (www.qht.az) has an online database of CSOs and CSO leaders. CSOs do not broadly adopt or adhere to codes of ethics.

Disclaimer: *The opinions expressed herein are those of the panelists and other project researchers and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or FHI 360.*

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