



*ARAB NETWORK FOR NGOS*



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Doha International Family Institute  
المعهد لدراسات العائلة العربية  
Research to advance family policies

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## **The Eleventh Annual Report of Arab NGOs**

### **The Civil Society and Risks Facing the Arab Family**

#### **“Executive Summary”**

**Dr Amany Kandil**  
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**The Arab Civil Society Confronting Social Risks**  
**- A Critical Review-**

**Executive Summary**

**Dr. Amani Kandil**  
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**The Civil Society and Risks Facing the Arab Family**  
**"Executive Summary"**

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The ideas included in this report do not reflect necessarily the point of view of the Doha International Family Institute or those of the Arab Network for NGOs, but are those of the researchers and experts who participated in its production.

**The Arab Civil Society Confronting Social Risks**

**-A Critical Review-**

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## Foreword

The eleventh report of the Arab Network for NGOs titled “The Arab Civil Society Confronting Social Risks” represents a new benchmark in the accumulation of knowledge since 2001-2002 that witnessed the launching of the first two reports about the profile of the voluntary sector in the Arab region. Over the following years, the Network has published consecutive reports about specific topics such as the relationship of NGOs with social issues such as poverty, partnerships, the environment, voluntarism, or with specific sectors of the population like women, children and youth. These reports are structured as to enable a comparative analysis helping to identify commonalities and discrepancies among Arab countries.

The issue approached in the present report is centered about the nature of social risks threatening the Arab family and the roles played by Arab Civil Society Organizations to alleviate these risks or manage their consequences. The topic is timely as it coincides with the rise of social risks in the context of important political and socio-economic changes in our region, creating a state of ambiguity and uncertainty about the future contributing to increase the severity of these risks and their impact on the Arab family.

Sixteen researchers from eleven Arab countries have participated in the preparation of the present report, and each country report includes a cognitive map of the main risks faced in the respective societies. Reports also identified and evaluated the role played by Civil Society Organizations in preventing these risks or alleviating their effects. The main findings of country reports indicate important risks threatening the Arab family, specifically poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, growth of slums, social marginalization and exclusion. On the other hand, the reports identified risks directly menacing the family entity; they included spinsterhood, early marriage of girls, widespread violence among the majority of Arab household either internally or towards the society, drugs abuse, drops out from school, street children, child labor and passive exposure to internet.

Moreover, country reports show that the most vulnerable categories are the poor, the illiterates, the inhabitants of slums, women heads of poor households, children and youth, representing thus the most important sectors of the population that need to be targeted by the social policies in the Arab countries.

Regarding the role of Civil Society Organizations, the country reports reveal that the vast majority adopts a traditional charity and social care approach. Therefore, their interventions have only a tranquilizing effect rather than an immunizing one. In addition, they do not deal with the family as a comprehensive unit but as fragmented sectors addressing either women, or children or youth. Consequently, this approach did not result in the development of comprehensive programs seeking to preserve the cohesion of the family.

Finally, the report elaborated five main points to serve as a road map for Arab Civil Society Organizations, enabling them adopting a new methodology in confronting the social risks

surrounding the Arab family. Some of these points are related to the State social policies while others present recommendations to guide the voluntary sector. Our goal here is a revision by both the State and NGOs of their vision and philosophy in order to become more effective in dealing with these risks.

**Talal Bin Abdul Aziz**

**President of the Board**

**The Arab Network for NGOs.**

## **Presentation**

The Doha International Family Institute (formerly Doha International Institute for Family Studies and Development) was established in 2006 upon the generous initiative of Her Highness Sheikha Moza Bint Nasser, chairperson of Qatar Foundation of Education, Sciences and Community Development. The initiative was launched at the closing ceremony of the Doha International Conference on the Family in 2004, organized at the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family. The Conference aimed at meeting the challenges threatening the family in the era of globalization on the base of the awareness that the reinforcement of the family provides a unique opportunity to deal with social problems in a comprehensive way. The Doha Declaration issued by the Conference represents the main reference of the Institute with a firm confirmation of the main international commitments towards the family. Actually, the Institute has obtained a special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) at the United Nations.

The mandate of the Institute is to support the achievement of the goals included in the Doha Declaration by contributing in developing knowledge worldwide about the issues related to the Arab family through the production of high quality scientific studies. It also aims at improving the exchange of information and knowledge among the members of an international multi-disciplinary network of researchers, policy makers and service providers. Moreover, advocacy and lobbying are conducted at the local, regional and international levels to put the issue of the family as a priority on the agenda of policy makers. Finally, the Institute is concerned with the establishment of an international coalition of experts specialized in the issues of the Arab family.

The Doha International Family Institute considers partnership with Arab Civil Society Organizations as highly important, and supports their contributions in dealing with the problems encountered by the Arab family in particular. Therefore, we are happy to support the publication of the Arab Network for NGOs' eleventh report titled "The Arab Civil Society Confronting Social Risks". The need for serious scientific studies about the Arab family is more pressing today than any other time with all the challenges faced by the family and the profound changes occurring in Arab societies impacting negatively the resistance of the family. The Institute hopes that this report will provide a solid base to the Arab voluntary sector in strengthening the homogeneity of the Arab family, and will serve as an incentive for the production of additional studies about the issues and challenges raised by the report.

**Abdallah Bin Nasser Al Khalifa**

**Chairman of the Board**

**Doha International Family Institute**

## Introduction

We present here the eleventh annual report prepared by the Arab Network for NGOs; this series of reports represent in their own capacity a success story for an Arab developmental non-profit organization that remained committed to publish an annual report – as part of its concern with the research and studies related to the Civil Society – developed by a team of Arab researchers and experts. Each of the successive reports was keen to analyze one main important topic aiming at contributing in the accumulation of knowledge about the Arab reality.

The added-value of the Arab Network's annual reports could be perceived since the beginning of the process in 2001 that celebrated the International Year of Voluntarism. The following reports attempted to identify the features of the Civil Society in each Arab country in terms of size, history, trends of development, fields of activities and legislation ruling this sector.

**The challenge for the Arab Network was to guarantee the sustained publication of these reports, considered as one of the indicators applied worldwide to measure the success of social and strategic research centers. Sustainability here was not only restricted to the availability of necessary funding, but included also:**

1. **The capability of the Arab Network to persevere in tackling diverse issues and perspectives in the analysis of the reality** about the Civil Society in reacting to/and addressing the global and regional changes as well as the developmental challenges. Accordingly, the consecutive annual reports studied diverse facets of the Arab voluntary sector and its capacities in fighting poverty (2004), empowering Arab women (2005), building effective partnerships with governments and the private sector (2006), dealing with youth and their needs (2007), children's issues and the Civil Society (2008), the weight of efforts granted to environmental issues (2009), the social responsibility of the private sector and its interaction with the Civil Society (2010), and the state of voluntarism in the context of a decade after the International Year of Voluntarism (2011). At the threshold of 2013, we launch the eleventh report that draws the attention of governments and Civil Society organizations about the importance of dealing in a different and more effective way with the dangers and risks surrounding the Arab family.

**Thus the challenge of sustainability was seriously met by the Arab Network for NGOs, leading to an important accumulation of knowledge through the monitoring, documentation and analysis of Civil Society organizations position towards the challenges of development in the various Arab countries. We are witnessing a process that begun in 2001 with the first report and we are today launching our eleventh report.**

2. **The challenge of sustainability exceeds the boundaries of periodical publication as well as the diversity of knowledge obtained.** Actually, the target of the Arab Network was always to cover all Arab countries, and to attract skilled researchers in order to establish a good working team every year, mainly composed of young researchers. The efforts deployed to reach this objective were huge; this is due to the fact that although the voluntary sector has a long history, it did not develop as a specific field of research with specific approaches and methodologies before the last two decades of the twentieth century. This raised difficulties for the Arab Network, especially in some Arab countries in terms of identifying research teams concerned with the study of the Civil Society from a socio-cultural, economic and political perspective, i.e. from a multi disciplinary approach.

**Over more than a decade, the annual reports of the Arab Network were produced with the participation of around 132 researchers from the various Arab countries. These young women and men represent today an Arab academic community active in the monitoring, documentation and analysis of the developments related to Arab voluntarism. However, it is fair to mention that it is not always easy to find the adequate experts in the totality of Arab countries.**

3. **The third dimension that contributed in the sustainability of this effort refers to the strong partnership and mutual understanding built between the various partners and conferring value on this collective scientific work.** Stakeholders include researchers and experts who joined us over the years sometimes on a voluntary base or against quite symbolic remuneration, and Arab institutions that provided support such as the Arab Gulf program for UN Developmental Organizations, the Arab Women Organization-League of Arab States, the Arab Bureau for Youth and Environment, El Doha International Family Institute in Qatar that granted support for the present report, and Amel Foundation in Lebanon that was committed over the past years to conduct field work in Lebanon and contributed in adding depth to the study besides hosting the workshop organized to launch the report.

**The partnership with various stakeholders contributed in achieving sustainability for a period extending from 2001 until 2013.**

## Part one: Importance of addressing social risks by the Civil Society

We will expose in the next few pages the importance of the subject selected for this report, justified by the global context on one hand and by the Arab regional context on the other hand.

### I - Considerations related to globalization

Globalization has become a clear phenomenon since the eve of the third millennium, referring concisely to the open boundaries between countries at the economic level accompanied by international free trade. At the political level, globalization means the adoption of democracy and respect of human rights, while its cultural dimension indicates the globalization of central principles, i.e. freedoms and the acceptance of the other, respect of cultural diversity and its manifestations, as well as citizenship rights. In this sense, globalization highlights transnational cultural principles and consequently the possibilities of coexistence between different civilizations inside a single society. But it connotes also the cultural and social alienation for some categories inside the same society. In dealing with social risks, it is important to underline the relationship between globalization and the unprecedented progress of technology, especially in the field of communication and information technology<sup>1</sup>.

#### What is the importance of globalization regarding the issue of social risks facing Arab family and the Civil Society?

1. The open boundaries for international free trade include **the possibility of exporting risks and crises from a country to the other** and even from a continent to the other. As a mere illustration of that are the implications of the world economic crisis on the Arab region.
2. **Globalization is linked to the marginalization of wide sectors of the labor force in the countries that do not possess the capacity of competitiveness;** consequently, wide sectors of the youth are not empowered in these countries with the contemporary technical and technology skills and they lack a good quality of high education. Consequently, they become marginalized as well as their countries forcing us to draw attention on several issues, mainly:
  - Unemployment among new graduates.
  - Poor quality of education.
  - Risks of poverty and marginalization.
3. **In addition, globalization opens widely the door to big multinational companies that have established branches all over the world, provoking risks at several levels:**

- The establishment of coalitions and groups of interest between businessmen at the expense of deepening class discrepancies and differences, and negatively impacting social justice.
  - The achievement of gains and interests often results in environmental pollution and destruction.
  - Labor force has quite limited capacity to protect its rights and those of their families.
4. **Globalization is linked to the emergence of new actors such as big multinational companies with a growing role of global institutions and international NGOs.** Simultaneously, globalization has added **new roles to Civil Society Organizations** either from the perspective of democracy and freedoms or that of development. In this context new concepts emerged such as partnership, social responsibility, sustainable human development, networks of security and protection, and social risk management<sup>ii</sup>. The latter is directly linked to the Civil Society. It is important to note here that globalization has imposed a growing concern with the concept and mechanisms of social risk management according to the possibility of exporting risks and crises as well as the reduced traditional concept of the State.
5. **The risks of globalization have extended to values, culture and identity; moreover, it provoked the explosion of national, tribal and religious entities.** Though we acknowledge the various positive aspects of globalization, we have to admit that it extended to families causing a split between generations. In this context, we note the progress of communication technology and the emergence of social media and communication through internet including its impact on improving the interaction of millions of people<sup>iii</sup>.

**From this perspective, globalization raises the following risks:**

- The emergence of different and new cultural values invading the minds of wide sectors of youth and resulting in troubles in terms of values and identity.
- The exposure of wide sectors of children to the internet culture without any censorship or the availability of social rearing institutions providing guidance in this field.
- A wide intergeneration gap inside the families.
- The invasion of a culture of consumerism pushing children and youth towards irrational expending practices and an attempt to copy the western model, beginning with the acquisition of big international brands and ending by behaviors and values far from the national traditions.

- There are also the risks of excluding categories of poor incapable of following up the progress of communication technology.

**The socio-economic, cultural and political consequences of globalization accompanied by speedy developments of the technology have shed the light on a series of social risks requiring systematic scientific interventions on behalf of governments and the Civil Society with the adoption of new mechanisms and approaches, especially in terms of the social and educational policies. It also requires the establishment of observatories to monitor the social risks and intervene before they turn into big crises.**

## **II - Considerations related to the growing concern with the study of social risks**

On the other hand, globalization witnessed an important academic activity in terms of risk management representing another important aspect in addressing this issue in our report. **The indicators of this academic concern include the following:**

1. **The establishment of an important number of centers for the management and analysis of risks** in the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan, some of which connected to big universities, such as the center for risk management at Pennsylvania University in the US, and the center for the management of risks and crises at George Washington University. Some other centers are independent and include researchers and experts responsible of evaluating the trends of social development and risk management; these represent the main type of centers in Europe<sup>iv</sup>.
2. **The establishment of forum for knowledge grouping scientists and experts concerned with social risks**, conducting regular monitoring in order to ring the bells of danger. These groups publish important works for the alleviation of risks. Among the most famous groups we note the Club de la Securite de l'Information that published a few years ago the "White Paper" that indicates the sources of risks as well as the mechanisms dealing with them<sup>v</sup>.
3. Another indicator of the growing academic concern with social risks in the era of globalization is **the creation of units of research monitoring in multinational companies and in big corporations of the private sector worldwide with the purpose of monitoring social risks in order to guarantee the stability** of the business sector and anticipating the effects of these risks on the work environment. One of the most important units is the **"Initiative of the Private Sector Social responsibility"** launched by Harvard University during the first decade of the third millennium<sup>vi</sup>.

4. **There is also the publication of a series of international documents by global organizations with the emergence of complications and implications of the globalization in order to draw the attention on social risks:**

- The United Nations document on **“Human Security”** that refers to the global risk society in the era of globalization and the dangers threatening the world. Most importantly, this document underlines the idea of the exportation of risks across the borders in light of the difficulty to delimit risks and crises<sup>vii</sup>.
- There is also **the Millennium Development Goals** that have become quite famous because 1) the document was ratified by the presidents and leaders of the world; 2) it is considered as a global convention for the confrontation of risks; 3) it includes indicators enabling to measure progress; and 4) it reflects a global consensus about the potential risks including poverty, illiteracy and quality of education, quality and comprehensiveness of health services, the challenges related to the empowerment of women, the environmental challenges and the importance of building effective partnerships between governments, the private sector and the Civil Society<sup>viii</sup>.
- We note the important series of **studies published by the World Bank** during the first decade of the third millennium about social risks and the mechanisms of social protection, marginalized categories, methodologies of analysis and evaluation of risks, and the interventions of governments and the Civil Society.
- We also mention an **important document produced by a group of experts from ISO** (the International Organization for Standardization) under the United Nations sponsorship. The document includes all the dimensions related to the private sector social responsibility, the mechanisms of protection from environmental risks and others for the protection of workers’ rights contributing in protecting the society as a whole from socio-economic risks with a focus on the marginalized<sup>ix</sup>.

5. The fifth indicator of the global concern with social risks is **the increasing number of social studies regarding this phenomenon under the name of “Sociology of Risk”** that draws to our attention the way people perceive risks in each society or community<sup>x</sup>. This new cognitive approach raises our concern to big issues, mainly in terms of social risks and the Civil Society:

- The perception of risks and the way people deal with it differs from a person to the other and from a society to the other according to the variables of education, culture or income.
- The prevailing culture of risk in a given society or community might lead to the denial of risks or to their exaggeration.
- The lack or scarcity of transparent information leads to additional threats of risks.

- The Civil Society can play important roles in raising awareness, rehabilitation, education and training that contribute in confronting or alleviating risks.
- The social theory of risk is concerned with values, customs, opinions, beliefs and other aspects related to the level of trust between individuals and groups, between these and governments and among generations.

**In conclusion, globalization was accompanied by socio-economic and cultural risks referred to as the global society of risk. These risks are unaware of geographic borders; they include foreseen risks and other unpredictable risks. It is the society of ambiguity. These global changes raised an academic concern resulting in a huge unprecedented production of knowledge aiming at confronting social risks, and proposing mechanisms of confrontation indicating the necessity to develop a participatory democratic system for the management of social risks.**

### **III - Considerations related to the regional context**

This report comes to life in a critical moment for the Arab region as a whole, combined with the various interactions of this region with the global changes.

- 1. In view of the regional context, we are seeking to involve Civil Society organizations in a discussion about the dimensions and priorities of social risks in each social environment as well as the ways to deal with these risks. We are also targeting a qualitative change in the social policies of governments at two levels:**
  - A switch from the social care approach to the developmental empowerment approach.
  - A switch from the fragmented approach towards the family that is divided into categories (youth, children, women, etc.) into a comprehensive approach looking at the family as a whole, i.e. a basic social unit primarily responsible of socialization.
- 2. Based on our concern to improve the role of Civil Society organizations in confronting the risks surrounding the Arab family, the main objectives of the present report that covered eleven Arab countries (Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar and Yemen) include the following:**
  - **Identify the map of risks and priority** fields of intervention in each Arab country as well as the level of awareness and responsiveness of Civil Society organizations towards these risks.

- **Promote flexible responsiveness of Civil Society organizations** through developing the cognitive, human and material capabilities in order to interact with all aspects of dangers such as marginalization, poverty, unemployment, lack or scarcity of services, poor infrastructure, family disintegration, shaken values and ethics, etc.
  - **Raise the awareness about the importance of switching from a charitable and relief philosophy into a developmental human rights-based approach** capable of providing the elements of socio-economic and political strength to millions of households exposed to marginalization, not only as a result of poverty or level of income but also due to policies of social and political exclusion.
3. From the perspective of the Civil Society, we also seek to draw the attention on the fact that the sources of risks as well as the existing threats require the development of **effective partnerships between the various stakeholders** (governments, Civil Society organizations, the private sector, academic institutions and the media) especially in the critical moment experimented in the region.
  4. **Another objective of the report is to highlight the risks hampering the efforts and process of human development and threatening the social stability of Arab societies.** Actually, we are in front of potential blows-up any time, affecting everybody. In fact, the effects of such explosions will not be limited to a specific category of the population as we will witness a snow ball phenomenon that will reach the various sectors of the society. The risks related to the rise in the rates of unemployment among young graduates in most Arab countries represent one of the main risks capable of initiating an explosion any time. We also note the growing size of populations, as well as the unprecedented forms of violence that extended in some cases from streets to schools and universities. Other risks include the deprivation of women from their rights, the slums that are increasing in size and density in some Arab countries (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Yemen, Algeria, and even Bahrain), the rising rates of poor women heading households ranging between 17% and 23% in the region, the widespread drugs addiction, drops-out from schools, human trafficking, etc. All this indicates the need to critically review the map of the Civil Society, its philosophy and approaches, as well as identifying the gaps in the performance in order to improve the roles of the various partners.
  5. **It is worth mentioning that the beginning of the second decade in the third millennium has witnessed what is called the Arab spring revolutions that aimed at throwing the ruling regimes and called for social justice, democracy and freedoms.** In addition to Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen, we note the Syrian case where bloody conflicts are taking place provoking the escape of thousands of Syrians towards Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. This migration is accompanied by pressures and claims for relief services and accommodation in countries with limited capacities as was recorded in some of the country reports. In some other countries of the region, we watch popular pressures

for the implementation of democratic reforms or the adoption of equitable measures with categories that were exposed to social or political exclusion as a consequence of their beliefs, ideology or opinions.

Without going through the details of this revolutionary and reformist state of mind in the Arab region, it is possible to say that the ultimate outcome is political instability, unprecedented political and social conflicts, huge economic pressures due to inflation combined with the incapability of mastering or rationalizing the economic situation in addition to the decrease of the available financial allocations to the social and economic policies.

**These conditions have resulted in the emergence of unprecedented risks that affected many strata of the populations** and provoked a state of social congestion and anger in addition to a sharp political polarization, lack of dialogue, social divisions, and all forms of verbal and material violence.

In this historical moment characterized by full ambiguity about the future, fluidity, social and political mobility, we are in front of a new picture deserving review and evaluation by all concerned parties. **The main features of this new scene are:**

- The presence of **new effective actors** represented by the youth.
- **Claims and pressures** for participation by the middle class.
- **Changes among the elites** at the level of the Civil Society.
- Change led by **networking** and interaction through internet.
- **Intergenerational conflicts** and clashes with a trend among youth to find wider spaces of freedom.
- The unprecedented need for a **comprehensive system of integrity** and more effective means to alleviate corruption.
- **Strong claims for social justice**, equal opportunities and democracy due to the prevailing unsatisfactory social policies.
- The need to **renovate mutual trust between the State, the Civil Society and the private sector.**
- Social dismantlement reflected by **the clashes between the ideological and political trends** leading to sharp polarization of the grassroots<sup>xi</sup>.

Thus, in addition to the risks related to poverty, marginalization, and quality of life, we face in the Arab region an additional set of risks that makes things harder and increases their negative impact on the Arab family.

**In conclusion, this scientific work covering eleven Arab countries and conducted by 16 researchers and experts, seeks to attract the attention of Civil Society organizations, governments, academic institutions and the private sector about the importance to analyze and assess the risks surrounding the Arab family. This requires the adoption of a new vision compatible with the global and regional changes, a vision based on a different methodology and comprehensive approaches according to the clear identification of the priorities specific to each country.**

#### **IV - Concepts and methodology of the report**

The present report relies on the main following concepts:

- The concept of social risks and their sources.
- The concept of risk management and its levels.
- The methodological approach of the family in relation with risks.
- The Civil Society and the main actors in confronting risks.

**Before detailing these concepts, it is important to formulate some preliminary remarks explaining the methodology used in this work:**

- Since the first report published in 2001, the Arab Network for NGOs is used to develop a referential conceptual framework linked to the knowledge accumulated over the years and accurately indicating the objectives and mainstreams of each report. The framework includes in addition the main questions that are addressed in order to enable comparison between the various countries while simultaneously pointing out to the socio-economic and political specificity of each country.
- A principal researcher is appointed in each country, sometimes helped by assistants, in order to obtain an outcome reflecting the society to which the researcher belongs. In addition to the conceptual framework, we are committed to reach a consensus among all the team about the questions and axes of the report while granting each researcher some free space allowing to express other problematic found or to highlight specific features of a given society (such as the division between the West bank and Gaza in the case of Palestine, etc.).

- The country reports rely on the official data provided by the State bodies as well as on the findings of research and studies reviewed, in addition to the 42 scientific publications of the Arab Network for NGOs. In the case of Lebanon, the team work conducted also a field research in order to reinforce the results obtained.
- Country reports are revised and evaluated by a committee of experts in light of the available data. In some instances, researchers are requested to fill some gaps. Then the full work is edited and the first chapter is elaborated. It includes a critical reading of the findings, a reflection exposing some main deductions, and a presentation of good practices related to the performance of the Civil Society.
- Finally, the report is launched and disseminated in several Arab countries. A summary is prepared in Arabic and English, distributed as a hard copy as well as posted on the Network's website.

**Country reports of this eleventh annual report cover Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar and Yemen. Sixteen researchers and experts belonging to these countries participated in the production of the report. The Arab Network sought to extend the report to additional countries; however it failed to find adequate experts .**

#### **a. Definition of concepts used in the report: Social risks and their sources**

The field of risk analysis occupied a prominent place in the past few years from the perspective of achieving human security on one hand, and addressing the ongoing debate about the global risk society on the other hand, as it becomes difficult in the era of globalization to delimit risk and crises inside specific geographic borders. In addition to the exportation of risk, and transnational risk mentioned in the previous part of this chapter.

In the global context that raises the importance of analyzing social risks through a series of academic works as well as the establishment of observatories to monitor social risks, we can note the following:

#### **1. The variety of definitions of risk**

The ISO adopts the general idea of the presence of a risk and the perception that a threat will happen resulting in losses of properties, lives, information systems, institutions and projects. Such a definition is compatible with an international organization holding a specific nature, i.e. an organization that focuses on acts and methods impacting the level of professional performance<sup>xii</sup>.

On the other hand, other definitions of risks have emerged in the social sciences during the last years of the twentieth century. These definitions establish a link between capacities and the

possibilities of alleviating risks; accordingly, risk management becomes a scientific and collective effort aiming at avoiding risks, alleviating its potential occurrence, or dealing with its consequences. Therefore, it is a process that includes the evaluation of risks, the perception of risks and the management of risks<sup>xiii</sup>.

**Risk is everything that could negatively impact the achievement of objectives, human beings, properties and wealth. It might result from unpredicted harmful events where the level of incertitude is high. It also might be due to practices and behaviors directly leading to the emergence of risk. The perception of risk is a relative issue that differs among the various cultural or social contexts. Risk management is pending on several factors including a transparent flow of information, good governance, and distribution of roles between the various actors (governments, Civil Society organizations and the private sector.**

The concept of social risk management was used in the context of proposing a responsive social policy, and raising the importance of providing a social net of security aiming – among other reasons – to initiate partnership in the management of risk between the various impacting actors, individuals, families, and marginalized groups that are highly affected by risks<sup>xiv</sup>.

**Risk management is based on a vision of policies at the macro level with a view on all social categories. In parallel, this macro level includes a sub vision concerned with the poor and the marginalized. Accordingly, the traditional philosophy of social protection and care that guides the social policies in the Arab region should go beyond financial tools such as compensations and donations to extend to the protection of human beings, providing them with immunity against risks and promoting a comprehensive management of risk by the society as a whole.**

According to this proposed definition of social risk management developed by Robert Holzmann in an important publication of the World Bank (2000), **the question that arises is related to the place of the Civil Society on the map of social risk management. Important points need to be mentioned here:**

- Social risk management strongly raises the specific responsibilities of the State, the Civil Society and the society as a whole. This means that the State responsibility of providing human security, and adopting responsive and flexible social policies, capable of dealing with the society as well as with global and regional changes should be primarily

acknowledged, besides the availability of capacities for the society and specifically the poor and the marginalized to deal with risks.

- On the other hand, the Civil Society's responsibility should exceed relief and social care to adopt two main trajectories:

**First:** Empowerment of marginalized individuals and groups in order to immunize them against risks

**Risk is not a risk unless the capacity of managing it is low.**

**Second:** The monitoring of the State and its policies in risk management and in creating nets of social security.

**Structural risks related to the public policies of the State require the adoption of national policies.**

- The conclusion here is **that real and effective partnerships between the various stakeholders is a prerequisite** to achieve human sustainable development capable of providing protection from risk to the poor and the marginalized, especially in a world where uncertainty prevails.
- **As mentioned several times that risk management is pending on a series of cultural, economic, social and political factors, it is important here to confirm that the perception of risk represents a decisive factor in risk management<sup>xv</sup>.** Therefore, what could be considered as a major risk in a given society, can be seen quite differently in another context. Moreover, the perception of risk could vary between the various strata of the same society, or according to the geographic location. Accordingly, we stress on the idea that the role of the Civil Society includes among other roles ringing the bell of danger to draw the attention of governments, then monitor and follow up governments' performance. On the other hand, civil Society organizations should launch campaigns to raise the awareness of the public opinion and operate an impact at the level of consciousness and perception of the size of risk and its implications on the society.

**Relief and charitable activities are nothing but a temporary pain killer against risk. However, strengthening the capacities of human beings and habilitating them on self reliance to avoid risk and become immunized is a common responsibility between the national policies and the Civil Society that adopts the modern criteria of achievement rather than the traditional approaches.**

## 2. What are the sources of social risk?

In order to correctly and rationally manage risk, it is important to identify the source of risk as well as the possibility of interaction between one of the sources with other risks. In addition, the level of risk density and consequences referred to as the snow ball should also be assessed<sup>xvi</sup>.

On the other hand, risk could happen at the macro level (such as earthquakes, floods, collapse of the financial market, increased inflation, etc.) or be partial (such as the firing of workers from factories, losses and destruction in specific geographic areas, fires in slums, etc.) There are also some risks repeated over time (such as floods in specific areas) and others that are not repeated but lead to catastrophic results. In addition, some risks can be reduced in specific countries while others have transnational consequences.

**Contemporary writing analyzing the sources of risk categorizes them as follows:**

- **Natural sources** such as floods, earthquakes and natural disasters that could be related to a specific geographic area but appear suddenly causing a trauma resulting from big losses of properties and lives. There is limited opportunity for the good management of these risks.
- **Sources of risk are produced by human beings or resulting from human activities:**
  - Some of them are of political nature such as wars, revolutions, armed conflicts, political, ethnic or sectarian scissions.
  - Some might have an incidental nature such as road accidents or the collapse of buildings.
  - There are also health risks threatening human lives and requesting rapid and comprehensive measures. In addition, we note the health risks on cattle and poultry that affect farmers as well as consumers.
  - Finally, the source of risks could have an economic nature, some of it related to the work environment such as the privatization policies and the sudden unemployment of workers, workers' strikes, conflicts between workers and bosses, violations of workers' rights and its negative impact on their households. Other economic risks refer to the collapse of the stock exchange market, or inflation exceeding the purchase capacity of the middle and lower class.
- **Additional risks were recently classified:**
  - ✓ “Risk has become inside everyone of us”: this represents an important level of risk raised by the sociology of risk and referring to the relationships between trust and security feeling which loss will have serious implications on family disintegration, lack of dialogue or the capacity of tolerance and acceptance of the other<sup>xvii</sup>.

- ✓ Unprecedented scientific and technology developments in social media produced new risks in our contemporary world, mainly the risks resulting from industrial progress, environmental risks, the risk of information loss, the unprecedented use of internet especially by children and youth leading to cultural alienation, producing a gap between generations and threatening values and ethics.

**The Wikipedia encyclopedia indicates that human beings are exposed to risk all over history; however, we live now in the real risk society with the rapid pace of socio-economic, political and value changes.**

- **We witness a series of social and economic risks partially due to globalization and partly resulting from the failure of development,** or from the disparity of competitiveness capacity between developed and developing countries, mainly:
  - ✓ **Poverty**, marginalization and social exclusion.
  - ✓ **Unemployment** and changing types of labor force.
  - ✓ **Difficulty to anticipate the needs** of the labor market (unemployment of newly graduates).
  - ✓ Increasing rates of **violence**.
  - ✓ Lack of **social justice**.
  - ✓ **Changes of values**, gradual disappearance of customs and habits, unstable identity.
  - ✓ **Family disintegration** and risks faced by children.
  - ✓ Strong trends towards the escape from reality and **drugs addiction**.

**When the socio-economic and cultural risks are accompanied by low quality of education, health services with lack of political or social participation of citizens, we are confronted by a series of risks and a state of social and political congestion looking as if it was pushing the entire society towards collapse and the State towards institutional disintegration. At such level, countries are considered by the international classification as looser states.**

#### **b) Methodological approach to the risk affecting the Arab family**

We are seeking here to indicate a series of methodological considerations, some of which are related to the analysis of the family status and others to the attempt of establishing a link with Civil Society organizations.

Regarding our focus on the family as a whole and on its various categories (women, men, youth, children, etc.), it is important to take the following points into consideration:

- Any intervention aiming at protecting the family from risks requires a social policy characterized by both comprehensiveness and complementation. Actually, the various dimensions and problems are interacting and mutually impacted such as the existing interaction between education, health, cultural awareness and income defining together the quality of life for the family.
- Another important methodological issue is to avoid generalization and identify the phenomenon under analysis within its own context. This practically means that we do not only talk about the family in Egypt or Lebanon, but that we should also be aware of the family status in a specific socio-economic and cultural environment. Actually, there are rural and urban households, upper class families and middle class ones.

**It is important to avoid generalization when we talk about the family or about the risks which intensity might vary even inside a single family.**

- The level of immunity from risks differs for families inside the same country, even when these families belong to the same strata. However, it is important here to note that the poor and the marginalized occupy the most prominent place on the map of risks as a result of their lack of strength habitating them to manage risks; the tools of strength include education, income, skills, etc. Accordingly, empowerment is repeatedly mentioned either for the Arab region or for developing countries. Another renewed claim of global institutions and governments was the provision of social protection (proposed by the World Bank in the late nineties). During the first decade of the third millennium, concern with the poor and lower middle class improved to prevent the latter falling in the circles of poverty. Accordingly, social security nets were proposed to achieve investment in human capital instead of providing social protection whose effects are similar to the policies of social care. Accordingly, concern with the poor on the base of social security nets will be positive from several perspectives:
  - ✓ It will exceed monetary subsidy/increase of public expenditure.
  - ✓ It will reflect the variety and multiplicity of actors.
  - ✓ It will promote the idea of capacity building for the poor and the marginalized<sup>xviii</sup>.
- Another methodological concern in the analysis of the family in relation to risks and the role of Civil Society organizations is to examine social integration versus marginalization. Here we exceed the criteria of income to identify the poor, concerned with social and cultural interactions between families, groups and individuals, as well as

their interaction with the political power<sup>xix</sup>. In several country reports (case of Lebanon as model), we will note the extent of risks related to political conflicts and repeated events of armed violence greatly linked to sectarianism and political divisions and their important implications on the family.

**Thus, marginalization might not relate to poverty, but rather to a process of exclusion of the other, lack of equal opportunities and lack of social justice. As a result, there is a rising call for social integration.**

- In analyzing the risks threatening the Arab family, it is important to establish a connection between the phenomenon (such as family disintegration or growing rates of divorce) and the socio-economic categories without limit ourself to numbers or percentages. According to Dr. Moustafa Hegazi<sup>xx</sup>, the high rates of divorce in the upper classes is due to reasons related to the features of this category; on the other hand, family disintegration and divorce in the popular class hold different reasons rooted in the socio-economic environment.

**"What falls under the line of poverty is exactly what is under human dignity".**

**c) There is another set of methodological considerations related to risks threatening the family from the perspective of Civil Society interventions in the various Arab countries:**

- Households are a vital field of work for the Civil Society; they include several categories of age, generations and genders; therefore Civil Society organizations are undoubtedly cross-cutting with the family, its need and the risks it faces.
- Despite the observation above, Civil Society organizations do not deal with the family as a comprehensive unit, especially when it comes to social and cultural guidance as well as interaction with the quality of life.
- While families are distributed over various social maps either from the geographic perspective, their access to development, or from the socio-economic and cultural perspective, an important research question remains to be answered: how the map of Civil Society organizations matches with the population and developmental map?

**Do families settled outside capitals and big cities are granted the efforts of voluntary activities? Is there a concern with the families in slums (Egypt), the families in the belts of misery (Lebanon) or the families in shanty towns (Morocco)? What are the types of interventions? Are these interventions overwhelmed by a philanthropic nature while the risks threatening these families require their empowerment?**

- We reconfirm here the importance of conducting research efforts in order to gain a better knowledge about the extent of compatibility between the map of the Civil Society and the map of social risks.

In 2008, the author of this chapter has conducted a preliminary study to test the relationship between NGOs in Egypt and the map of geographic distribution of poverty on the base of human development indicators. The study conducted in several governorates indicated the lack of a general trend among NGOs to address the areas of poverty<sup>xxi</sup>. Another finding was that the vast majority of organizations active in the poorest governorates of Upper Egypt had a philanthropic approach with religious connotation. It is interesting to note that two years after the 25<sup>th</sup> of January revolution, and the establishment of nearly 4600 new NGOs, more than half of them had a charitable mandate with religious referential and work in the areas of poverty that are the same areas where the highest rates of voting for political Islam took place.

**There is need for additional in-depth research efforts aiming at analyzing and getting acquainted with the dynamics of voluntary work in the Arab region, its approaches of the risks related to poverty and all forms of marginalization. We also need more explanation about the relationship between systematic voluntary initiatives, the tribal groups and the policies of mobilizing crowds of supporters for the benefit of specific political trends.**

- It might also be important to indicate that the lack of accurate documentation regarding the activities of these organizations, as well as the trend towards the adoption of multiple activities rather than specialization represents an additional difficulty faced by researchers. This was mentioned in the majority of country reports, hampering thus the possibility of identifying the weight of NGOs' concern with risks faced by the Arab family. Moreover, it is difficult to apply indicators showing the effectiveness of NGOs in alleviating poverty, combating illiteracy, or providing vocational training to raise job opportunities. Thus, we will find the titles of great risks addressed by NGOs without available criteria of performance except some data and figures that might be insignificant<sup>xxii</sup>.

## Part two: Main findings of the eleventh annual report of the Arab Network (2013)

### I - Preliminary remarks guiding the critical review of findings

In critically analyzing and discussing the findings of this report that covers eleven Arab countries (Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Qatar, Bahrain and Yemen) about the risks surrounding the Arab family and the interventions of Civil Society organizations, several remarks should be taken in consideration:

- When we enumerate the various risks jeopardizing the entity of the Arab family and its vital roles as the main institution of socialization, **we are ringing the bells of danger regarding the shaken traditional status of the family under the pressure of global as well as regional and local changes.** This requests that governmental policies and Civil Society interventions become based on a new vision in addition to the improvement of the private sector social responsibility. Another important stakeholder in this equation is the society as a whole. As already mentioned in the first part of this chapter, the social perception of risks represents an important factor in the confrontation though it remains relatively conditioned by the geographic or social belonging and differs from an individual to the other (according to the variables of education, income, cultural level, gender, professional status, etc.)<sup>1</sup>.
- Despite the increase of social risks and the possibility of being transformed into big crises threatening some Arab societies as they affect the political and social stability as well as citizens' security, **we notice in the majority of country reports many positive aspects in Arab societies that deserve to be preserved and enhanced.** Such positive aspects include the sustained solidarity and mutual support reflected in the flow of funding from the rich to the poor through thousands of NGOs in the Arab region. We also note the responsiveness of NGOs to the risks perceived even before governments. Moreover, Civil Society organizations are spending continuous efforts to raise the awareness of marginalized categories and fight for their rights. An illustration of the positive aspects is the Lebanese experience during the civil war and the role of NGOs in assuming the responsibility of providing social care and relief within the absence of the State.
- **The density and level of risk differs from country to the other according to the demographic structure of the population and the indicators of human development,** especially indicators related to **income, education and health, in addition to the prevailing culture, values and habits.** Some country reports have opened the black box

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<sup>1</sup> Several social studies concerned with the anthropology of risk have drawn to our attention that the rich strata and businesspersons have the highest fears and feel threatened by risks. It is because they are afraid to lose their interests and their awareness makes them more sensitive to socio-economic risks.

of behavioral and value-based risks while the majority of reports avoided this issue. Our report of 2013 strongly refers to the phenomenon of human trafficking, exploitation of women and girls, and even trafficking of children (case of Yemen). Several country reports mention school violence or violence in the educational institutions not only practiced by teachers and educators, but also by students against each other as well as towards their teachers (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Sudan). The black box revealed also practices violating the human dignity and the family values in several country reports. This was especially true in the case of slums and the prevalence of incest in these settings in addition to the practice of psychological and physical violence against women. In the case of Lebanon, the report mentioned clearly the political coalitions with businessmen characterized by highly corrupted practices that “represented a model of corruption for lower social classes”.

- **The findings showed similar risks for the group of countries included in the report, mainly in terms of poverty, unemployment** among the ranks of graduates, drugs addition, gap between generations, high rates of divorce as well as high rates of spinsterhood, prevalence of violence, homeless children, child labor and other similarities.

**On the other hand, the reports indicate specific risks in some of the Arab countries** that witnessed big revolutions and uprising, mainly: the lack of human security, political and ideological polarization, division of the society, lack of tolerance or acceptance of diversity, in addition to important economic risks that led to the increased marginalization of the poor, a state of social fluidity, dismantlement of the State (Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Libya); and armed aggression against citizens.

We will notice in some country reports the risk of social exclusion for educated categories from the middle class who have the potential of working. However, these categories are marginalized because of their ideas, religious or political belonging. Other risks were specific to the Arab Gulf region as a result of the economy based on the revenues of oil and its impact at the level of the policies as well as the society (instable income, lavish consumerism, foreign labor force exceeding the number of natives).

- **Finally, in focusing on the interaction of Civil Society organizations with the risks surrounding the Arab family, it is important to mention that we are not talking about a homogeneous body either in terms of the Civil Society or for the family itself.** Actually, Civil Society organizations have different levels of human, material and technical capacity as well as there are differences in their perception and awareness of risks. Moreover, their approaches are also varied (charity oriented and social care providing versus developmental human rights based approach). Their relationships with the population are not either similar. Thus, the Civil Society is a cultural phenomenon par excellence that requires avoiding both generalization and exaggeration. On the other

hand, we should be clear about the family we are referring to in terms of socio-economic affiliation, and geographic location (rural/urban). This leads us to reaffirm the relativity of findings and the importance to establish correlations between the socio-economic and cultural features of the family and the nature of risks to which it is exposed.

**The five remarks presented above indicate the importance of a critical review of the findings and the adoption of a new vision in order to understand the relative risks endangering the first institution of socialization, i.e. the family. Actually, the role of the family is being reduced as well as the role of the State, besides the presence of new actors in the virtual space. Sons are getting rid of their fathers' custody and the gap between generations is widening. On the other hand there is an increased marginalization of the poor and other categories doubled with growing economic pressures, and a disorganized withdrawal of the State.**

## **II - Civil Society organizations and the map of marginalized categories**

This research and other studies concerned with risks consider that risks become more acute and violent for marginalized categories and are not limited to the case of extreme poverty. However, risks are approaching the middle classes that is threatened in turn to fall in the circle of poverty; therefore, this class that represents a pillar in the process of development as well as social and political mobility is gradually losing its weight.

**We are concerned with the interventions of the Civil Society as well as its partnership with the government in the management of social risks. This requires three interactive factors: the analysis and assessment of risks, setting the priorities and implementing interventions in order to avoid risks, or to alleviate the possibilities of occurrence and enabling the target categories representing the first target of risk management to deal with their consequences.**

### **a) Definition of marginalization and the marginalized**

**A simplified definition refers to the marginalized as individuals, groups and strata in a status of extreme fragility, lacking the capacity and tools to defend themselves and pursue life in dignified conditions.** The evaluation of the state of marginalized categories in each Arab country and in the Arab region is quite important because the negative impact of risks is harder on them. On the other hand, the identification of marginalized categories will enable developing strategies and adopting mechanisms aiming at protecting them and avoiding to reach the level of crisis that is considered according to George Washington University as a turning point and a decisive and critical phase in the trajectory of a given thing, highlighting a state of instability requiring immediate change<sup>xxiii</sup>. Thus, crisis is a major event that holds huge negative effects as

well as it costs an important socio-economic and political price. On the other side, risk refers to the expectation of potential losses from various sources, primarily the marginalized. However, strategic interventions could prevent risks as long as we are aware of them and deal properly. These interventions could also alleviate the possibility of turning risks into crises or big disasters.

#### **b) Map of the marginalized categories**

On the base of the country reports, the map of risks affecting the marginalized categories in the Arab region includes the following items:

1. **The poor** - either in the circle of extreme poverty or mere poverty – who does not possess any capacity or tools to confront risks.
2. **Unemployment** with a focus of all reports on unemployment in the ranks of young graduates.
3. **Poor women heads of households** were also central for the majority of reports (Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco and Algeria) with a rate ranging between 17 and 23% of Arab women-headed households.
4. **Inhabitants of slums whose numbers have highly increased in several Arab countries:** Slums witness a concentration of poor and extremely poor categories. The settings lack any infrastructure in terms of potable water or sewerage system. Most slums are occupied by migrants from rural areas to the capital and big cities, and they are the theater of important behavioral and ethical disorders. These slums were mainly addressed by the country report of Egypt where there are approximately 1034 slums and an estimated 17 million inhabitants. They were also mentioned in the Lebanese report regarding the belts of misery, in the Moroccan report about shanty towns, as well as in the Bahraini report where the phenomenon is growing in addition to the Yemeni report.
5. **Illiterates and dropped out from school represent another fragile category** lacking the capacity or the tools to be protected from risks and this category is deprived of a dignified family life. The effects of this phenomenon led to the marginalization of millions of children between **street children and children in the labor market**. Most country reports refer to the behavioral and ethical risks affecting these children (Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Morocco and Yemen).
6. **There are other marginalized social categories, not necessarily because of poverty or on the base of the income indicator; we refer here to a state of social exclusion due to official or social policies affecting a given society as a whole.** This has led recently some researchers to talk about relational exclusion (i.e. resulting from social relations) in reports about marginalized women excluded from social and political participation, or

other categories who have no equal access to work or promotion such as people with special needs, or people excluded because of their religion, sectarian or political affiliation (the Lebanese report is quite clear about this issue, in addition to the Bahraini report). Other country reports referred to geographic and developmental exclusion reflecting the status of wide categories of the population deprived from equal opportunities compared to inhabitants of capitals and big cities, generating big differences in the indicators of human development inside the same country (Egypt represented the most prominent case with a wide gap of human development indicators between Lower and Upper Egypt with high rates of poverty in the latter; this was also found in the Lebanese report that mentioned the marginalization of northern populations especially in the region of Aakar; moreover, the Tunisian and Moroccan reports indicate the marginalization of full regions in these two countries.

### c) Risks directly endangering the family cohesion

The findings of the country reports reveal that the risks directly threatening the unity of Arab families have a social and value nature and are characterized by their increased intensity and the threat they represent for the family entity; **these risks include:**

1. **Divorce:** The majority of country reports have documented high rates of divorce with all the resulting stress and disintegration at the family level and its impact on children and youth. In addition, divorce means increased economic pressures and tasks (usually assumed by women), as well as the concern of rearing children in a healthy educational environment. The reports show that divorce is widespread in several Arab countries such as the Arab Gulf area, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria where it affects one quarter of the households and reaches the percentage of 30% in Egypt. However, most importantly, we note that the phenomenon is linked to newly married couples (case of Egypt) and is cross-cutting all the categories of the society from the upper class to the popular classes (case of Lebanon).

**Egypt country report reveals high rates of divorce in urban governorates such as Cairo, Alexandria and Port Said, with a decrease of these rates in rural areas, especially in Upper Egypt where the culture and norms are against the idea of divorce (Source: the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, 2008).**

2. **Increased rates of spinsterhood:** It is an increasing phenomenon according to the country reports, as the Egyptian report refers to nine millions, and the phenomenon of “sustained bachelorhood”, i.e. abstention from marriage is also mentioned in the reports of Morocco, Lebanon and Tunisia for both women and men.

**A study about the Kingdom of Morocco indicates an extended duration of bachelorhood, or what is called “the percentage of ultimate bachelorhood”. The study has identified in 2010 for people reaching 50 years old a bachelorhood percentage of 6% and 8.6% for women.**

3. We also note **early marriage for young girls that are often under the legal age** of marriage, especially in the areas where a traditional culture is prevailing. Usually, young girls are married to old wealthy men, which is considered sometimes as a form of human trafficking. The reports of Lebanon, Egypt and Morocco refer to this phenomenon and mention a growing phenomenon of Orfi<sup>2</sup> marriage in educational institutions and other settings. The resulting risks are related to the access to legal rights including the difficulty of proving the official affiliation of children born from this kind of marriages to the father (Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt).
4. **The dangers of drugs addiction among youth:** This is a risk that emerged clearly in all the socio-economic categories of the population. It is worth mentioning that the prevalence of drugs abuse was quite shocking in some of the country reports. The phenomenon was found in wide sectors of students in pre-university and university stage, in addition to unemployed youth or young handicraftsmen. It was also linked to slums and affects both males and females.

#### **The study about the prevalence of drugs consumption in Algeria**

**An important field research conducted in Algeria (2009) shows that the highest prevalence of drugs abuse is in the age bracket 19-30 including males and females. The sample questioned justified this addiction by stress, the will to escape from the reality, lack of youth participation and a total state of marginalization.**

5. **Violence occupied an important place in all country reports and was perceived under all its forms as a huge social risk:**
  - **Domestic violence** especially against women including psychological and physical violence was recorded by the various reports as an increasing phenomenon.
  - **Violence in the educational institutions** was found between students, from teachers against students and various reports mention unprecedented violence perpetrated by students against teachers (Egypt, Sudan, Morocco and Tunisia).

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<sup>2</sup> This marriage is not registered officially, but concluded amicably upon a written piece of paper.

- **Violence in slums** that witness the highest rates of domestic violence followed by violence against the society.
- **Increasing rates of crimes** and violent behavior especially among young delinquents.
- **Lack of secure society** in the Arab countries where revolutions occurred (Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and Yemen in addition to the situation in Syria, Iraq, Palestine and Sudan).

**The prevalence of violence in universities, called in Sudan “students’ violence”, is a reflection and an extension of the political conflicts prevailing in the society. Political activism practiced today in Sudanese universities is based on a double mistake by the transmigration of the general political situation. Conflict results from the will of one of the parties to impose its own views on the others. Violent behavior in Sudanese universities is linked to the environment, the family, the lack of justice and the political climate. Most violent actions are targeting the power, university buildings, teachers and the university administration.**

6. **All the facts mentioned above reflect an important disturbance of the value system under the economic, political and social pressures on one hand, and the cultural pressures on the other hand;** all these pressures are a direct threat to the entity of the family in the Arab region. Actually, the value system has become instable in all the categories of households in the various Arab countries where we witness lavish consumerism recorded in the studies about Arab Gulf countries that extended from upper to middle classes in an attempt of the latter to prove their belonging to the upper class. Illustration was referring to the problems of imported foreign nannies and the resulting negative impact in Gulf countries, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. Disturbance of the value system led to the abandonment of old parents by their children all over the Arab region. In addition, we note a loss of identity with the attempt of youth and children to imitate the western model (intensive use of foreign languages, attempt to own international brands, irresponsible behavior, etc.). On the other side, we find extremism and polarization, follow-up of pornographic sites on internet, and sexual harassment of women and girls noted in several country reports.

**Thus, we are in front of a risk map not only related to the marginalized or the poor but to Arab societies and households as a whole with varied levels of acuteness according to each country** and inside each country depending on the social category, geographic setting, discrepancies in terms of human development indicators, etc. Risks are higher for the poor and the marginalized, women heading households and in slums. Illiteracy and drops-out from school pushes millions of children towards the street or in the labor market. Millions of youth are

searching for a job opportunity. Marginalized women fall outside the scope of economic, social or political participation.

**The complex and interlinked map of social risks urges us to look into the map of the Arab Civil Society in order to identify the level of concern among these organizations with the risks mentioned above. It is important also to examine the mechanisms used to confront these risks, as well as the capacity of organizations in managing them.**

### III - The Arab Civil Society and its capacity of managing risks

#### A) A contemporary vision about Civil Society within the circle of social risks

The main issues raised by modern literature concerned by risk management include the following requirements:

- The importance of **developing the human capital** through the empowerment of target categories in a sustainable way and providing wider opportunities to the poor and the marginalized in order to confront the negative impact of risks.
- **The multiplicity of impacting actors and their diverse roles in confronting risks.** These actors include governments, the private sector and Civil Society Organizations.
- **Participatory approach is a must** in order to secure success for the various actors in the fight against risks.
- **Flexibility and responsiveness of social policies and the Civil Society** are strongly requested in front of risks threats, in addition to the economic policies and the social responsibility of the private sector.
- **The modern vision of social risk management** exceeds the reliance on financial tools to encompass more effective tools in support of social justice such as providing a comprehensive net of human security that includes socio-economic, care and political tools representing a package for the respect of human rights and dignity.

**According to the main features of risk management, we can assert – at least theoretically – that the Civil Society possesses relative assets for the management of risks: 1) Civil Society is deeply connected to the society and thus capable to perceive the needs of this society; 2) Civil Society has a high capacity of responsiveness and is characterized by its flexibility; 3) Civil Society seeks to establish partnerships; and 4) Civil Society is primarily concerned with**

**human beings, and specifically the marginalized, providing services and defending rights.**

The question that may arise here is: which place the Civil Society occupies in the strategy of risk management? The answer to this question will lead us to an objective discussion of the real capacities of Arab Civil Society.

**Without going into details, it is important to note that there are three strategies detailed by some works about risk management<sup>xxiv</sup>:**

- **A preventive strategy** aiming at reducing potential risks (such as the risk in the work environment, avoiding increased rates of unemployment, avoiding the risk of social exclusion by public policies).
- **An intermediary strategy** mainly addressing the weakest and more fragile individuals and households that are consequently the most exposed to the negative impact of risks (such as providing capacity building and practicing solidarity, social concern with aged people, people with special needs, women heads of households, activate the rule of law and the respect of human rights, deal with violence and infraction of the law, etc.).
- **Strategy/strategies dealing with the impact of risks** after they occur (strengthening and activating the tools of insurance against risks, developing cooperation and partnership between governments and the Civil Society in managing the risks of earthquakes, floods, collapse of buildings, transfer of injured and harmed people, providing direct financial aid to the poor, enacting new protecting legislation, etc.).

**Thus, Arab NGOs have an important place to occupy on the map of social risk management according to the three interlinked and interactive strategies. Accordingly the roles of voluntary organizations could be categorized as follows:**

**Relief and service providing (strategy 3).**

**Human rights, developmental and philanthropic support (strategy 2).**

**Monitoring governmental policies, establishing coalitions and networking, exerting pressures to prevent or avoid risks (strategy 1).**

Similarly to the impossibility of looking at the strategies separately, it is impossible to make a sharp division between the various types of Civil Society organizations in the Arab region as developmental organizations hold a human rights component and aim at empowering the marginalized categories; the same applies to philanthropic, relief and service providing organizations that play interconnected roles. On the other hand, NGOs might be acting in small

local communities or at the national level. It could also be international actors with high flexibility, responsiveness, and important human and material resources enabling to overcome the geographic boundaries (such as “Medecins sans Frontieres”, the Red Crescent, Oxfam, Amnesty International, WHO, etc.).

Besides the space of Civil Society organizations on the map of risk management, there is another growing space for the private sector referred to as the social responsibility of the private sector and reflecting one of the global concept and practice. Global transnational companies as well as private financial and commercial institutions are increasingly addressing their efforts to the Arab region by adopting strategies aiming at alleviating risks and managing their negative consequences. This way, social stability is achieved, enabling these companies to pursue their activities and make profits.

**The ninth annual report of the Arab Network for NGOs about “The Social Responsibility of the Private Sector” had presented positive models of important corporations in the Arab region that took the initiative of establishing NGOs playing a relief role. They also greatly contributed in supporting the development of communication technology in schools and universities (mainly the companies of portable phones). Some other companies were concerned with the empowerment of poor categories in partnership with NGOs with a focus on deprived areas, or to provide job opportunities for young graduates. However, there is still need to improve the practice of social responsibility at a wide scale in the Arab region.**

Despite the variety of actors, the socio-economic policies of governments as well as the political and legislative environment remain the main motive behind the capacity and motivation of the other actors, especially the Civil Society, in managing risks and alleviating their impact.

#### **B) Features of Civil Society organizations’ responsiveness to social risks threatening the Arab family**

Although the number of NGOs represents the main structure of the Civil Society, this is not absolutely synonymous of effectiveness and efficiency that is measured by several indicators, mainly the achievement of objectives according to the available human and material resources with a good quality of outcomes<sup>xxv</sup>. As we have already noted, there are big differences between NGOs and it is difficult to generalize in this field.

However, we are testing here the structure of the Civil Society in terms of size and types of organizations in order to identify the features of their responsiveness to the risks threatening families, and the type of qualitative and thematic interventions. The following table indicates the overall number of NGOs in each country at the beginning of 2013 according to the available data.

Country	Overall number of NGOs	Remarks
Egypt	36,734	A new estimate was recently announced referring to 42,000
Lebanon	6,600	According to 2012 data
Palestine	2,945 (for Gaza and the West Bank)	The majority is concentrated in the West Bank
Jordan	2,139	--
Sudan	3,300	This estimate includes an important number of branches of foreign organizations
Tunisia	11,740	Beginning of 2012
Algeria	1,028 <sup>3</sup>	National NGOs at the beginning of 2012
Morocco	45,000	An electronic site refers to 50,000 in 2013
Bahrain	544	Mid 2012
Qatar	33	2013
Yemen	8,125	2012
United Arab Emirates	144	2012
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	617	2012
Kuwait	88	Beginning 2013
Sultanate of Oman	124	Beginning 2012

The table indicates several facts if we compare the figures with previous years: 1) the overall number of NGOs is tending to increase in most Arab countries except for Arab Gulf countries where the speed of growth is relatively slow; 2) Tunisia and Egypt have witnessed after the revolution and the fall of the ruling regime a noticeable increase in the number of organizations during the past two years, as 4000 new NGOs were registered in Egypt and around 2000 in Tunisia (with more than 1000 after the revolution in Yemen). This could be simply explained by the tolerance of the new governments in the registration of NGOs as well as the growing trend of voluntary participation; however, when we examine the types of organizations and their fields of activity we notice that there might be other explanations as an important number of these organizations has a religious and political reference; 3) the overall number for Palestine is connected to the political conflict and relief activities; and 4) the increasing overall number of NGOs in Sudan is due to the presence of hundreds branches of foreign relief organizations.

### **What are the main risks addressed by NGOs according to the various fields of activity?**

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics in Algeria rely on two levels: 1) national organizations that are widespread in all the governorates and 2) other grassroots organizations in local communities and alliances of neighbors and parents of students reaching around 92 thousand.

1. **Intensive concern with risks related to poverty in the Arab region:** there are two approaches adopted in dealing with the marginalized and the poor; the first approach is philanthropic and the second is developmental empowering. The charity oriented approach is the traditional one historically practiced since the birth of an important sector of NGOs. It relies on a religious culture tending to encourage good and merciful actions for the poor. It is based on religious commandments and traditions calling for granting direct aid to the needy. Therefore, there is a direct relation between donor and grantee that can be either sustained or seasonal and related to special occasions (such as religious feasts, the month of Ramadan, the beginning of the school year, etc.) or it could be linked to special risks facing poor households (such as the death of the father, the collapse of the building, etc.). This charitable trend is considered as a pain killer, i.e. it is preserving survival by providing the basic needs to poor households. **Philanthropic organizations represent the majority of Arab NGOs and include the following types:**

- ✓ Voluntary organizations providing material and in-kind donations to poor households.
- ✓ Voluntary organizations supporting poor orphans.
- ✓ Relief voluntary organizations (mainly in Palestine, Lebanon, Sudan, Iraq, and Libya after the fall of the regime).
- ✓ Organizations concerned with migrants from the areas of disasters or armed conflicts in their new settlements.
- ✓ Social care organizations concerned with the provision of health and social care to poor households.

#### **Relief organizations in Egypt**

**As a consequence of the migration of thousands of Iraqi and Sudanese followed by Syrians to escape from armed conflicts, several voluntary organizations were established in Egypt to provide migrant families with social care. These organizations are concentrated in new cities and in the neighborhood of Cairo. They help migrants at the material level as well as helping them to find lodging and accommodation, in the issuance of official papers, and registration of children at school. One of the most prominent efforts are those of the Shar'eya Association granting care to 2000 households in the 6th of October city where there is a high concentration of Syrian migrants.**

As of the second approach, it has in common with the philanthropic approach the same concern with the poor considering them as a category that should obtain the priority of their activities.

However, there are several differences between the two approaches: 1) the empowering developmental trend provides tools of strength to the poor and the marginalized categories in terms of vocational training, education, raising their awareness in order to improve their self-reliance; 2) the empowerment approach contributes often in changing the quality of life of the poor and prevents them from falling into extreme poverty or taking the path of criminal activities; and 3) this approach presents valuable experiences in the protection of poor's rights<sup>xxvi</sup>.

### **El Zahraa Forum – Kingdom of Morocco**

**It is a network grouping several NGOs concerned with poor households all over Morocco with a special focus on providing vocational rehabilitation and training to these families. The network implements activities of protection, provides job opportunities especially for poor women and girls in order to avoid their exploitation. The forum was a main partner of the Arab Network for NGOs in implementing the project of developmental community groups that was conducted in six Arab countries. Although with a religious reference, El Zahraa network has overcome the limits of traditional charitable action and adopted the approach of empowering poor households comprehensively aiming at combating human trafficking of women, showing thus a courageous model of voluntary work. The reality of voluntary work in the Arab region indicates that the main trend for the majority of NGOs is the traditional philanthropic approach based on a direct relationship between donors and grantees; this trend commonly called in most Arab countries “social assistance” is represented by almost 32% of NGOs in Egypt and nearly 85% for Arab Gulf countries.**

If we add to the previous estimate the organizations active in the field of social and health care, as well as those mainly giving support to poor orphans and people with special needs, the main feature of the Arab Civil Society is charitable, care giving and service oriented.

### **Associations and charity funds in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

**According to the website of the Ministry of Social Development, there are 544 NGOs in Bahrain with one hundred charity organizations disseminated in the cities and villages. These organizations help poor people, widowed women and orphans. A similar type is called the charity funds playing the same role as charity organizations and established by local communities in villages or cities to whom they specifically provide their services. It**

**is possible now to establish more than one fund in the same area, creating thus a kind of sectarianism according to the country study of Bahrain.**

2. **Unemployment occupies an important position on the map of risks threatening the Arab family, especially when it comes to newly graduates,** representing one of the main sources of poverty as the family has to continue taking in charge the youth; moreover, it also leads to stress and deviations registered by all country reports. Consequently, the first decade of the third millennium is marked by the establishment of developmental NGOs intensifying efforts to provide job opportunities for youth through vocational training in order to rehabilitate them becoming compatible with the changing labor market. These organizations rely on several sources of funding and mainly the social funds for development created by the governments that adopted the policies of privatization. The capital of these funds is mostly provided by global financial institutions and sometimes by the governments of big countries or by the private sector. Social funds for developments deal with the issue of unemployment, providing job opportunities through active NGOs that play an intermediary role in their communities with groups of businessmen (case of Egypt where this trend was adopted since the nineties). It is important to mention that these experiences were not sufficiently evaluated and raise problems related to loans, management of enterprises, and the high rates of interests.

### **Organizations of the economic development sector**

#### **- Palestine-**

**The overall number of Palestinian NGOs is estimated at around three thousand with 12% active in the field of economic empowerment. These organizations provide small and micro loans to poor households (57% of Palestinian households are under the line of poverty) with special focus on women. They cooperate with local and international expertise to train people and provide job opportunities. The main problematic is their quasi total reliance on foreign funding. This sector obtains 21% of the overall foreign aid which represents a threat to their sustainability.**

Although there are governmental and voluntary efforts aiming at alleviating poverty and meeting the challenges of unemployment in most Arab countries, partnership between these two parties faces several problems as mentioned in the country reports. They include the limited human and material capacities in the areas where poverty and unemployment are widespread, weak coordination as well as working on individuals or single households rather than targeting the

poor community as a whole, and the scarce flow of information preventing to reach the target beneficiaries.

### **Limited capacity of NGOs in Yemen to deal with poverty and unemployment**

**The high rates of poverty (51%) and unemployment (34%) in Yemen combined with the size of families (7 children) are mainly concentrated in the countryside. This required important interventions from NGOs to alleviate poverty. Unfortunately, this is not the case and most associations are charity oriented with only 55 NGOs among 8271 adopting the empowerment approach (vocational training, rehabilitation, small loans, etc.). The Yemeni voluntary sector lacks a social base, i.e. volunteers, and has limited human and material capacities that could ensure its sustainability. Therefore, associations might find it more adequate to directly deliver services to the poor.**

3. **Child labor and street children (or homeless children) seem to be one of the consequences or a main representation of the risks related to poverty and unemployment.** These phenomena are also related to family disintegration as well as the low quality of public education that has become a factor of repulsion for children.

In this context, social risks are increasing in Egypt, Sudan, Morocco and Yemen with varied efforts from NGOs to counteract these risks. One of the first initiatives to address the risks of child labor and street children took place in the beginning of the eighties in Egypt where several NGOs were established sometimes under the initiative of businessmen. NGOs requested the governmental protection to these categories, including the adoption of legislation organizing child labor. As an example we note “El Amal (Hope) Village” that is active until now. However, the ultimate result of these efforts did not succeed to reduce the phenomenon as a consequence of the lack of comprehensive social policies of protection. Actually, these risks were addressed as outcomes without confronting the reasons leading to this phenomenon<sup>xxvii</sup>.

### **The Coptic Evangelical Organizations for Social Services in Egypt proposes a model focusing on the families of poor children**

**Since its establishment in 1956, the Coptic Evangelical Organizations for Social Services has adopted a developmental approach based on the concept of empowering the target beneficiaries. The organization constantly improves its activities in various developmental fields. Its flexibility and responsiveness are its main characteristics; consequently, it is concerned with the family as a whole, then by the development of the local community where these families are settled.**

**One of its main fields of concern is street children that are being attracted through a comprehensive approach (psychological, economic and social) in addition to the promotion of arts and the sponsorship of new talents. On the other hand, these activities are conducted in poor marginalized areas where there are high rates of drops-out from school resulting in child labor. In the developmental project conducted by the Coptic Evangelical Organizations for Social Services in cooperation with the Arab Network for NGOs (2008-2012), the empowerment of poor household was the entry point to deal with child labor.**

- 4. All country reports refer to the risks of violence and drugs addiction among youth and some sectors of children.** The phenomenon is widespread in all social levels of the Arab societies. Reasons found by the researchers about the rise of violence and the prevalence of drugs addiction are varied, they included: economic and political marginalization, unemployment, intensive exposure to internet, lack of the spirit of dialogue and respect of others' opinions, deprivation and social exclusion.

Interventions of NGOs in these fields were mainly limited to strategies for the alleviation of risks or the provision of rehabilitation services.

Some remarks about the interventions of NGOs in facing the risks of violence and drugs abuse:

- The rise of violence is taking place in a comprehensive social context (inside the family, at school, in universities, in the media, through internet combined with an atmosphere of social exclusion and marginalization). Consequently, we note limited interventions of Civil Society organizations; however, there are few exceptions that include human rights organizations dealing with State violence against some categories, with domestic violence against women and children, violence at school, etc. It is worth noting that the reasons of violence are linked to the entire structure of the society and to the comprehensive socio-economic and political context.
- The weight of NGOs concerned with drugs abuse is quite limited compared to the overall size of NGOs and social initiatives. This small amount of organizations focuses on raising the awareness of youth about the risks of drugs. Besides these efforts of preventive health, there are few others concerned with healing addiction; overall NGOs addressing drugs addiction in Egypt was estimated at 55 among an overall number of 42,000 NGOs.

## **The Network of NGOs for the fight against drugs abuse**

### **Kingdom of Morocco**

**The Network was established in 2009 with membership of 15 NGOs. Its activities are mainly focused on educational institutions with the participation of groups of students under pedagogic supervision; these groups are called the “cells of awareness”. The Network cooperates with the concerned families as well as the centers of rehabilitation in each city, presents a new preventive approach and works with youth in educational institutions.**

#### **C) Critical review of the characteristics of Civil Society interventions regarding the direct risks threatening the Arab family**

All country reports have identified direct risks threatening the entity of the family, mainly the unprecedented increase in the rates of divorce, domestic violence, early marriage of girls, growth of spinsterhood, exploitation of women and children, disturbance of the value system that used to prevail in the family relations, intensive import of foreign nurses, and marginalization of aged persons.

**We attempt here to examine how Arab NGOs dealt with these direct risks:**

1. The general trend in dealing with these risks was based on **fragmented and individual approaches**. Although there is a sector of human rights organizations concerned with violence against women and children, early marriage, or human trafficking, they look at issues in a fragmented way, and in most cases they do not address the family as a whole.
  2. **Priority appears to be the risks related to poverty for the majority of NGOs** in the various countries. As already mentioned, this was addressed through two approaches: the predominant traditional charity approach, and the developmental empowerment approach. The two approaches target mainly the economic dimension despite the fact that poverty is the source of other risks jeopardizing cohesion and solidarity inside the family, resulting in acts of violence and drugs abuse, as well as human trafficking of women and children<sup>xxviii</sup>. Thus, the overwhelming concern was for the economic factor and the measurement of the income considered as a major factor, with no evident interest with the cohesion of the family, cordial relations between the parents or the values and type of socialization.
- **Some country reports criticized the philosophy and vision of NGOs that tend to divide the family in sectors** (women, youth, children, etc.) without dealing with this entity as a main unit, even from the developmental perspective. Recent field research confirms that the provision of small loans to establish small and micro enterprises, or the

vocational training of the family was not reflected on the household life, cohesion or values (non-linear relationship between the increase of income and the protection of poor families from disintegration)<sup>xxix</sup>.

- Some country reports (Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen) expressed clearly the importance of “**returning back to address the family as a whole**” and presented some interesting experiences.

### **Centers of family guidance to deal with risks**

**We call Arab NGOs to deal with family guidance that is highly absent from their interventions. Family guidance holds three dimensions: 1) a curing dimension related to the conflicts between parents, children or between both of them; it aims at strengthening cohesion and contributing in the psychological health of the family; 2) the preventive dimension that immunizes families against risks; and 3) developmental guidance that includes the programs of health and psychological awareness, reproductive health, preparation to marriage, skills of dealing with children, youth and adolescents. If voluntary initiatives failed from adopting family guidance as a tool in their approaches, we believe that risks will increase in an unpredictable way in Arab countries.**

It is important to note that our criticism extends from the traditional philanthropic approach to the developmental empowerment approach that addresses households in a fragmented way rather than a comprehensive one.

### **The Center of Family Advice**

#### **Doha – Qatar**

**The Center of Family Advice aims at dealing in a scientific systematic manner with the issues threatening the family entity. In order to achieve this objective, the Center conducts preventive programs of awareness about the risks affecting families, as well as curing programs to solve problems either directly or indirectly through a hot line. The Center focuses on the services seeking to prevent divorce or to alleviate its impact in the context of parenthood. However, we have to question the role of this Center in the alleviation of divorce that reached in Qatar the percentage of 40.3% in 2010.**

## IV - Key issues to operate change and strengthen the Civil Society

1. Either related to the State structure (poverty, marginalization, unemployment, poor quality of health and educational services) or directly directed to the family as the primary institution of socialization (increase of divorce rates, practice of violence, risks encountered by children, risks related to youth, disintegration of the value system, etc.), the map of social risks threatening the Arab family indicates an **urgent need for social policies exceeding the philosophy of social care** and the tools of material support, to adopt a comprehensive kit of tools. This will necessarily impact the philosophy and tools used by NGOs.

**The change in the philosophy of State social policies from social care to developmental approaches will provide immunity to the Arab family and will impact the trends of NGOs in dealing with risks.**

2. **There is a big gap between the intensity of social risks and the capacity of Arab NGOs mainly regarding the following:**
  - ✓ Many geographic areas were neglected and deprived from development by both the State and Civil Society organizations (Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan).
  - ✓ The dangers affecting directly the family and related to the mutual understanding of parents and the type of socialization provided to children are not an issue of concern for NGOs despite the availability of official indicators and data proving the intensity of risks (rates of divorce, unofficial marriage, spinsterhood, early marriage, etc.).

In this context, we notice the limited capacity of responsiveness for many NGOs towards these risks directly related to the prevailing culture, values and customs such as discrimination between males and females inside the family, educational gap between genders, socialization according to roles, early marriage for girls, etc. Moreover, NGOs adopt a neutral attitude towards lavish consumerism, pornographic websites or sinking types of arts presented in the satellite channels.

The gap between the map of social risks and the map of the Civil Society becomes evident when Civil Society organizations adopt the policy of providing pain killers through a traditional charity approach instead of operating a cultural, human rights based and developmental change.

**There is a gap between the rising intensity of social risks and the responsiveness capacity of Arab NGOs.**

3. The focus of the majority of qualitative interventions is on the alleviation of consequences after the negative effects reach important dimensions, i.e. adoption of the third strategy. Unfortunately, NGOs deal with the negative impact of risks the same way

of the State social policies that are only concerned with the effects rather than the reasons. As an example we mention the phenomenon of drops out from schools, followed by child labor or street children; both NGOs and the State are only concerned with the alleviation of consequences.

**There is tendency to deal with the risks affecting the Arab family as a reaction aiming at alleviating the negative impact instead of predicting risks and adopting policies of prevention. Apparently voluntary organizations follow the same trend adopted by governments.**

**4. The scene offered by field interventions needs to be revised and corrected in this historic momentum for the following reasons:**

- ✓ **There is an increasing politicization of the Civil Society**, i.e. the involvement in political activities in support of political parties and movements. While some previous annual reports had noticed this dimension, **the present report shows undoubtedly a rise of this trend, especially in the countries of the Arab spring**. Actually, in Egypt and Tunisia hundreds of organizations have become politicized after the revolution and act as tools for the Islamist forces that took power; they include women organizations, organizations of youth, charity organizations dealing with the grassroots in order to attract their loyalty and obtain their votes in the elections.
- ✓ **There is a phenomenon of "sectarian Civil Society" as mentioned in the country reports of Lebanon and Bahrain**. This sectarianism has contributed in widening the gap at the society level. Actually, we find in these two cases organizations that discriminate between citizens at the level of provided services and activities. Such sectarian behavior is blowing up in essence the concept of the Civil Society. Actually, the presence of political parties claiming a religious or sectarian reference is undermining the values of citizenship, reflected in the surrounding Civil Society and transmitted to the State and the society as a whole.
- ✓ **The phenomenon of combining between charity and religious preach is another risk threatening the Civil Society**. It is true that the Arab history has known since the birth of voluntary organizations, NGOs with religious features based on the religious motive of practicing philanthropy and benefaction; however, they have also adopted national causes and played important roles in preserving the national identity. However, the present arena shows many varied charity organizations, some belonging to the fundamentalist, Jihad or Moslem brotherhood trend. These organizations mix between the dissemination of their beliefs, religious preach and charitable action. This is quite clear in the case of Egypt where over 2000 NGOs of these trends were registered after the revolution. The same applies to Tunisia, Libya and Yemen and happened previously in the case of Iraq.

**Thus, there are risks surrounding the Civil Society threatening to deepen polarization inside the society as well as the principles of citizenship and the independence of Civil Society organizations which had a long fight against the State in order to obtain their autonomy. Actually, there is risk that these civic organizations become divided between political, religious and ideological trends and forces, reinforcing the risk of exclusion instead of being fully involved in managing social risks.**

5. **The fifth important issue deserving to be honestly and realistically approached is the risk of marginalization for the Civil Society itself especially that many writings refer to the erosion of the middle class.** In this context, it is important to indicate the essential relationship between the Civil Society and the middle class as well as the wideness and variety of sectors in the middle class that is reflected in the Civil Society. Actually, the middle class composed of educated and professional people is a major source of social and political mobility and is mainly linked to voluntary initiatives aiming at operating change at the level of the prevailing culture and in the society as a whole. On the other hand, it is the middle class that put pressures on the government and the political power to respect the social claims and rights.

There are currently several layers of the middle class suffering from unprecedented economic pressures and poor quality of health and education services in the majority of Arab countries. The decreased value of their incomes pushes them to be mainly preoccupied by securing means of survival. There is a correlation between the prevailing unemployment among young graduates and the crisis of the middle class that spent every efforts to educate its children who join today the ranks of the unemployed with all the feelings of frustration generated by such situation leading to additional risks such as anger turning into violence, drugs addiction, spinsterhood, incapability of youth to create a family of their own, etc.

The socio-economic pressures affecting the middle class pushes its members to withdraw from the public space into the private space in order to manage their personal problems. Accordingly, the participation of the middle class in the Civil Society, political parties and other forms of political and social representation is gradually reduced. Some reports of the World Bank indicate also a possible fall of the lower strata of the middle class in the circle of poverty as a consequence of the risks threatening this layer. Finally, the deterioration is clear, especially in the Arab spring countries that witness huge crises during the transitory period as we are in front of a fragile State incapable of managing the socio-economic and political risks accompanied by marginalization and vacuum for Civil Society organizations.

## Conclusion

Given the multiple risks identified and the limited capacities of most Civil Society organizations in managing these risks, several points need to be confirmed:

- The Arab States deal with social risks from the perspective of reacting and providing pain killers rather than predicting potential risks and preventing them; however, this approach could lead to great crises and disasters.
- There is urgent need to change the vision of all actors in the management of social risks; this vision should avoid neglecting risks or not acknowledging them. The transparent flow of information about the map of risks leads to a clear perception of the reality generating organized efforts and an adequate distribution of roles compatible with the capacities of the various stakeholders. It is worth mentioning here that according to various indicators, the private sector has not succeeded yet to fulfill its social responsibility in the Arab region.
- The feasible solution to the many social risks identified is to build real effective partnerships based on mutual trust and consensus over common objectives. This is a main requirement that will be created through accumulated efforts in order to achieve development.
- Partnership with academic institutions is also an important factor to rationalize the steps of social risk management. Therefore, we propose the establishment of national observatories responsible of monitoring social risks with governmental participation and support combined with the effective efforts of the Civil Society that has the advantage to be present between the people.

**The observatories of social risks will rely on important progress achieved by the social sciences in Western countries (and ignored by Arabs); they will also be pending on the political will of governments; finally, effective and influential/impressive Civil Society organizations will contribute in activating these observatories on the ground in the right direction.**

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