OLIVE BRANCH

STRATEGIC PLAN
2026 – 2030

MISSION :

Olive Branch works to foster peacebuilding, social cohesion, and community development by strengthening education, empowering youth, expanding economic opportunities, promoting rights-based advocacy, and reinforcing civil society, with inclusive engagement across refugee, host, and local communities.



VISION :

A peaceful, inclusive, and just society where empowered individuals and communities live with dignity, opportunity, and active civic participation, and are able to recover, thrive, and build sustainable peace.

Values

1. Innovation & Creative Solutions

We embrace innovation, creativity, and responsible experimentation to develop context-responsive solutions that address complex challenges, amplify community potential, and strengthen peace, resilience, and sustainable impact.

2. Peaceful Coexistence, Non-Violence & Conflict Sensitivity

We believe in resolving conflicts through dialogue, inclusion, and non-violent approaches. We are committed to conflict-sensitive action and reject all forms of violence, hatred, exclusion, and harm.

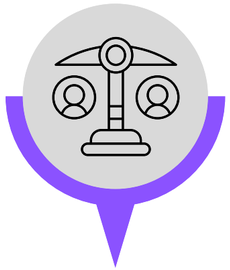
3. Inclusion & Social Justice

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and fair participation, defending marginalized groups, and addressing all forms of discrimination and structural inequality.

4. Community Empowerment & Local Ownership

We view communities as active partners and leaders of change, and we promote local ownership, collective agency, and sustainable community-led action.

Values



5. Human Dignity & Rights

We respect the inherent dignity of every individual and adopt a rights-based approach that centers protection, equity, and empowerment in all our interventions.



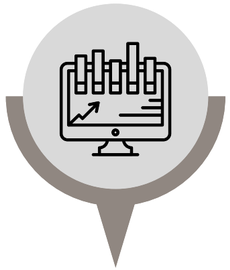
6. Integrity, Transparency & Accountability

We uphold the highest ethical standards, ensure transparency in our work, and remain accountable to communities, partners, and donors.



7. Solidarity & Collaborative Action

We believe in the power of solidarity, cooperation, and partnerships to achieve collective impact and strengthen peace, social cohesion, and shared responsibility.



8. Learning, Adaptability & Evidence-Based Practice

We value continuous learning, reflection, and adaptability, and we ground our actions and advocacy in evidence, knowledge, and community-informed insights.

THEORY OF CHANGE

CONTEXT



Olive Branch operates across multiple and interconnected contexts.

The organization works within a highly complex Syrian and regional environment characterized by a transitional phase following years of protracted conflict. This period has been marked by social fragmentation, weakened institutional structures, and declining trust among different groups within society. Accordingly, Olive Branch prioritizes Syria as its primary context of intervention, focusing on supporting local communities in recovery processes, peacebuilding efforts, the restoration of social cohesion, and strengthening the capacity of individuals and communities to overcome the impacts of conflict and build a more stable and inclusive future.

At the same time, the organization works with Syrian refugees in host countries — particularly in Turkey — recognizing them as an integral part of the Syrian social fabric and as key actors in both the present and the future, whether in contexts of displacement or potential return. Interventions also extend to host communities affected by displacement, as well as to return and post-conflict transition settings, ensuring a comprehensive and interconnected approach across all contexts.

Collectively, these contexts are characterized by several key features and challenges, including:

- Increasing economic pressures, high unemployment rates, and weakened livelihoods
- Deep psychosocial challenges resulting from accumulated trauma and prolonged conflict
- Social tensions and weakened social cohesion and trust among different community groups
- Child protection concerns and the critical importance of children’s mental health and well-being
- Limited youth capacities and restricted civic and political participation
- Limited influence of civil society in public policy and decision-making processes
- Fragile legal and protection conditions affecting refugees and returnees

CORE ASSUMPTION

Olive Branch's Theory of Change is grounded in the following central assumption:

- If communities inside Syria — as the primary priority — are supported through integrated interventions that combine quality education, psychosocial support, economic empowerment, and peacebuilding;
- If children and youth are systematically invested in through educational, creative, and psychosocial pathways that strengthen their capacity for recovery, innovation, and meaningful civic participation;
- If Syrian refugees in host countries are comprehensively empowered — economically, educationally, psychosocially, and legally — while being effectively connected to return contexts and local communities inside Syria;
- And if civil society is strengthened and evidence-based advocacy is activated to influence and transform exclusionary policies and structural barriers;



Then this will contribute to strengthened social cohesion, reduced conflict dynamics, and the building of sustainable and inclusive peace within Syria and across its regional extensions.



STRATEGIC CHANGE PATHWAYS

PATHWAY I: COMMUNITY RECOVERY AND PEACEBUILDING

This pathway focuses on supporting communities inside Syria during the recovery and transitional phase through direct community-based interventions aimed at rebuilding trust, managing conflicts, and strengthening social cohesion. It includes:

- Provision of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) programs
- Community-level dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives
- Support to local mediation and conflict management mechanisms
- Mainstreaming peacebuilding approaches across all other strategic pathways

Expected Outcome:

More cohesive Syrian communities that are capable of recovery, managing conflicts peacefully, and actively supporting sustainable peace processes.

PATHWAY II: EDUCATION FOR RECOVERY AND STABILITY

Pathway II: Education for Recovery and Stability

This pathway positions education as a strategic lever for long-term recovery, stability, and peacebuilding. It aims to strengthen and enhance the quality of the education system while ensuring its relevance to community needs through:

- Promoting quality education that fosters creativity and critical thinking
- Providing safe and child-friendly learning spaces
- Delivering psychosocial support through play-based, arts-based, and creative expression approaches
- Supporting non-formal and remedial education in post-conflict settings
- Strengthening the capacities of educators and local educational institutions
- Integrating values of peace, social cohesion, and recovery across formal, non-formal, and remedial education

Expected Outcome:

A resilient, inclusive, and high-quality education system that supports children’s psychosocial recovery, strengthens critical thinking, and promotes values of peace and social cohesion.





PATHWAY III: YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

This pathway positions young people as key actors in long-term transformation and sustainable change, building their capacities for leadership, civic participation, and social integration , and sustainable change.
It focuses on:

- Strengthening youth leadership, civic, and organizational capacities
- Promoting meaningful youth participation in public life, civic engagement, and local decision-making processes
- Creating inclusive spaces for engagement and social integration through sports, culture, arts, and community-based activities

Expected Outcome:
Empowered, influential, and actively engaged young people who contribute to shaping Syria's future and advancing sustainable peace.

PATHWAY IV: ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AS A LEVER FOR PEACE

This pathway focuses on strengthening economic stability as a critical driver for reducing tensions and conflict dynamics, while promoting dignity and self-reliance through:

- Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)
- Promoting social entrepreneurship and community-based economic initiatives
- Building economic and financial skills and capacities at both individual and community levels
- Advocating for economic rights and equitable access to opportunities for vulnerable groups

Expected Outcome:
Enhanced economic stability that upholds dignity, strengthens self-reliance, and contributes to social cohesion and sustainable peace.



PATHWAY V: ADVOCACY AND STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

This pathway seeks to foster a more just and inclusive policy environment while reinforcing the structural role of civil society in influencing decision-making processes and public policy. It does so through:

- Conducting research and analyzing existing policies
- Providing legal and rights-based support to targeted groups
- Advancing rights-based advocacy initiatives
- Transferring knowledge and expertise and strengthening the institutional capacities of local civil society organizations
- Building and sustaining effective local and international alliances and networks

Expected Outcome:

A stronger, more independent, and more influential local civil society capable of leading advocacy efforts and meaningfully contributing to the development of more just and inclusive policies.





PATHWAY V: ADVOCACY AND STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY

This pathway complements the other strategic pathways and focuses on empowering Syrian refugees while organically linking them to recovery and peacebuilding processes inside Syria.

In host countries (particularly Turkey):

- Advocating for the protection of legal and humanitarian rights
- Promoting economic empowerment and improved livelihoods
- Providing Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)
- Supporting positive social integration with host communities
- Advocating against forced return (non-refoulement)

In return contexts:

- Advocating for the rights and protection of returnees
- Supporting economic reintegration and leveraging returnees' skills and expertise
- Strengthening social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts
- Connecting local communities with diaspora networks

Expected Outcome:

Economically active and legally protected refugees and returnees who contribute meaningfully to stability and sustainable peace.

OUTCOMES

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES

- Improved mental health and psychosocial well-being among conflict-affected communities
- Enhanced quality and resilience of the education system, strengthening its ability to support recovery and stability
- Increased structured and meaningful youth participation in civic and political life, including local decision-making processes
- Improved economic stability and livelihoods for targeted groups, reducing vulnerability and drivers of instability
- Strengthened capacities of local civil society organizations for collaborative action and effective advocacy
- Improved relationships and positive interaction between refugees and host communities, as well as between returnees and local communities
- Increased rights awareness and improved access to legal protection for refugees and returnees

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOMES

- Stronger social cohesion and increased trust among different groups within society
- Educated and recovered generations capable of contributing to stability and sustainable peace
- Reduced community tensions and conflict-related violence linked to economic fragility
- Communities capable of managing disputes and conflicts through peaceful and constructive means
- A more independent and influential civil society actively shaping public policy and decision-making processes

IMPACT

A peaceful, inclusive, and just Syrian society in which individuals and communities live with dignity, access to opportunities, and active civic participation, and are able to recover from the impacts of conflict and build sustainable peace.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE I: STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY RECOVERY, SOCIAL COHESION, AND SUSTAINABLE PEACEBUILDING

1.1 Design and implement integrated community-based interventions that rebuild trust, promote inclusive dialogue, and foster positive interaction among local communities, returnees, refugees, and host communities.
1.2 Support and activate sustainable local mechanisms for conflict prevention, community mediation, and peaceful dispute resolution, particularly in post-conflict and return contexts.
1.3 Systematically mainstream peacebuilding principles, conflict sensitivity, and the Do No Harm approach across all organizational policies, programs, and partnerships.

This objective seeks to contribute to the development of more cohesive and recovery-oriented communities in post-conflict and return settings by rebuilding mutual trust and strengthening positive engagement among diverse social groups. It focuses on reducing localized community conflicts by enhancing community capacities for conflict prevention and peaceful management, while reinforcing local mediation mechanisms and sustainable, locally driven solutions.

It also aims to institutionalize peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity as cross-cutting organizational approaches embedded throughout all interventions, thereby strengthening community safety, belonging, and participation, and supporting sustainable peace trajectories in the medium and long term.

This objective is implemented in integration with education, economic empowerment, and youth empowerment pathways to maximize overall impact. It reflects Olive Branch's commitment to working alongside communities and enabling them to lead their own recovery and peacebuilding processes.





2 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE II: STRENGTHENING EDUCATION AS A LEVER FOR RECOVERY, RESILIENCE, AND SOCIAL STABILITY

2.1 Improve access to inclusive, flexible, and high-quality education that supports the psychosocial recovery of children and adolescents while fostering critical thinking and long-term learning pathways.

2.2 Build and strengthen the capacities of educators, educational institutions, and community-based learning spaces to deliver education that responds effectively to post-conflict needs.

2.3 Integrate values of peace, social cohesion, and recovery across formal, non-formal, and remedial education systems.

This objective positions education as a strategic entry point for long-term recovery and the rebuilding of social stability in conflict-affected contexts. It seeks to enhance both the quality and inclusiveness of education systems, ensuring their responsiveness to the psychosocial, cognitive, and developmental needs of children and adolescents, while mitigating the long-term impacts of conflict and strengthening sustainable learning trajectories.

It also aims to embed critical thinking, creativity, and the values of peace and social cohesion within educational processes, while reinforcing the institutional capacities of educators and learning institutions to play an active role in community recovery and resilience-building.

Implemented in integration with youth empowerment and peacebuilding pathways, this objective frames education not merely as a service delivery mechanism, but as a transformative driver of societal change. It reflects Olive Branch’s vision of education as a tool for building both individuals and communities.

3 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE III: EMPOWERING YOUTH AS KEY ACTORS IN LONG-TERM CHANGE AND PEACEBUILDING

3.1 Strengthen youth leadership, civic, and organizational capacities to enable their meaningful participation in community initiatives, public life, and local decision-making processes.

3.2 Provide inclusive and safe platforms for youth engagement through culture, sports, creativity, and community action, fostering dialogue and social integration.

3.3 Support youth-led initiatives that contribute to peacebuilding, social innovation, and community development.

This objective seeks to position young people as a central force in rebuilding society and shaping its future by equipping them with the leadership, civic, and organizational skills necessary for active participation in public life and local governance processes. It expands structured opportunities for youth engagement and supports youth-led initiatives in peacebuilding, social innovation, and community action.

It further strengthens the role of youth as bridges for dialogue and integration among diverse community groups, contributing to reduced exclusion and enhanced social cohesion in the medium and long term.

Implemented in synergy with education, economic empowerment, and peacebuilding pathways, this objective supports youth transition from beneficiaries to leaders. It reflects Olive Branch's conviction that young people are not only the future of society, but active partners in shaping its present.





4 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE IV: ADVANCING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT AS A FOUNDATION FOR DIGNITY, STABILITY, AND SUSTAINABLE PEACE

4.1 Support sustainable livelihood opportunities through small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), social entrepreneurship, and community-based economic initiatives.

4.2 Strengthen economic, financial, and entrepreneurial skills and capacities at both individual and community levels to enhance self-reliance and reduce vulnerability.

4.3 Advocate for inclusive economic policies and promote equitable access to economic opportunities, particularly for women, youth, refugees, and returnees.

This objective positions economic empowerment as a key driver of human dignity, reduced vulnerability, and the mitigation of community-level tensions and instability. It seeks to enhance livelihoods and strengthen self-reliance among individuals, households, and communities, thereby contributing to greater social stability and alleviating economic pressures linked to conflict and displacement.

It also aims to support the development of more inclusive and equitable local economic environments that expand opportunities for marginalized groups and reduce structural economic disparities.

Implemented in synergy with recovery, peacebuilding, and youth empowerment pathways, this objective recognizes the strong interconnection between economic stability and social cohesion. It reflects Olive Branch’s commitment to promoting economic development as an instrument for peace, not merely as a source of income.

5 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE V: STRENGTHENING CIVIL SOCIETY AND ADVANCING RIGHTS-BASED ADVOCACY FOR MORE JUST AND INCLUSIVE SYSTEMS

5.1 Strengthen the institutional, technical, and coordination capacities of local civil society organizations to enable them to operate effectively, collaboratively, and sustainably.

5.2 Produce and utilize evidence-based research and policy analysis to support impactful advocacy efforts on social justice, youth participation, and refugee rights.

5.3 Build and manage strategic local, national, and international alliances and networks to maximize impact, enhance sustainability, and influence public policy processes.

This objective seeks to reinforce the structural role of civil society organizations as key actors in rebuilding the social contract and shaping public policy, particularly within fragile and transitional contexts. It focuses on strengthening their capacities to operate effectively and independently through participatory and evidence-based approaches that enhance long-term sustainability and systemic influence.

It also aims to advance research-driven advocacy efforts and expand civic alliances and networks capable of influencing policy frameworks and governance processes.

Integrated across all other strategic objectives, this objective recognizes civil society as a cross-cutting pillar of systemic transformation. It reflects Olive Branch's commitment to working toward more just and inclusive systems, rather than solely responding to immediate needs.





6 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE VI: ENSURING COMPREHENSIVE EMPOWERMENT AND PROTECTION FOR REFUGEES AND RETURNEES ACROSS THE DISPLACEMENT–RETURN CONTINUUM

6.1 Protect and promote the legal and humanitarian rights of refugees and returnees, including advocacy against forced return (non-refoulement) and efforts to combat discrimination.

6.2 Provide integrated support to refugees and returnees — including economic empowerment, psychosocial support, and education — to strengthen resilience and self-reliance.

6.3 Foster positive interaction, reintegration, and knowledge exchange between refugees, returnees, and local communities, while strengthening linkages with diaspora networks.

This objective focuses on positioning refugees and returnees as key actors in recovery and peacebuilding processes, rather than solely as beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance. It seeks to enhance their legal protection and rights awareness while strengthening their psychosocial resilience and economic self-reliance.

It also aims to promote positive relationships and social cohesion between refugees and host communities, as well as between returnees and local communities, while linking them to recovery pathways both inside Syria and in host countries.

Integrated with economic empowerment, peacebuilding, and civil society strengthening objectives, this approach ensures a comprehensive and interconnected response across the full displacement and return lifecycle. It reflects Olive Branch’s vision of refugees and returnees as active partners in stability and sustainable peace.

THANK YOU

VISIT US