

SYRIA*

Empowering Women in Political Leadership: Social Norms Change, Reducing Stigma, and Fostering Sustainable Political Participation in Afrin and Qamishli in Northeast Syria

DURATION: 02/2025 – 02/2026

The current context in Syria has severely marginalized women in political and peacebuilding processes. Across the country, women face barriers such as exclusion from decision-making, limited access to resources, and deeply rooted patriarchal norms. While the Northeast region shows some representation by women, it often lacks substance. In the South, emerging women's movements struggle due to weak structures, and in Central Syria, worsening economic conditions further restrict women's roles. With the recent political changes in Syria, this project represents an important opportunity to strive for more women in leadership, shifting CSO: civil society organizations toward gender-responsive strategies and providing women with the tools, training, and support needed for lasting and meaningful political participation.



A participant from Afrin takes part in a training session of the "Watad" project, empowering women to challenge the social stigma surrounding their participation in public life.

Photo: DAR for Peace and Prosperity.

This project aims to enhance women's participation in political and community leadership in Afrin and Qamishli by empowering female activists, reducing stigma around women's leadership, and fostering inclusive social change. Key strategies to implement this project are:



Empowering women activists through tailored leadership and advocacy training.



Mobilizing community support by raising awareness to reduce stigma around women's political roles.



Strengthening local networks (e.g., Syrian Women Journalists Network, Agora, Early Warning Network) to sustain change.



Promoting inclusive dialogue by engaging diverse ethnic, religious, and social groups.



Building local and international partnerships to reinforce community-based solutions and ensure lasting impact.

*Focus on the cities of Afrin and Qamishli.

KEY TARGETS INCLUDE

60

from Afrin and Qamishli
empowered with peacebuilding
and political skills

WOMEN
ACTIVISTS

15

to increase community
awareness on women's
political leadership

COMMUNITY-LED
INITIATIVES

2

established in each city
bringing activists to quarterly
exchanges of experiences,
best practices and knowledge

COMMUNITY OF
PRACTICE (COP)
PLATFORMS

10 – 15%

related to women's political
leadership and on gender-based
violence, within communities of
Afrin and Qamishli (1800 surveys
administered)

REDUCED
STIGMA

PARTNERSHIPS



Agora Network

Early Warning Network

Swiss Peace

Syrian Women Journalists Network

Synergy for Justice

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Deliver interactive online training workshops with Swiss Peace on peacebuilding, governance, leadership, and advocacy skills for 60 women activists.
- ▶ Organize quarterly hybrid Community of Practice meetings in Afrin and Qamishli to facilitate experience sharing among activists from partner networks.
- ▶ Coordinate with Synergy for Justice for expert consultation on gender-based violence stigma assessment.
- ▶ Implement community events by network teams, including media productions, debates, theater, and dialogues to raise awareness and foster women's leadership.
- ▶ Provide ongoing mentoring and support for teams implementing community initiatives.
- ▶ Produce a comprehensive report on women's political leadership in Afrin and Qamishli, summarizing project outcomes and guiding future efforts.


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