



النساء الآن  
WOMEN NOW  
FOR DEVELOPMENT

# Field Research

## Justice from a Gender Perspective

Women Now for Development

April 2019



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**Author:**

Nisrin .H

**Editor:**

Dr. Maria Al Abdeh

**Translation:**

Baraa Seraj Eddin

**Graphic Design:**

Tammam Alomar



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**WOMEN NOW**  
FOR DEVELOPMENT

Published by: Women Now for Development

9 Villa d'Este - Tour Mantoue 75013 Paris

[www.women-now.org](http://www.women-now.org)

Not for sale

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April 2019

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**Special thanks to:**

All the women who shared their personal stories with the researchers.



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## 1. Basic Information About the Research:

The interviews (11 interviews in total) were conducted over a period of approximately one month. From the start, the researchers (Zahra Ali and Nisrin .H) agreed that the number of interviews should not exceed 15, out of consideration for the narrow timeframe as well as the fact that these interviews will be used to develop the outlines of a broader research project which will include a larger number and wider range of interviewees in order to obtain results that are both deeper and closer to the lived reality of Syrian women in a variety of contexts and personal situations. (see Women Now Position Paper on Gender Justice)

### 1.1 Research Goals:

- To understand the lived experiences of Syrian women, which are taken here to be a source of feminist knowledge, as a form of feminist documentation of their various realities.
- To create a space where the voices of Syrian women can be heard, as they are seldom heard.
- To create a link between Syrian women inside Syria and abroad in order to locate points of participation and support.
- To learn more about the opinions, thoughts and feelings of Syrian women with regard to both the present situation and the future of Syria, especially as they pertain to justice in general and gender-based justice in particular.

### 1.2 Criteria Used in the Selection of Women for Interviews:

- Syrian women who lived in Syria before the year 2011 (as this was the year when the situation of the country changed).
- After conducting the first two interviews, we agreed on a minimum age of 25. The women interviewed were asked to talk about life before 2011, and we concluded that this could be difficult for women younger than 25.
- Marital status was not among the criteria, however the differences here may shed light on some sensitive points.
- Interviewees should come from a variety of social contexts (inside Syria) and refugee contexts (outside Syria).
- Interviewees should not be involved in direct political action (i.e. they do not have a platform for expression and their views are not influenced by any clear political orientation).



### 1.3 Research Environment:

The research was conducted by two women: The primary researcher, Dr. Zahra Ali, and the field researcher, Nisren Habib, with continuous assistance from Dr. Maria al-Abdeh, executive director of Women Now. These three women held joint meetings throughout the duration of the research period in order to share their observations and suggestions on an ongoing basis.

### 1.4 Research Methods:

The researchers decided on a semi-structured interview method, as the nature of the research called for a qualitative approach. Interviews ranged from one hour to as long as two and a half hours in order to give the interviewees the space they needed to talk about their experiences and voice their ideas.

Most of the interviews were conducted virtually (using either Skype or WhatsApp), depending on whether or not the women had access to these applications and how comfortable they were with using them.

Most of the women opted not to record their interviews for security reasons. Instead, the field researcher took notes during the interviews.

### 1.5 Analysis Methodology:

The researchers relied on content analysis in obtaining their results. This was especially important as they wished to focus on obtaining information that was representative, subjective and intersectional, as this was the most helpful way to analyze the given information from a critical feminist point of view.

### 1.6 Descriptive Information (Semi-Quantitative):

As previously mentioned, we were able to interview 11 Syrian women who represented a variety of regions, environments, experiences, and ages. Here is some detailed information about these women:

- Age group: All of the women interviewed were between 25 and 57 years old; three were in their twenties, four in their thirties, one in her forties, and two in their fifties.



- Marital status: Five women were married, three were single, one had a boyfriend, and one was engaged.
- Areas of residence: Four women were in Europe, one in Turkey, two in Lebanon, one in Damascus, one in Raqqa, one in Qamishli, and one in Idlib.
- Means of communication: Two women were interviewed in person and the rest were interviewed by Skype or WhatsApp.

## 1.7 Circumstances Surrounding the Interviews:

Challenges	Advantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The interviews were conducted without a foundation built on trust.</li> <li>- Most of the interviews were conducted virtually.</li> <li>- Difficulties communicating, both technical and practical, in some cases (Deir ez-Zor, some areas of Damascus).</li> <li>- Security risks for some of the women.</li> <li>- The sensitive nature of the research subject matter.</li> <li>- The narrow timeframe for the research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A spirit of teamwork and a dedicated team.</li> <li>- Highly experienced researchers.</li> <li>- Assistance provided by the Women Now team in communicating with women in different regions.</li> <li>- High level of responsiveness among the women interviewed.</li> </ul>



## 2. Research Results:

### 2.1 Change in Patterns Analyzed from the Perspective of Gender

In order to examine the extent to which the daily patterns of women's lives changed in 2011, researchers had to address the daily life of each woman before and after on all levels (personal, social, economic, familial and professional), as life's daily patterns, with all their details, feelings, goals and actions, can be reflective of the nature of the change taking place. Of course, we have been careful not to draw generalizations from any of the results, as we are fully convinced of the specificity of each individual experience and believe that change is relational rather than general. We divided the comparisons based on time periods with some common characteristics, for example: before 2011, when all of the women were settled in Syria in more or less familiar and stable circumstances; and the period from 2011 to 2015, which marked the beginning of total change in Syria at all levels and brought with it high hopes for a radical change of the Syrian situation, especially on the economic and political levels, along with instability and transience (displacement, asylum, expulsion); finally, there is the period from 2016 until today, which most of the women characterized as a period of disappointment at both the national and international levels and which began setting the course for the near future with regard to their place of residence and future possibilities: the possibility of attaining stability in their current location, either as a displaced person or a refugee, rhetoric around returning, the clear control of Russia and Iran and the decline of US intervention, rhetoric around reconstruction, the control by the regime of the south of Syria and of Eastern Ghouta, and the expulsion of its people, etc.

#### Common Features of Daily Life (Before 2011):

- The struggles taking place in the women's lives were happening at the individual or familial level, if at all (studies, work, family, emotional life, societal freedoms as they relate to the individual's personal life), along with some struggles, internal and individual, against corruption, harassment and dependency.
- The women were fairly comfortable in their social circles and these circles are fairly stable (family, friends, relatives, university, work); The women make frequent mention of their homes and families; Moreover, their lifestyles are clearly defined.
- The women are familiar with the places in which they live: The geography of these places is known to them and they can describe them in detail; Moreover, they are connected to a great many personal experiences and memories.
- The women's work environments are typical and, to a large extent, familiar socially (studies, teaching, agricultural work, pharmacy, home, private sector).



### Common Features of Daily Life (2011-2015):

"Abu Majid no longer has a salary. We begin doing whatever work we can. I begin heating and curdling milk to sustain us and we do not leave the house, and we tell ourselves it will soon pass. Then the men begin to say that the women should leave, as they fear there will be a battle. I go with my daughters first to Yabroud and later to Lebanon. Of course it broke our hearts to leave. We were hoping for something better and were barely getting by. You cannot clap with one hand alone. I hope that everyone will be reunited."

Umm Majid al-Qasir – Lebanon

- The inability of most of the women to move between places as they previously had, either because of the security situation, fear, sieges in Syria, or because they have sought refuge in new places which were unfamiliar to them and unprotected.
- The hope for positive change in Syrian society may reflect changes on the personal level (freedoms, job opportunities, the end of corruption, and in some cases access to basic rights, etc.).
- The suspension, whether temporary or permanent, among some of the women from studying or sitting for exams due to the security situation and political conditions.
- A changed relationship with matters previously regarded by most of the women as fixed or stable (view of the media, relationship with family, fields of work, etc.).
- Difficulty obtaining basic services (water, electricity, heating, internet, etc.). Moreover, most of the women bear additional burdens (additional work, transportation, governmental processes, searching for missing persons), while at the same time maintaining the basic responsibilities they had before.
- A changed sense of trust vis-à-vis the immediate environment (old friends, new friends) due to a different outlook and attitude towards what is happening, moving to new places and the death, arrest and loss of some friends, etc.).

### Common Features of Daily Life (2016-Present):

- Fatigue – sometimes vocalized, sometimes hidden – due to a lack of clarity about the Syrian situation and the future of the country, and despair vis-à-vis the absence of desired changes (transition of power in Syria, the exit of privately funded armed groups, and the exit of all external parties).



- The disappearance of old relationships, difficulty finding new circles, and a growing sense of loneliness. Most of the women complained of not having similarly-minded people around or at least a comfortable environment, even women in Syria who had not been displaced but where the social fabric around them has changed dramatically as a result of the conflict.
- Increased mental fatigue among all of the women and a lack of outlets for expressing or alleviating this anxiety and fatigue.
- Disappointment among some of the women with regard to political and civil groups. All of the women expressed a sense of disappointment vis-à-vis political groups, while their opinions ranged with regard to civil groups (meaning local and regional organizations involved in civil affairs) between satisfaction and support for some of these groups and accusations of corruption and being out of touch with reality against others.
- Facing severe challenges (forced displacement).
- Fear of the near future and an unwillingness to think about the more distant future among women both inside and outside Syria.

“It may sound strange to say this, but we are afraid of the alliance coming, afraid of Turkey and the Free SYrian Army coming because there will be killing. And at the same time, we are afraid of the regime entering because there will be killings, detentions, and forced conscription. There are a lot of girls in particular who want the regime to return so that they can continue their studies at the universities. There are mothers who want the regime to return so that education will improve and mothers who don’t want it to return because they fear for the young men.”

Reham from Raqqa

## 2.2 Changing Trust Circles:

It was clear during the interviews that the trust circles of most of the women have undergone a radical change. This change is mostly negative because it is characterized by the loss of people or circles and the inability to replace them with circles and relationships that have the same effect as those before.

There were constant indicators – when the women were asked about their trust circles before the year 2011 – expressions such as “my (female) friend, my (male) friend, my dear, my family, my relatives, my sister, my neighbors, meetings, occasions, etc.,” while after 2011, these were replaced by



expressions such as “virtual communication, loss, distance, loneliness and superficial relationships lacking a shared history,” among some of the women.

It appears that the change in trust circles, along with widespread and radical changes on the psychological and personal levels, have given rise to new questions in the last three years, questions about identity and belonging among most of the women, with them voicing the feeling that they did not feel a sense of belonging in their new realities, with all their civil, political and societal features. Most of the women mentioned that they no longer felt a sense of harmony vis-à-vis their old communities, and many of them began asking questions like “Who am I?”, “What do I belong to?”, “What did I want to become?”, and “Who have I become now?”

It was as if the identity of the women before 2011 had been based on questions related to the individual, the family and the place at most, while after 2011, the women began to identify with changes occurring at the collective level. That is to say that most of the women began to connect changes in their personal lives with changes on the political level and to feel, for the first time, a sense of collective belonging that had not existed before. Then, after displacement, migration and the absence of any political solution or a clear future for their individual lives or for Syria in general, this collective affiliation was lost. Each woman turned her attention back to herself and her individual status as a woman and as an individual in the society in which she lived and began to examine her relationship with herself and with her community.

“I have three real (female) friends, but they are in Syria, and I met my fiancée four years ago. There are things I tell my fiancée and other things which I can only tell my girlfriends. It really bothers me not having them nearby. I’ve been here in Germany for a month and when I leave the house I always think I’m going to run into someone I know, but I never do.”

Rasha (from Qamishli – now in Germany)

“When you’re in the city center, you don’t notice the losses. You are losing little by little without feeling it. Currently, I don’t feel secure at all. Everyone I was close to is gone. It took a long time for me to understand that my friends’ house, where I used to go whenever I was tired, is no longer there. I felt compelled to form relationships just so that I wouldn’t feel like I was alone. Life has begun to return, but it’s not like before and I feel a sense of alienation.”

Samar (Damascus)



## 2.3 Changing Gender Roles:

Before talking about the gender roles of the women interviewed, we have to ask about the nature and reasons for this change: There are many indications that the roles of some of the women changed from before 2011 to after. Among most of the women, tasks changed as they became more involved in the outside world, whether through work, keeping up with bureaucratic processes, or even moving between places when they had not traveled previously. There are many reasons for this change, but through the interviews we can focus on the most important:

- The war, which led to a comprehensive change in all relations between people, a change in the economic, security, and community situations. It is a factor which led some of the women to begin working, provide for their families, secure resources, or move from one place to another.
- Changing roles of men: In most of the cases mentioned, the man is either missing (dead, detained, disappeared) or unable to move, as is the case in Lebanon due to the strict laws relating to residency and work. It should be pointed out that the laws apply to both men and women, however the situation is such that women are allowed to move and are able to take advantage of work opportunities. Moreover, there are civil society organizations concerned with the well-being of women, which seem to provide a safe space and a sufficient source of income for some women.
- The refugee situation itself varies depending on the host country, its laws, and its economic, legal, and political status. For example, refugees in Europe have been encouraged to enjoy the benefits of women's rights, but face the pressures of new institutions, a new culture, a new language, and a lack of family support. Moreover, these countries do not take into consideration women's previous experience and they are made to start from zero.
- Militarization within Syria, which in most contexts led to a reduction in freedom of movement for women and gave rise to a worrying security situation.
- The poor economic situation of most women, which prompted many of them to work in different fields (civil society organizations, retail, makeup and jewelry, writing articles, etc.).

This change can neither be described clearly nor can it be evaluated as positive or negative; it is a change related to each woman's personality and circumstances. Among some of the women, it



may have led to increased freedom of movement, freedom to express their opinions, and freedom to make their own decisions, while at the same time being accompanied by a lack of safety, comfort and stability, all of which the women had previously wanted. While some of the developments brought about by this change continue to have a positive effect on some of the women today – especially with regard to their sense of playing a bigger role in their communities – the path which led to this change taking place was not something all of the women desired.

Most of the women still struggle to answer this question: “Are you satisfied with your changed role?” It may be the case that the question itself is not sufficiently sensitive with regard to the general situation and the women’s experiences, and may not consider that the women’s previous circumstances and freedoms were not one and the same, that not all of them suffered from the same social oppression and were forbidden from moving freely and operating in the public sphere. In fact, it may be the case that some of the women actually enjoyed greater personal freedoms before 2011. What we have concluded from these interviews is that change is neither systematic nor collective; rather, it relates to the women’s individual situations and may or may not relate to the surrounding political, economic and societal circumstances.

“I would love it if things were to go back to the way they were. Life was easier before. But at the same time, I want to have my own work, like the work I’m doing now. Before, I used to work only with my husband and never once thought that I could actually do something I loved, and do it on my own.”  
Umm Hassan (from Homs – now in Lebanon)

## 2.4 Changing Laws Related to Women and their Mechanisms of Application:

During the interviews, the women mentioned that, in some areas, some laws relating to women – or the mechanisms through which they were applied – were changed. For example, in predominantly Kurdish areas (under the control of the Syrian Democratic Forces), some of the women reported a change in the laws regarding punishment for and criminalization of violence against women, which had become a punishable offense. They explained that rulings are handed down by a women’s court dealing with women’s affairs (divorce, violence, familial problems, rights, etc.). In Idlib, on the other hand, one of the women mentioned that divorces are handled exclusively by an Islamic Sharia court. In neither case were the women satisfied: In the case of the women’s court, the women found that the mechanisms currently being adopted were not fully developed, while in the second case, the women complained that the court was unjust.

We did not dwell further on this point, but did feel that it was necessary to draw attention to it, and



we believe that it can only be analyzed through an in-depth study of the context of each region and the factors influencing this change.

While some of the women who have moved to Europe are satisfied with the laws concerning their rights and consider them to be a source of support, especially with regard to marriage, divorce and violence, the women do not all feel the same sense of contentment. Some of the women, for example, complain that certain laws in Western European countries are not sufficiently sensitive to the situation of refugee women.

## 2.5 The Impact of Violence and Militarization on the Situation of Women:

We consider the issue of militarization to be the most complex because the meanings and stages of militarization in Syria vary from one region to another, as do the different experiences of women in each stage. However, most of the women agreed that militarization and violence had had a negative impact on all aspects of life, especially on interpersonal relationships, which had grown fragile and lacked trust. Although the women all observed that violence in its various manifestations had had a psychological impact on everyone around them, it did not originate from a single source – the use of weapons in war – rather, the women observed several forms of violence:

- The violence of war (death, injuries, weapons, sounds, bombing, destruction) and the accompanying feelings of fear, terror, anxiety and helplessness.
- Family violence, especially in families where women are opposed to the regime and harbor views which run contrary to those of their parents.
- The violence of public spaces (widespread checkpoints, popular committees, armed factions, difficulty reaching nearby areas).
- The violence of the economic situation, which has resulted in a deterioration of interpersonal relations, forced some women to engage in very difficult work, given rise to a lack of basic necessities and blackmail and exploitation by certain parties capable of providing those materials, etc. Moreover, the economic situation has affected women in particular ways: Many families have stopped sending their daughters to schools and universities, there has been an increase in early marriages, especially to commanders (this is of course related to the security situation, the economic situation, and the restructuring of power), the freedom of movement of women and girls has been restricted (in most areas, even those under the control of the regime), and there has been an increase in sexual harassment in some areas.



“Outside violence, that is to say bombing, is one thing, and societal violence is another. People no longer have any mercy for one another. For example, I might have no water or sugar and go ask someone who has some and he doesn’t give it to me. To me, this is a form of violence. Because he knows that he might die at any moment, but still he won’t share what he has.”

Sarab (from Eastern Ghouta - now in Turkey)

## 2.6 The Concept of Gender Justice:

The women responded in a variety of ways when the concept of justice was brought up. Some considered justice to be the accountability of all parties and the return to people of what is rightfully theirs. Others felt that justice will only be served when everyone experiences the displacement, death, poverty and war from which some have suffered. Some of the women said that justice could only begin with the requisite political will and the support of the international community, while others said that justice could only begin with the return of healthcare services, especially for children with special needs, and the reconstruction of schools and the advancement of education.

Despite the diversity of their views, all of the women felt that the question itself was in some way ridiculous, the reason being their almost complete despair with regard to any of the things they mentioned becoming reality, especially in the near future. All of them were clearly distrustful of international negotiations, political leaders and armed factions.

**It was clear from their reactions that most of the women viewed the reconstruction process in Syria – whether current or future – as “an embodiment of the complete opposite of justice.”**

Even mention of the concept of transitional justice did not elicit any positive reactions. Some of the women were not familiar with the term, and those who were expressed a sense of mistrust vis-à-vis any part of transitional justice. The source of these feelings and thoughts are the repeated disappointments of the past seven years with regard to the approach of the international community to dealing with the Syrian situation, with the women having found that none of the steps taken by states or international bodies have brought about any kind of justice. This is accompanied, of course, by a total despair among the women to see any justice done to the current Syrian regime. No explicit mention was made of gender-based justice, but it was a part of each of the conversations. Most of the women do not view gender-based justice as being separate from justice in general, which has yet to be brought about.

“Peace in Syria is very far away and justice in Syria is an impossibility. For us, peace has been rel-



egated to the world of fantasy and dreams. And justice is further away than peace. In Syria, we have many problems such as ignorance and the dictatorship inside us. Current events have led to increased problems between Arabs and Kurds. Before, when I would see someone from Qamishli, I always enjoyed talking to them and felt that we were similar. But now, I can't even talk to Kurds anymore. Everyone has some political affiliation or ideas."

Reham (Raqqa)

"It's too early to talk about justice and peace. The first thing we need is to rid ourselves of this war. We still suffer from killing, the effects of injuries, and the psychological effects of war, especially since the people in Raqqa have now been living through war for a long period of time."

Samar (Damascus)

"For me, justice means returning to my country with my head high and free of humiliation, returning to live in my house, and seeing those responsible brought to justice. Only then will we stop fearing one another."

Umm Majid (from Homs – now in Lebanon)

## 2.7 The Women's Views on Returning to Syria:

The issue of returning to Syria and the likely scenarios thereof may be one of the most difficult and most sensitive issues for the women. What exactly is meant by return? Does it mark a new beginning and the end of the current phase? Then, who can return and who cannot? Where can one return to and under what conditions? Many questions arose during the discussions around the issue of return, and there was a clear difference of opinion with regard to the situation inside Syria as well as the women's current places of residence.

**Refugee women in Lebanon and Turkey:** Demonstrate their concern and lack of confidence in any local or international decisions ensuring the safety of Syrian men and women returning to Syria. This concern has its roots in real experiences (especially those of some Syrians who returned from Lebanon in 2018). Moreover, some of the women are afraid and refuse to return to new areas ("Who is there? Where will we live? What about our homes?"). There is even fear of returning to the same areas. Who will prevent the Syrian security apparatus from again tearing apart these families, arresting the men, and humiliating and blackmailing the women? Moreover, who are the people who make up the current social structure in those areas? Will we be afraid of them? Will we be able to live with them?



**Women inside Syria:** There is a great deal of confusion among women in Syria around the idea of staying there or leaving. The situation in Syria with all its factors makes the idea of leaving appealing to lead a different life elsewhere, one that will at the very least be more secure. At the same time, the women struggle with the idea of departure and find it difficult, both emotionally, practically (as there are no opportunities to leave Syria legally), financially and, sometimes, physically. In particular, the women focused on the deteriorating economic situation, which affects their daily lives, as well as on the effects of the war, which they feel has not ended, and their constant fear that the fighting might flare up again at any moment.

**Refugee women in Europe:** There is confusion among the women regarding the possibility of returning to Syria, even after a period of time. There is fear regarding the nature of the society to which they will return and what rights they will have there. What will the education system be like for them and their children and what freedoms will be available to them in all areas of life, especially with regard to women? Some of the women also questioned the meaning of the concept of homeland. They have a great desire to return, but will they really feel that they are returning home just because they are Syrians returning to Syria? There is still a system of government in place which they have come out against and laws and customs which would hinder any progress in their lives, along with all the physical, psychological and social devastation that the war has brought. Some of the women mentioned the possibility of returning but said that they would like to become citizens of their host countries as a security measure. Meanwhile, those women who have children said they would hesitate to bring their children back to a place that is unsafe for children for a great variety of reasons.

"Some of the people closest to me – my aunt, for example, left immediately for Turkey. She came back to visit Damascus but she couldn't live there, so she went back to Turkey with its structured laws and rights. She couldn't live in Damascus at all. I think that there are a lot of people who have become acclimated to where they are and can no longer return. Personally, I try not to think about it. What we were living before was difficult but sweet, but now, I don't know what the point of my returning would be. Would I return just for the sake of returning? What would I do there? Maybe I will go back just to see my uncle."

Sarab (from Eastern Ghouta - now in Turkey)



### 3. The Women's Demands and Suggestions:

The women inside Syria called for a quick solution to the deteriorating education and healthcare situation, and for civil and international bodies to work to return security even to areas under the control of the regime. There is a great deal of fear among the women of arbitrary arrest, kidnapping, extortion and harassment. The women suggested that organizations working in the area of civil society should continue to do so and broaden the scope of their operations. Most of the women inside Syria said that their work with women's and feminist organizations provided them with job opportunities and safe spaces, to a certain extent, not to mention the opportunity for personal development in a number of areas. The biggest hope among the women was for the total cessation of the fighting and real steps being taken towards justice and accountability.

The refugee women hoped for a scenario in Syria that is just at all levels, that effective and serious international initiatives be formed – initiatives that can engage in a sensitive and realistic reading of the Syrian situation, especially for women – for Syrian women to be given a strong role in these initiatives, and for their return to be one of dignity and not subject to any conditions, exploitation or extortion. **When they talked about their return, they talked about it as a collective return, that is to say, the return of their families, relatives and friends.**

Most of the women inside Syria also demanded that Syrian organizations outside Syria play an active role in supporting Syrian civil initiatives, including established and newer ones, inside the country, rather than launching new projects based on perceptions that may or may not actually reflect women's demands or needs, or hinder the growth of effective initiatives at home. As for the women in Europe, they called for the development of Syrian civil services in their current countries, through which they would be able to reactivate their abilities and draw on their past experiences, which have, to a certain extent, been lost among the asylum procedures and steps imposed on them in the name of "integrating" them into their new countries.



## 4. Recommendations Based on Initial Research Results:

Our interviews have proven to be an important source of knowledge about the experiences of women and their views. Continuing and completing the interviews will be useful and productive for the research carried out by Women Now at the following levels:

- Our interviews with Syrian women reflect a variety of contexts and subjective and personal experiences along a timeline from 2011 to the present day. Among the main themes mentioned in the research results was the need for a survey and map of the women's movements and the events which accompanied them during that time period, using women's and feminist thought and narration as its basis, and not only rigid maps and sources from politics, the military or traditional media.
- Critical Cartographies of Conflict and Borders Based on Syrian Women's Experiences
- Another essential step for Women Now is to continue the interviews to arrive at a somewhat representative sample of the various experiences of Syrian women, thereby building an archive of women's experiences for a very important historical time period in the Syrian context. Such an archive would be an invaluable resource for the future strategies and projects of the organization, as well as for other Syrian civil organizations, and an important source of knowledge for future field studies and academic research.
- An in-depth analysis of the visions, ideas and aspirations of Syrian women as they pertain to justice and peace in Syria and the issue of return is crucial for the Syrian present and future. This is especially important in light of the start of reconstruction operations built only on political and economic interests, which are not even remotely interested in the demands and rights of Syrian women and the Syrian people in general, or in justice and accountability. We believe that amplifying the voices of Syrian women with regard to these issues and translating what they say into studies or papers for advocacy and mobilization will be one of the main tasks for the coming period. This also serves to support all of our advocacy and lobbying activities and will help us to apply the principles of the feminist economy in Syria in the coming stage.
- In addition to all of the above, we discovered through conducting the interviews that there is a clear need for Syrian women in their various locations to communicate with one another, with the aim of bringing about Syrian feminist solidarity and breaking the existing physical, security and societal boundaries by creating virtual safe spaces in which the various Syrian women can operate. Research such as this will enable the organization's team, with its many contacts with women both inside Syria and in the places where they have sought refuge, to better manage and organize such communication, which works to



strengthen the (somewhat broken) relationships between Syrian women.

- Through monitoring, listening to and analyzing the interviews, we found that Syrian women everywhere are in need of psychological support, listening sessions, and emotional support sessions. Some of the women interviewed asked for them directly, going so far as to view the interviews themselves as a kind of therapy and complaining that there were no circles or people with which they could discuss their feelings, fatigue, fears, and so on. We therefore recommend that psychological support sessions be implemented with participants both inside and outside Syria, run by female experts on the trauma which results from conflict, war and displacement.









Published by: Women Now for Development

9 Villa d'Este - Tour Mantoue 75013 Paris

Not for sale

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April 2019



With the support of WILPF

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR

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