

21st SEPTEMBER: EUROMED FEMINIST INITIATIVE ALONG WITH ITS PARTNERS LAUNCH A PROJECT FUNDED BY AFD TO ADVANCE THE WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY AGENDA IN IRAQ, LEBANON, JORDAN, AND PALESTINE

21st September 2023

To mark the International Day of Peace, the EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) and its partners are launching the project ‘Strengthening Feminist Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) working in the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda in Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine’, funded by the Agence Française de Développement.

The project is jointly led by EFI and its partners in four countries: the **Women Empowerment Organisation (WEO)** in **Iraq**, the **Arab Women’s Organization (AWO)** in **Jordan**, the **Association Najdeh** in **Lebanon** and the **Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD)** in **Palestine**. The project aims to contribute to the effective implementation of the **Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPSA)** in **these countries**.

These CSOs have substantial expertise in combating **Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG)** and advancing the **Women, Peace, and Security Agenda** both within their respective countries and on a regional and international scale. They have demonstrated their expertise through activities such as raising awareness, delivering community-level services, supporting grassroots organizations, and engaging in advocacy at local, national, regional, and international levels. Empowering women to actively participate in peace-making and peacebuilding is the central focus of this project, especially in a region deeply affected by conflicts and occupation that have significant repercussions and oppression impacts on women’s lives.

The project will support, strengthen capacities, and build synergies between nine national-level CSOs and twelve Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) working at the grassroots’ level. All will contribute to the effective implementation of the WPSA and its four pillars: prevention, participation, protection and rehabilitation. Here come a few examples showing how such initiatives will contribute to each pillar in each country:

- 1) **The role of women in conflict prevention.** *“Najdeh (Lebanon) considers that the inclusion of women in formal political processes and decision-making structures is a key to advance WPSA and women’s rights. To prevent violence and conflict, the project will support initiatives which promote a culture of peace in the educational setting as well as in communities, raise awareness on women’s rights and discriminatory practices while engaging men in preventing VAWG. Through this project, Najdeh will showcase women’s essential role in conflict prevention and continue to advocate for the adoption of electoral laws and quotas to increase the percentage of women elected”.*
- 2) **Women's participation in peacebuilding.** *“Considering the context of Palestine, the Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development will utilize WPSA as a tool to increase women’s involvement in peacebuilding, with young women as the main target group of the project as well as working with women members of political parties”. PWWSD will support initiatives which will empower women’s rights defenders in monitoring violations of human rights, highlight the role of young women in peacebuilding and decision-making and expand grassroots involvement in promoting civil peace. PWWSD will also build synergies with the other local coalitions and networks to promote women leadership.”*
- 3) **The protection of the rights of women and girls during and after conflict.** *“The Arab Women’s Organization (Jordan) recognizes the multiple challenges that women and girls face in terms of protection, particularly in Jordanian communities hosting Syrian refugees. In Jordan, the project*

aims to empower and strengthen the capacities of feminist CSOs and women-led CBOs including when it comes to implementing effective response to women's protection needs. For instance, the project will support initiatives that will provide safe spaces for women victims/survivors and enhance access to relevant services. Young women will also be empowered to address economic violence against women”.

4) **Women's specific needs during repatriation, resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration, and post-conflict reconstruction.** “In Iraq, WEO and other CSOs have led advocacy campaigns to support survivors of sexual violence which resulted in the adoption of the “Yazidi Survivors Law” on 1st March 2021 by the Iraqi Parliament. This legislation aims to establish an administrative reparation programme to give effect to the right to reparation. The project will strengthen the continuous engagement of CSOs in advocating for the effective implementation of this law, to ensure survivors/victims can fully exercise their rights. The project will also support initiatives that contribute to women's economic empowerment”.

EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) is a policy platform that provides expertise in the field of equality between women and men and its link with democracy building and citizenship and advocates for the right of peoples of self-determination. <https://www.efi-ife.org/fr/>

The Arab Women Organization of Jordan (AWO) is a women's rights organization established in 1970. Since its inception, it started serving refugee women in the Baqaa Camp for Palestinian refugees, with permanent premises still there. Since 2011, AWO has been involved in serving Syrian refugees (mainly women and girls) in 2 different women's centers in the hosting communities in Irbid and Mafraq governorates. <http://awo.org.jo/en/>

Najdeh is a secular feminist democratic organization that was founded at the beginning of civil war in 1976 and was registered in 1978 with the Lebanese Ministry of Municipalities and Interior as an independent non-governmental association. It works mainly with Palestinian women and girls refugees, and through them, with the wider marginalized communities in Lebanon, especially those living in camps and gatherings. <https://association-najdeh.org/en/>

Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSO) was established in the year 1981 and dedicates efforts to advocate women's rights on the base of being human rights. The main goal of the organization is: “Effective women engagement in the public and private spheres”. PWWSO is a grassroots feminist learning organization that works in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip through six branches. PWWSO operates through three major Programs: Women Empowerment in the Decision-Making Process and WPSA Program, Women Economic Empowerment Program, and Psycho-Social Counselling and Combating GBV Program. <https://pwwsd.org/>

Established in 2004, Women Empowerment Organization (WEO) is a women-led, national non-governmental organization registered in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq devoted to empowering women socially, economically, and politically. WEO works diligently to enhance women's influence, combat all forms of violence against them, and advocate for policy development and reform that supports equality between women and men. <https://weoiraq.org/>

Agence Française de Développement (AFD) implements France's policy on international development and solidarity. Through its financing of NGOs and the public sector, as well as its research and publications, AFD supports and accelerates transitions towards a fairer, more resilient world. It also provides training in sustainable development (at the AFD Campus) and other awareness-raising activities in France. With our partners, we are building shared solutions with and for the people of the Global South. Our teams are at work on more than 4,000 projects in the field, in the French Overseas Departments and Territories, in 115 countries and in regions in crisis. We strive to protect global public goods – promoting a stable climate, biodiversity and peace, as well as gender equality, education and healthcare. In this way, we contribute to the commitment of France and the French people to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Towards a world in common. www.afd.fr/en