

**Purpose:**

Karama's project aimed to provide emergency support to women's civil society organizations in post-revolution Sudan as they worked to ensure gender parity for Sudan's government institutions. It further aimed to help build a strong and effective women's movement representative of Sudan's demographic diversity.

**Activities:**

Karama's goals were to help enable diverse women's civil society organizations from across Sudan to:

- Develop clear objectives and comprehensive strategies that they can implement
- Hold meetings in provinces throughout the country to build constituent support
- Implement strategies for organizing, mobilizing, advocating, and communicating
- Participate in critical national, regional, and international meetings pertaining to the post-revolution transition process
- Build and sustain momentum after media interest wanes and as inevitable challenges grow

Our primary activities for these purposes included:

- Convening women's CSOs and other stakeholders for knowledge exchange, training, and collaborative strategizing
- Providing technical assistance
- Facilitating access to government officials and other influential actors

**Activities planned:**

- Regional consultation where Sudanese women leaders could learn from the recent experiences of their counterparts in Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen
- National consultation for diverse Sudanese women's rights activists to unify and strategize for the path forward
- Grants for women's rights groups in Sudan
- Technical assistance for ongoing guidance for the Sudanese women's movement

Our activity plan was revised due to changes in the context and in response to needs that surfaced through activities. Specifically, to achieve the project's aims, CSOs from across Sudan needed a mechanism for obtaining current, accurate information about peace process developments, women in Eastern Sudan needed capacity to participate in national-level processes, and women from other regions, needed to provide more input into the women's movements priorities.

As a result, we supported national consultations, 2 activities in Eastern Sudan, and a learning and outreach visit. We also provided more technical assistance than expected, particularly for women in Eastern Sudan and for developing the Peace and Security Platform.

During the first national consultation, participants identified an urgent need for ongoing information about peace process developments. There was no formal mechanism for officials to convey information about the process to civil society, leading to significant delays in civil society's ability to engage. The second national consultation therefore launched the Sudan Peace and Security Platform as a means of conveying high level information to stakeholders from throughout Sudan.

The first national consultation also illuminated how women from Eastern Sudan are often marginalized within the national women's movement as well as in national political processes. They

needed support to develop their capacity to work together and elevate their priorities at the national level. The first activity in Eastern Sudan established a set of priorities for women's rights activists in the region. The second was a training to increase their capacity. Without these activities, they would have been unable to participate effectively at the national level.

#### **Partners organization:**

Karama's primary partner for this project was the Al-Ayam Center for Cultural Studies and Development. The Center is a well-established organization with experience in the peace-building field. It has strong connections with peace-building stakeholders in Khartoum and the states outside, with high credibility and respect among partners and the communities.

#### **Concrete outcomes of activities:**

*National Consultation I:* a) Priorities for women's organizations regarding the peace process were established; b) Strategy for meeting the need for timely, accurate information concerning peace process developments was identified; c) Need for capacity building for women's groups in Eastern Sudan was identified.

*National Consultation II:* a) Sudan Peace and Security Platform was launched as an information channel regarding peace process; b) Participants received high level information about current status of process; c) Second Platform meeting was planned.

*Eastern Sudan Consultation:* a) Participants developed a position paper for the peace talks, focused on the Eastern Process, including analysis and specific recommendations; b) Participants from across Eastern Sudan identified shared goals, gained understanding of their differences, and developed a strategy for working together to increase participation of women from Eastern Sudan in the peace process.

*Eastern Sudan Training Workshop:* a) The first women's rights network in the eastern region was established – Alliance of Women in East Sudan (AWES) – with young women at the helm; b) Participants gained new skills in network operations, building alliances, and strategic planning to contribute effectively to the peace process and the national women's network.

*Technical assistance:* Examples include a) preliminary discussions with over 30 organizations and political party representatives prior to first national consultation; b) ongoing discussions with national women's rights activists concerning options for adapting to major shifts in context and political dynamics; c) advising young women activists in Eastern Sudan regarding CSO and network operations, movement strategies, and engagement in the peace process; d) ensuring well-run activities with skilled facilitators, appropriate participants, clear agendas, and next steps; e) ensuring diverse demographic representation in activities.

*Facilitating advocacy opportunities:* a) New relationships were formed between women civil society leaders and influential actors including stakeholders from the embassies of Sweden, Canada, Netherlands, and Norway; European Union; UN Women; Sudan's High Council of Peace; Ministry of Labor and Social Development; and the Unit for Combating Violence against Women.

#### **Particular challenges and obstacles faced including political and economic conditions in the country or region that influenced Karama's work:**

The reporting period coincided with multiple health, political, economic, and movement developments that presented challenges. While covid-19 and its effects (including economically) could not have been anticipated, the political and movement developments followed common post-revolution patterns.

*Health:* The covid-19 pandemic first resulted in curfews then other restrictions lasting about four months. This limited community activities and meetings for more than 10 participants. Lack of access to adequate technology limited capacity to work remotely.

*Economy:* Inflation reduced the reach of the funds, constraining the ability to travel and conduct advocacy.

*Politics:* Post-revolution political divisions led to realignments that reduced the number of movement allies in the government and political parties.

*Movement:* Political divisions and realignments were also reflected within the movement. For example, some political parties have rejected the peace agreement because of the role of the army/militias. This extended to some in the women's movement, creating conflict between those who reject the legitimacy of the agreement and those who accept its legitimacy but want to influence it.

### **Description of the outcomes of the project:**

Overall, this project strengthened the capacity of Sudan's women's movement to: advocate for women's rights and participation in the peace process, build local constituencies for women's rights and participation, and represent the country's diversity. It also increased the sustainability of the women's movement through developing the leadership of young women, a new movement network in marginalized region of Sudan, a new channel for accurate, high-level information on peace process, and new relationships for actors within Sudan.

- Establishing a new women's rights network in eastern Sudan led by young women activists resulted in:
  - New capacity of young women leaders in that region to organize and to design and implement an effective advocacy strategy
  - New influence at the national level for women from a marginalized region of the country
- Convening a national consultation for women's civil society organizations from across Sudan along with other stakeholders resulted in:
  - New strategies to increase women civil society leaders' influence on the peace process
  - New links between women civil society leaders and decision-makers and new advocacy opportunities for them
- Initiating a Peace and Security Platform resulted in:
  - New pathways for high-level information about the current status of the peace process to reach diverse stakeholders across Sudan
  - New capacity to implement targeted advocacy efforts to influence the peace process
- Linking civil society to government officials resulted in:
  - New opportunities for women civil society leaders to convey local priorities to government officials
  - New opportunities for collaboration between women civil society leaders and government officials