

# WINNET

ARMENIA



**WINNET Armenia**’ Network of Women Resource Centers was established by Syunik Women’s Resource Centers’ Network (SWRCN) in 2014.

**The Mission of WINNET Armenia** is to promote women’s role and competitiveness in the social, economic, and political spheres at the national, regional and local levels.

In 2008, Meghri Women’s Resource Center NGO, Kapan Women’s Resource Center NGO and Goris Women’s Development “Resource Center” Foundation were founded by local women in the regions and OSCE Office in Yerevan, in order to facilitate economic and political empowerment of women in the Syunik region. In 2014, SWRCN became a part of **WINNET Europe** and was renamed, “**WINNET Armenia**” Network of Women Resource Centers.

Starting from 2014, **WINNET Armenia** is developing women resource centers’ in six different towns within the regions, with goals of growing an even larger network and later expanding throughout Armenia. SWRCN established new WRCs’ in Sisian, Ijevan and Yeghegnadzor. Currently, **WINNET Armenia** has six member organizations in Goris, Kapan, Meghri, Sisian, Yeghenadzor, and Ijevan towns. The network expansion activities of **WINNET Armenia** have been supported by OSCE in Yerevan and European Endowment for Democracy fund. However, funding is still limited and **WINNET Armenia** is searching for network expansion and developmental funds.



*European Association of Resource Centers for Women (WINNET) is an organization for resource centers to promote women’s potential and their part in a sustainable development of society. The organization spread out widely first in Sweden and later in Europe, thanks to the support of the European Union who has allocated specific funding to promote their development. In this work, the resource center for women can be utilized as a system of innovation for regional growth, jobs and development. WINNET Europe has been formed and developed since 2006 and it has 11 EU member countries and continues to grow. Armenia was the first non EU member country that joined the network since 2014.*

## ***WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY***

In Armenia, women participation in the political and economic sphere is at a very low level. Practical actions are not taken to promote and support women political participation, especially in the local levels. Women make up more than half of the population in Armenia, but are underrepresented in the local government. Furthermore, issues related to women are not included in community development projects.

During the 2008-2009 local self-government elections, the number of female candidates nominated and elected as council members were the lowest in the Syunik region. However due to the Syunik Women's Resource Centers Network, it increased the participation of women at the local level resulting in even higher nominated candidates in 2012 -2013.

The following are SWRCNs most relevant democratization projects:

- **Women's Political Empowerment at the Local Level** focused on increasing the level of political activity and participation of women in the 2013 local elections in 6 urban and 14 rural communities in the Syunik and Vayots Dzor regions. As a result, 27 out of 38 women (68.8%) were elected head of their community and/or council members. These elected women have furthered our goals of network and collaboration.



- **Leadership Development in Syunik Region** focused on young women's capacity building, leadership development, and increasing their activity in the political, economic, and social spheres. This initiative has enabled over 200 women to develop their skills and gain employment. This resulted in them finding competitive job opportunities. Furthermore, more than 150 young leaders through SWRCN's initiative have increased their political awareness and involvement in electoral processes.



- **Young Citizen Journalists in Action** promoted open, free media in Syunik Region. As a result, two alternative media platforms has been created in Syunik Region: "Sharavigh" Young Journalists Club <http://sharavigh.blogspot.com> in Goris and "Meghri News" <http://meghrinews.com/>. Members of the clubs are active young people who are aware of current events and strive to solve community problems. The clubs' blogs act as online platforms in which young journalists give voice to various topics of public importance. The clubs also partnered with various TV channels and materials prepared by the clubs were broadcasted by regional and national television stations.