

## Hope amidst the darkness: the 4th anniversary of the Syrian crisis

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During the last few months I traveled extensively throughout the Syria region, an experience that has profoundly affected me on different levels.

I had the unique opportunity to meet with CARE partners in action in Syria. It was an experience to remember. During our travels together, CARE's partners explained in detail how they work. I was impressed with their story, their commitment, and their emphasis on the position of women in the programs they are implementing. While travelling, it struck me even more how critically important women are for the future of Syria.

My trip into the heart of the darkness gave me the opportunity to observe that even with four years of continuous conflict and the immense suffering of the population who remain in Syria, there is still hope. This is where CARE can play a crucial role as after four years of violence, and the negative impact on livelihoods, water, sanitation, and basic protection, CARE and other agencies must grow more active, working more closely with partners to increase their activities, and improving the day to day lives of all Syrians; especially women, boys and girls.

On my last visit, in a village near an area of active conflict and after a seven hour drive, an old man told me that he was living in a small house crowded with 24 people. Unfortunately, no humanitarian actors were working in the area - except CARE partners. At that precise moment, I felt that our CARE team and partners are making a significant difference as we reach the most vulnerable displaced Syrians, and refugees, too, often in remote areas.

I'm proud that after four years, even as the situation becomes more complex, CARE continues its operations, scaling up its work in many areas inside Syria and across the region. The needs are so enormous and the numbers of people, especially women, who suffer, too high, that all we think about is increasing our work and improving the quality of our intervention. This is our humanitarian imperative, because as it stands, we, all of us, are reaching too small a portion of the population in need.

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