



Strategic Plan  
**Dorcas**  
*Syria*

Building recovery through local strength **2026-2030**

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## Publishing information

**Dorcas Syria Strategic Plan**  
Published November 2025

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([thegoldenthread.nl](http://thegoldenthread.nl))

**Design:** Paper & Pages  
([paperandpages.nl](http://paperandpages.nl))

**Photographs:** Dorcas

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This public version of the Dorcas Syria  
Strategic Plan 2026-2030 is a concise version  
of the internal document.

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# Pathways to recovery and dignity

## Dorcas Syria in 2030

By 2030, Dorcas Syria will be a trusted leader in humanitarian response and early recovery, recognised for its expertise in protection, mental health, and livelihoods, and as a pioneer in climate adaptation approaches. We will bridge immediate relief with sustainable development solutions as we operate across priority governorates through community-driven programming. Our balanced

partnership model will empower Syrian civil society while maintaining international connections. As a nationally registered organisation with deep local roots, Dorcas Syria will champion the voices of communities in vulnerable situations through evidence-based interventions and strategic advocacy. We will be the partner of choice for quality humanitarian action, building resilient communities where people live with safety, dignity, and renewed hope.

## Foreword

Syria faces unprecedented instability. Over 6.8 million people are internally displaced, and more than 16 million require humanitarian assistance. The challenges are immense: escalating sectarian violence, economic collapse, destroyed infrastructure, and the systematic persecution of communities in vulnerable situations, particularly religious and ethnic minorities.

Yet amid this crisis, we see remarkable resilience. Communities are determined to rebuild. Families are returning home. People are seeking pathways to recovery and dignity.

Dorcas has maintained continuous operations in Syria since 2011, working through multiple phases of conflict to support the most vulnerable. This strategic plan for 2026-2030 reflects our commitment to coming alongside Syrian communities during their most challenging period, while laying the foundations for lasting recovery.

Our approach combines immediate humanitarian relief with longer-term development programming. Through community centres across multiple governorates, we provide protection services, psychosocial support, livelihood opportunities and essential assistance.

We prioritise the safety and well-being of internally displaced persons, returnees and conflict-affected families, with a particular focus on women, children, and persecuted minorities.

This strategy embraces genuine partnership. We are progressively increasing implementation through local organisations, investing in Syrian expertise, and pursuing national registration to deepen our local roots while maintaining connections to international humanitarian networks. By 2030, we will achieve a balanced partnership with Syrian civil society, ensuring sustainability and local ownership.

Our work is guided by the voices and needs of affected communities. Through evidence-based programming, technical excellence and collaborative advocacy, we aim to support Syria's journey from crisis towards recovery. This strategic plan represents our commitment to walking alongside Syrian people, supporting their resilience, and contributing to a future defined by safety, dignity and hope.

**Najla Chahda**  
Country Director  
Dorcas Syria



# What unifies and guides us

## Our identity

Dorcas is a growing, dynamic and responsive organisation. Much has changed over the years, but our calling to support, our shared values, and our inspiration from Jesus have remained constant. This strong identity defines who we are and guides how we work, shaping an organisational culture rooted in compassion, collaboration, and commitment. As we enter the new strategic period leading up to 2030, consistently living out this identity across all levels and facets of our work is essential to deepen our impact and foster coherence between our offices and shops, enabling us to work together effectively as a united movement.

## Our vision

We believe that every person is equal before God and has been given unique potential by Him. Yet we live in a broken world where people suffer due to poverty, exclusion, climate change and other crises. Still, we see the extraordinary resilience of people. We envision a world in which people unlock their potential and restore their dignity so that people and communities can flourish!

## Our mission

We are called to stand up for people in need. We take action in the face of poverty, exclusion and crisis. We come alongside marginalised people and communities and together create opportunities for them to flourish. This is how we follow Jesus' example.

## Our values

*We are determined, ...*

We act with conviction and do not give up. Where there is need, we take action and get things done. We go the extra mile to make a lasting impact.

*...we act together, ...*

We are a movement that pursues sustainable change. We work alongside people in need and join hands with everyone who shares our mission. Only together can we make a real difference.

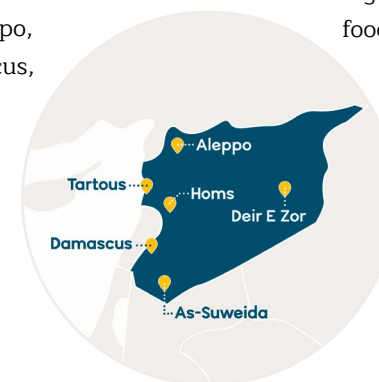
*...out of love.*

We are driven by compassion. We follow Jesus' example - out of love for our neighbour. We stand beside you - whoever you are.

## Where we work

Dorcas Syria operates in several governorates, primarily Aleppo, Rural Damascus, Deir E Zor, Homs, Tartous and As-Suweida. We operate four community centres across the country: two in Aleppo, two in Rural Damascus, one in Deir E Zor, and one in Homs through a partner. These centres serve as safe spaces, providing protection and psychosocial support, including

mental health support, vocational training, education, and livelihood opportunities. We also deliver emergency response initiatives, including the distribution of food and non-food items, medical aid, and shelter assistance to support internally displaced persons, returnees and conflict-affected host communities throughout these regions.



# Syria's complex operating environment

## Economic challenges and poverty

Over 80 per cent of Syria's population struggles to meet basic needs. Extreme inflation has drastically reduced purchasing power, making essential goods and services unaffordable. Unemployment rates remain alarmingly high. Infrastructure destruction has further exacerbated living conditions throughout the country.

## Climate change

Environmental degradation is worsening across Syria. Water shortages, deforestation and soil degradation threaten agricultural production and food security. Years of conflict have destroyed vital energy and sanitation infrastructure, leaving millions without access to clean water. Climate impacts increasingly affect communities in vulnerable situations, particularly in northeast Syria.

## Social barriers and people in vulnerable situations

Protection risks and human rights violations remain widespread due to increasing criminality and continued violence. Women and girls face heightened exposure to gender-based violence. Religious and ethnic minorities experience severe persecution, including killings, kidnappings and property destruction. Ex-detainees and displaced populations require urgent mental health support.

## Donor and funding landscape

Syria is not receiving the necessary funding. Donor fatigue and shifting international priorities threaten sustained support, despite Syria's need for comprehensive international assistance to facilitate recovery.

## Technology

Syria is advancing its digital transformation despite ongoing challenges. National efforts include infrastructure upgrades, digital health, and e-learning initiatives supported by international partnerships. Internet access remains limited, especially in rural areas, and sanctions restrict access to global tech tools.

## Political instability and fragmentation

Syria is in a state of extreme instability with no functional government. The country is fragmented among former regime loyalists, opposition forces, extremist militias, and emerging local authorities competing for regional control, creating unpredictable security conditions and collapsed essential services.

## Mass displacement and returns

An estimated 6.8 million Syrians remain internally displaced, while approximately 5.6 million have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. Over 600,000 have returned, mainly from Lebanon and Turkey. This massive population movement creates complex humanitarian needs for displaced persons, returnees, and host communities alike.

### 03 | Our strategic ambitions and focus

# Nationally rooted yet globally connected

## Strategic ambition

Dorcas Syria's 2026-2030 strategy pursues three interconnected ambitions: sustainable **growth** in reach and resources, enhanced **quality** through evidence-based programming and technical expertise, and strengthened **positioning** as a leading humanitarian

and early recovery actor. These ambitions will guide our transformation into a nationally rooted yet globally connected organisation delivering community-driven interventions across Syria's complex landscape.



## Grow

We will grow our reach to **serve over 100,000 people annually by 2030**. Our portfolio will expand by about 35 per cent. Funding diversification will increase significantly. We will **engage at least seven donor categories**, including institutional donors, UN agencies, and private-sector partners. Our team will strategically expand, adding technical experts in protection, mental health, livelihoods, and climate adaptation. We will progressively **increase local partner implementation**, aiming to have them implement half of our projects by 2030.

## Quality

Quality improvements will centre on strengthened monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning systems. We will conduct regular evaluations and impact studies that generate **actionable recommendations to drive programme adaptations**. Enhanced technical expertise across key sectors, combined with evidence-based approaches and systematic needs assessments, will ensure our interventions remain relevant, effective and responsive to Syria's evolving humanitarian context.

## Position

Dorcas Syria will establish itself as a **trusted leader in protection, mental health and livelihoods**. Active engagement in coordination platforms, strategic donor partnerships and humanitarian networks will amplify our influence. A **robust visibility and communication strategy** will showcase our impact and thought leadership, positioning us as an **effective implementer and policy contributor**.

## Strategic focus

1

### Evidence and impact to have a compelling, evidence-based story

We will gain a better understanding of our impact by continuing to develop evidence-based programmes and building strong track records. Our monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning approach will be integrated at all programme stages, from design through to closure. By 2030, we will conduct six evaluations and impact studies annually, generating actionable recommendations that drive programme adaptations and demonstrate tangible outcomes for communities in vulnerable situations across Syria.

2

### Expertise and innovation to be relevant and strongly present

We will improve programme quality and impact by investing in the development of specialised technical expertise across programmatic themes. By 2030, Dorcas Syria will employ dedicated experts in

**Dorcas Syria can only achieve these ambitions if it excels in five interlinked key areas that form our strategic focus.**

mental health, livelihoods, climate change adaptation, and protection. This expanded technical capacity will enable us to design innovative interventions, integrate cross-cutting themes effectively, and maintain relevance as Syria transitions from emergency response towards early recovery programming.

3

### Fund diversification to increase our donor base

We will increase the use of impact stories and evidence-based track records to become more attractive to funding agencies. By 2030, we will diversify funding across seven donor categories, including institutional donors, UN agencies, bilateral partners, and private-sector contributors. Strategic engagement with key partners will strengthen our portfolio and reduce dependency on single funding streams.

4

### Positioning to be well-known and attractive to supporters and networks

We will strengthen partnerships and diversify funding by positioning Dorcas Syria as a leading partner in humanitarian and development cooperation. Active participation in the Damascus INGO forum and sector working groups will amplify our influence on policy and coordination. By 2030, we will achieve a 60 per cent increase in brand recognition through enhanced communication, strategic visibility, and demonstrated expertise in protection, mental health, and community-driven recovery.

5

### Local power to increase local capacity

Dorcas Syria will pursue national registration as Tabitha Syria while maintaining international affiliation. This move will combine local grounding with global expertise. We will provide local partners with tailored capacity-building, hands-on coaching, and technical support so they can implement more of our programmes. Investment in Syrian staff development will build autonomous operational capabilities, with national team members increasingly assuming senior management roles and specialised technical positions across all programme areas.



## 04 | Our approach

# Four programmatic themes

### How we do things

As a faith-based organisation, Dorcas Syria follows eight principles that enable us to help people and communities flourish:

- We focus on people who are most **marginalised** and believe in their potential.
- We facilitate the **flourishing and well-being** of individuals and communities.
- We implement community-based and **locally led** projects.
- We cooperate with local **community-based** organisations and strengthen their capacities.
- We realise sustained change through **long-term** commitments.
- We connect people and organisations around shared values for **partnerships** with impact.
- We seek to be **impartial** in who we hire, support, or partner with.
- We uphold a high level of **integrity** in all aspects of our work.

These principles guide all our programmes. Dorcas Syria will focus on four key programmatic themes as we work toward 2030.

### Our four themes

Dorcas Syria will apply four programmatic themes to sharpen expertise, strengthen our track record, and define clear organisational positioning. By 2030, we aim to harmonise and standardise these programmes through a lens of inclusion and vulnerability, with community-based programming as our core approach.



Crisis  
Response



Livelihoods and  
Food Security



Protection



Community  
Development





### Crisis Response

We respond to acute and protracted crises through anticipatory action, lifesaving assistance and comprehensive recovery support.

When sectarian violence erupted in Sweida in July 2025, Amina lost her husband and fled with her children amid a citywide lockdown.

Through official coordination and international protection, Dorcas delivered food parcels to families like Amina's, reaching them despite severe risks and restrictions.



### Protection

We protect people vulnerable to poverty, exclusion, crisis and violence through integrated measures, targeted prevention and advocacy for systemic change.

After years of conflict, Samer struggled with depression and anger, unable to communicate with his distant, withdrawn children. He learned about Dorcas through a neighbour and received specialised case management and family counselling. With this, he learned to rebuild trust,

communicate effectively, and support his children's emotional needs.



### Livelihoods and Food Security

We support people in finding sustainable livelihoods, increasing resilience and contributing to community well-being, with particular attention to food security.

In Aleppo, widow Huda struggled to support three children on a cleaner's salary. After learning about the Dorcas food voucher programme at the local community centre, she received essential assistance.

The vouchers enabled her to purchase oil, rice, and lentils, ensuring healthy meals and restoring dignity.



### Community Development

We partner with communities in vulnerable situations through collaborative, asset-based and conflict-sensitive approaches that enhance their capacity, resilience and quality of life.

Amina joined the Dorcas craft workshops in Aleppo, where she learned loom weaving and mosaic making. The sessions provided creative outlets and stress management during difficult times. As her skills developed, Amina gained confidence and began selling crafts, generating income and restoring her sense of purpose.



# Looking after people and the environment

## Our people

Dorcas Syria recognises that retaining excellent staff is essential for delivering quality programming. By 2030, we aim to achieve 85 per cent staff retention through comprehensive human resources strategies. We will invest systematically in staff development, dedicating five per cent of project budgets to capacity strengthening while seeking earmarked funding for training initiatives.

A dedicated human resources officer,

recruited by 2030, will implement staff retention strategies and national staff development programmes to ensure continuity of expertise. We will establish clear pathways for Syrian nationals to assume senior management roles, with targeted mentoring programmes supporting career progression. Annual skills gap analyses and staff competency assessments will guide our training priorities. Technical capacity development will focus on specialised areas including protection,

mental health, livelihoods and climate adaptation, with staff receiving both formal training and hands-on coaching. Our approach emphasises building sustainable national capacity through partnerships with technical organisations and local universities. We will ensure equitable compensation and benchmark salaries. This comprehensive human resources strategy positions Dorcas Syria as an employer of choice for Syrian humanitarian professionals.

## Our capacity

Dorcas Syria will implement a comprehensive capacity-building strategy to achieve greater operational autonomy by 2030. Strategic recruitment will expand our technical expertise through dedicated specialists in mental health, protection, livelihoods, and climate change adaptation, alongside operational support staff in procurement, administration, communication and logistics. A dedicated fundraising officer will lead strategic donor engagement and institutional partnership development, working to diversify our funding base across seven donor categories. This enhanced fundraising capacity will reduce dependency on single funding streams and increase our annual income. We will progressively increase local partner implementation from 30 per cent to 50 per cent by 2030, providing tailored capacity strengthening and hands-on coaching to Syrian civil society organisations. This phased approach

ensures quality maintenance while systematically building sustainable local capacity.

Pursuing national registration as Tabitha Syria, while maintaining our affiliation with Dorcas Aid International, will strengthen our local grounding and increase funding opportunities in line with localisation priorities. By 2030, our highly skilled Syrian team will manage most programme implementation aspects independently, with selective technical collaboration from Dorcas Lebanon only in specialised areas, such as quality assurance, financial oversight and strategic communication.

## Our environment

By 2030, Dorcas Syria will integrate climate change adaptation and environmental sustainability across all programmes. We will promote waste management initiatives that support sustainable community practices while improving sanitation and hygiene. A climate change expert will be recruited by 2028 to lead climate resilience efforts, including drought resilience and climate-smart agriculture initiatives. We will seek climate financing opportunities and strengthen regional collaboration with Dorcas Iraq and Dorcas Egypt to develop multi-year projects that address water shortages, deforestation and soil degradation. Through these efforts, we will contribute to environmental protection and build lasting community resilience.

## Driving change

Between 2026 and 2030, Dorcas Syria will pursue strategic income growth through diversified funding sources and strengthened partnerships. We aim to achieve an annual income of approximately €3.5 million by 2030, with 80 per cent of the funding sourced from external sources across at least seven donor categories.

Our partnership strategy strikes a balance between direct donor engagement and consortium-based approaches. We will directly approach institutional partners for emergency response, protection, food security and livelihoods programming. Simultaneously, we will engage in consortium partnerships for more complex funding mechanisms, participating as co-applicant, local partner or subcontractor alongside experienced international organisations.

Strategic partnerships with UN agencies will form a cornerstone of our funding diversification. Active collaboration with humanitarian coordination platforms will position Dorcas Syria as a preferred implementation partner for joint programming initiatives. Our established relationships with these agencies, combined with demonstrated field expertise, will create pathways to multi-

year funding agreements.

We will strengthen partnerships with local organisations, faith-based actors, and community leaders to enhance the reach and cultural appropriateness of our programming. This collaborative approach not only improves implementation quality but also our attractiveness to donors by prioritising localisation. Our measured partnership model, which progressively shifts from 70 per cent direct implementation to 50 per cent through local partners by 2030, demonstrates our commitment to sustainable capacity development while maintaining the accountability standards that donors require.

Beyond traditional institutional funding, we will cultivate partnerships with private-sector contributors and corporate social responsibility initiatives to tap into significant non-traditional funding streams. Regional collaboration with other Dorcas country offices will unlock climate financing opportunities through joint applications.

Through these interconnected partnership strategies, we will build financial sustainability while amplifying our collective impact across Syria's humanitarian and recovery landscape.

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exclusion and crises. We come alongside  
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