IN BRIEF

RURAL WOMEN AND CLIMATE CHANGE IN JORDAN

A training participant showcases her Hydroponic System installed at home, Mafraq Governorate, January 2016. Photo © UN Women/ACTED

The threat of climate change is growing, affecting in particular those countries most prone to drought and desertification. Jordan recognized this risk and has been taking active measures to combat the effects of climate change. Yet in highly exposed rural and agricultural communities, Jordan is missing out on a strategic partnership with women, who have a significant role to play in addressing climate change, building capacities for adaptation and strengthening local community resilience.

Challenges

Research shows that the most significant issues Jordan will experience due to climate change are related to reduced access to water, directly and negatively impacting public health, agriculture and food security. The water supply is projected to decrease by over 50m^3 per person within the next ten years, making it one of the driest countries in the world by 2022. Rainfall will decrease by 15-60% and air temperature will increase by 1-4° Celsius. These drastic climatic changes will produce a domino effect by reducing agricultural and food production, threatening the survival of one-third of Jordan's biodiversity, exacerbating water scarcity, dissipating ecosystems and watersheds, and causing the decline of economic livelihoods, to name the most severe amongst other critical consequences. In the context of the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis, climate change could undermine efforts of poverty eradication and towards peacebuilding and achievement of sustainable development, turning this challenge into a global issue intersecting gender, age, and geography. Despite Jordan's active role within international negotiations on environmental policies, the debate on climate change in the country remains limited and insufficiently backed by evidence-based research.

KEY INDICATORS

- Jordan ranked 107 on the Worldwide Vulnerability Index 2015, measuring country's exposure and ability to adapt to climate change impacts[3].
- More than 50% of the arable land in Jordan is located in the arid zone (rainfall 250-300mm), highly sensitive to climate change. According to UNDP, only 4% of the land in Jordan is arable and less than 1% is forest[4].
- Jordan ranked 134 in the Global Gender Gap Index 2016[5], and second last in female labor force participation (15%) preceding only Syria (13%).
- Jordan's annual GDP would grow by 5% if women's participation in the labor market reaches 24% according to Jordan Vision 2025 plan.
- In 2011, the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions in Jordan were the energy, transportation and construction sectors (73%), waste and agriculture (15%) and the industrial sector (9%) (WRI CAIT).

Rural Women and Climate Change in Jordan

In rural areas of Jordan, women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men are, particularly because women constitute the majority of the poor and are dependent for their livelihoods on natural resources that are threatened by climate change. In the country, almost 9.1% of female-headed households are food insecure or vulnerable to food security, compared to 5.7% of male-headed families (DoS 2013). Furthermore, women face significant social, economic, and political barriers that negatively affect coping capacities. Women charged with the responsibility to secure water, food, and fuel for cooking and heating face the greatest challenges. When coupled with unequal access to resources, barriers to decision-making processes and limited mobility, women in rural areas are placed in a position wherein they are disproportionately affected by climate change. It is therefore of critical importance for gender-sensitive strategies to be identified and developed to respond to the environmental and humanitarian crises caused by climate change.

Solution: Empowering Women To Become Agents Of Change

In the fight against climate change, the role of women as agents of change is frequently overlooked. Women are often perceived as passive members of households or indirect victims of climate change. However, it is critical to recognise the actual role of women within their communities as educators, practitioners, and influential agents of change. Empowering women to harness their leadership capacities is therefore essential. Women can inform and implement actions and strategies related to water management, energy, agriculture and food security, economic growth and livelihoods, waste management, and policymaking.

In rural communities, empowering women at multiple levels to build both personal and professional skills will support the evolution of a new generation of female champions and advocates of climate change knowledge and resilience. Finally, the increased participation and leadership of women in the labour force, in entrepreneurial activities and in civil society, will enable them to gain power and influence gender and climate change policies and adaptation plans at the local and national level in Jordan.

Photo © UN Women/ACTED

Training session on soilless hydroponic held in the Mafraq Governorate in December 2016.

Context: Jordan Takes The Lead In The Response To Climate Change And Gender Mainstreaming

Over the last years, Jordan has led regional efforts in the response to climate change impacts. For example, the country has been progressing in mainstreaming the Rio conventions12 into national development planning processes, including their gender aspects. In 2009, and 2014, the *Second and Third National Communication reports* were released through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). They highlighted measures of adjustment and reform to be taken in priority sectors most sensitive to climate change, such as agriculture, food security, water and forestry[11]. Jordan has been the first country in MENA (Middle East and North Africa) to focus on mainstreaming gender into its climate change policy.

In the light of this, a study released in 2010 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) demonstrated the strength of women's ability to enact social change utilising their knowledge, skills and capacities, thus informing Jordan's climate change policies. The resulting gender-sensitive *Climate Action Plan* (ccGAP)[6] outlined a framework for integrating a gender perspective in climate change efforts, acknowledging the fundamental role of women in the sectors of water, agriculture, energy, and waste management and the vast contribution that women could make to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

In 2013, the country released its *National Climate Change Policy of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2013-2020)*[7], the first comprehensive national policy for climate change in MENA, reflecting priorities in key environmental and development sectors, highlighting the response to the negative impacts of climate change and proposing sustainable options to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Notably, the national policy recognizes that "women make crucial contributions in agriculture and rural enterprises in drylands as farmers, livestock herders, workers and entrepreneurs, and that negative impacts of climate change will be most felt by them".

Ahead of the Conference of the Parties (COP21) in Paris in December 2015, Jordan shared its *Intended Nationally Determined Contribution* (INDC) report[8]. The document highlighted the country's unconditional objective to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) by 1.5 % and to conditionally decrease GHGs by 12.5% by 2030, pending international aid contribution.

These objectives should be achieved, under the guidance of the *National Climate Change Policy of Jordan,* through the implementation of several projects in key sectors such as water and agriculture. Moreover, complementing its national policy, Jordan released its *National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Desertification (2015-2020),* the *National Biodiversity Strategy and Action (2015-2020), the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (2013-2020), and the National Water Strategy (2016-2025),* which mainstream climate change and highlight the powerful role of women in actions of adaptation to climate change.

In 2014, *Jordan Vision 2025*[9] was released. One of its goals was to "mitigate the negative effects of environmental changes on humans" through the development of a proper legislative framework, public awareness, and investment in the green economy.

In 2015, Jordan endorsed the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)*[10]. This international agreement sets several priorities for action, including strengthening government capacity to manage disaster risk, enhance disaster preparedness, and invest in disaster risk reduction for resilience. The document notably emphasizes the need to tackle climate change adaptation, as one subset of disaster risk reduction.

Finally, in the beginning of 2017, Jordan developed its *Green Growth Economy Plan,* and launched in March the *National Adaptation Plan* (NAP)[8] process, in the framework of the implementation of the Paris Agreement and the country's *Nationally Determined Contribution,* with the objective of integrating adaptation in its planning processes.

Defined within this context as the 'ability of a system to adjust to climate change to reduce its vulnerability,' adaptation is also closely linked to the resilience capacities of communities to observe and anticipate the impacts of climate change. While mitigation and adaptation strategies are complementary to each other in combating climate change effects, this policy brief prioritizes adaptation measures in which rural women's actions have significant leverage in reducing the impact of climate change, specifically in the sectors of agriculture, livestock and water.

Methodology

This policy brief was prepared within the framework of the UN Women project of "Strengthening Women Leadership in Agricultural and National Advocacy in Jordan (2016-2017)," launched in partnership with ACTED with funding from the Government of Japan. This brief is based on a field study on rural women's leadership and climate change, launched during the last quarter of 2016 in cooperation with AWO and the Center for Women Studies of the University of Jordan (CWS). The study targeted women leaders from Irbid, Mafraq, and Amman, with whom 30 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The brief also draws on the results of 10 focus group discussions held with women from prominent Jordanian institutions in Amman involved in climate change, including the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Environment, the Royal Scientific Society, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, and the National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension, amongst others. The survey finally takes into consideration the results of a first set of trainings and capacity-building activities launched in the early stage of the project. This policy brief finally aims to inform the advocacy initiative launched through

the UN Women project on the role of rural women in climate change in Jordan.

The findings of the survey include qualitative data, namely the responses and insights of the participants on the issue of women and climate change. Two-thirds of the respondents were from Irbid and Mafraq - women from both governorates were equally represented - and one-third from Amman. Women from Irbid and Mafraq selected for their participation in the study were active members of their local communities, representing a diverse range of age groups and socio-economic backgrounds and originating from the following areas: for Irbid governorate, Bani Kenanah District, Bani Obaid, Mughayyir, and Irbid City; and for Mafraq governorate, Mughayyir Al-Sarhan Village, Um Al-Jmal, Al- Ba'ej, and Mafraq City. The study targeted women who generally held leadership positions in selected rural areas, including in the agricultural sector, and who could be considered as agents of change within their communities. Women selected in Amman were 'decision-makers', in the sense that they could advocate for women or push forward progressive agendas that targeted women in rural areas through their organizations.

As for the major components of the interviews and focus groups, discussions tackled the issues of knowledge and practices, challenges, and opportunities for rural women regarding climate change; the factors that facilitated or obstructed women from assuming leadership positions and their relative capacity to influence decision-making for climate change response; and the network of supportive or inhibitive laws and policies towards women assuming leadership positions and participating in mitigation and adaptation plans and strategies. This brief does not aim to draw comparisons between such groups of respondents as *women from rural communities* versus *women from Amman*, but rather describe through a gender perspective the diversity of existing beliefs, perceptions and attitudes towards climate change, threats and challenges in terms of adaptation. Based on the outcomes of discussions and interviews, the policy brief will propose several recommendations aimed at strengthening the role of rural women in responding to climate change.

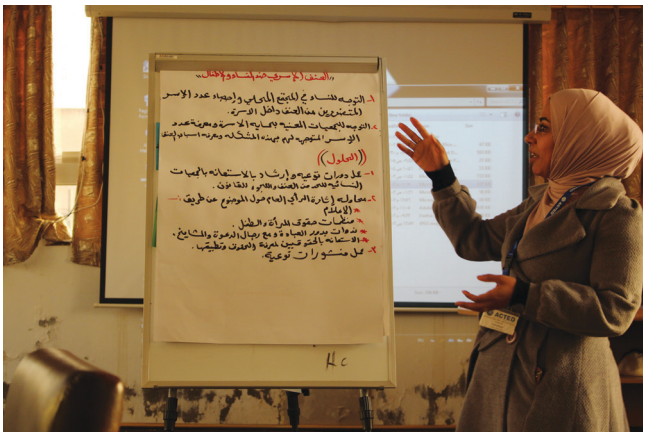

Photo © UN Women/ACTED

Training to promote women's rights and leadership in agriculture organized by UN Women and ACTED in December 2016 in Irbid.

Main Findings

Focus group discussions and interviews with female respondents from Irbid, Mafraq, and Amman produced four main results related to rural women's perceptions of climate change in Jordan. These findings include the following:

- Rural women's existing theoretical knowledge and understanding of climate change and adaptation remain limited, impeding their ability and willingness to act and find long term adaptive solutions (result 1),

- Rural women rely on their existing field experience and coping mechanisms to deal with changing climate conditions, but they are not yet capacitated to build on their traditional knowledge to develop appropriate sustainable adaptation strategies (result 2),

- Rural women consider the lack of awareness raising, networking opportunities and leadership capacities as the main obstacle to their participation in addressing climate change in their communities (result 3),

- Rural women lack a clear vision regarding their role, real or prospective, in decision-making for climate change adaptation, limiting their ability to advance community resilience as potential actors of change (result 4).

Rural Women and Climate Change in Jordan

1. In Jordan, rural women's existing theoretical knowledge and understanding of climate change and adaptation remain limited:

Overall, the study showed that rural women demonstrated a limited knowledge and understanding of climate change at the conceptual and theoretical level. Yet, they could perceive the negative effects of climate change through their field practices and experience. Among those women interviewed in Irbid and Mafraq, 47% were able to describe certain aspects of climate change, relying in most cases on their experience in agriculture in Irbid and in livestock in Mafraq. While only 10% of respondents understood the concept of climate change and its links with social and economic sectors in Jordan, 88% used their diverse lived and field experiences to define the problem by mentioning either climate disruption, mitigation issues, good practices of adaptation, awareness raising initiatives, or the need for advocacy and awareness raising in rural areas. 15% of respondents perceived climate change principally through its harmful impacts on agriculture and animal husbandry, including overgrazing, 20% through mitigation problems including pollution and overuse of non-renewable energies, and 20% through the lens of legislation. Lastly, 40% of respondents described climate change through best practices related to water usage and agricultural adaptation.

In total, 53% of respondents could not immediately demonstrate during interviews any particular knowledge of climate change despite holding leadership skills and positions at the local level. For example Nida[1], an active member of an agricultural association in Irbid Governorate, reported that her knowledge of climate change was limited. Still, she believed that responding to climate change was part of the mandate of her association. She described a successful initiative launched by women who cultivated aromatic herbs on rooftops in a nearby municipality[2], using it as an example to suggest that similar success stories could be replicated as durable solutions and expanded to other communities.

Respondents in Amman demonstrated a good understanding of climate change, at both conceptual and practical levels. More than 60% of respondents reported having participated in workshops or being involved in climate change related program management. Maysoon, one woman interviewed and in charge of a pasture conservation project in rural areas, noted that the knowledge of female beneficiaries on the topic of climate change was limited and that providing awareness raising was essential to empower rural women towards an effective and sustainable protection and conservation of natural resources.

2. Rural women rely on their existing field experience and coping mechanisms to deal with changing climate conditions:

Respondents from Irbid and Mafraq have demonstrated that they possess in-depth practical knowledge about responding to climate disruption, spontaneously linking the issue of climate change with the wealth of experience gained through their fieldwork. Of those women mentioning best practices related to water, agriculture and livestock, half of them associated these practices with the impacts and consequences of climate change. They described a variety of initiatives with which they were familiar, including for instance roof planting, overgrazing prevention techniques, greywater re-use for agriculture and home gardening, green poultry-rearing techniques and other small-scale innovations related to conservation practices and management of natural resources.

Several respondents noted that the introduction of new techniques had to be carefully planned. For example, Ghada, a veterinarian in Mafraq, mentioned that greywater reuse could contribute to increased disease among livestock if not properly managed. In response, she suggested conducting trainings on this issue and on the problem of overgrazing with women involved in rearing livestock, and procuring small seed money from the local private sector to enable these women to launch climate-smart initiatives incorporating these techniques. According to her, no such adaptation programs have been launched so far in her area in this sector of work. Overall, she believed that rural women rely on a strong body of field knowledge and experience yet their expertise remains untapped, whereas it should become the basis for adaptation strategies and policies. Consequently, as long as rural women perceive that

their existing expertise remains unrecognized or undervalued, and is not taken into consideration for the design of wider adaptation programs, they will lack the capacity and incentive to build on this experience to identify and propose long-term solutions to address climate change in their communities.

3. The lack of awareness raising, networking and leadership is perceived by women as the main obstacle to addressing climate change:

The results of the survey suggest that rural women are aware that their techniques and best practices developed in agriculture, livestock and water should be disseminated and replicated amongst communities, passed to the next generation and recognized by local and national stakeholders. 10% of respondents mentioned the essential role of agencies providing agricultural extension services, such as the National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension (NCARE), in the dissemination of good practices. One of the respondents, Sama, mentioned that NCARE started to provide trainings on organic agriculture, which was for her a key topic with significant income-generating potential in her area, but that more coordination was required between farmers and local community-based organizations.

The need to better involve local organizations and civil society actors in climate change response, through awareness raising and community mobilization activities, was mentioned by 25% of respondents from Irbid and Mafraq. Firstly because these initiatives were perceived to be part of the mandate of these organizations, and secondly because the lack of adequate networking and coordination between these actors was perceived as one of the main issues preventing women from obtaining the right information on the subject. Maysoon from Irbid and Ibtihal1 from Amman both believe that Community Based Organisations (CBO) have the capacity to create valuable linkages within communities on the topic of climate change, but better coordination should be established between stakeholders from diverse economic sectors. Respondents reported that several institutions from civil society and public authorities were raising awareness through lectures, training, and capacity-building events, but did not necessarily engage most vulnerable and isolated rural communities.

In Amman, all female respondents reported to be actively engaged in the climate change response by providing trainings or managing projects targeting rural beneficiaries. They highlighted that raising rural women's awareness on conservation techniques and climate change processes were among the most effective ways to strengthen climate-change adaptation processes in Jordan. Alia, who worked for the Ministry of Social Development in Amman, noted that her ministry conducted awareness-raising activities on proper greywater re-use and water harvesting techniques due to the limited knowledge of communities on these issues. Interestingly, when asked if they were actively sharing their experience on climate change with other women, respondents from Amman strongly believed that they should engage in knowledge sharing activities. For their part, women in Irbid and Mafraq thought that they were not fully capacitated to convey information on climate change and best adaption practices, but would rather rely on existing institutions to do so.

10% of respondents mentioned the role of local municipalities and councils in disseminating proper messages in rural areas on climate change, as well as supervising and controlling locally launched climate change adaptation and mitigation programs and initiatives. Finally, 25% of respondents spontaneously mentioned the need to include climate change in the schools and universities curricula, with the objective to raise awareness among young men and women across Jordan. This suggestion is in line with the *National Climate Change Policy of Jordan,* which quotes that the curricula of vocational training and higher education should reflect the needs for climate change education and teaching of environmental concepts.

4. Rural women in Jordan lack a clear vision regarding their role and responsibilities in decision-making for climate change adaptation:

The study demonstrated that rural women did not feel that they possessed a clear vision of how they could directly influence climate change decision-making processes. One

of the underlying reasons is that rural women's existing knowledge and experience, although extensive and diversified, is not positioned within the broader discussion and strategy on climate change and adaptation in Jordan.

When asked whether they thought that women had a role to play in responding to climate change, over 80% of respondents in Irbid and Mafraq did not have any clear opinion on the question, despite being cognizant of the threats of climate change on their livelihoods. Responses were similar concerning the capacity of women, compared to men, to understand climate issues and act accordingly. Respondents from Irbid and Mafraq showed a limited understanding of the overall status of climate change in Jordan. Consequently, rural women interviewed through the survey did not consider themselves playing vital roles in climate-change response processes, despite their invaluable field experience.

Respondents in Amman considered themselves having clear responsibilities for combating climate change in Jordan. Amal, working for a prominent institution involved in gender initiatives in Amman, believe that she, as well as her organization, have an important role to play in climate change adaptation, first by raising awareness in rural communities, and then by promoting projects focusing on conservation practices, related for instance, to water harvesting and planting of drought-resistant crops. Similarly, Dima, an independent expert on local development in Amman, believes that women have an essential role to play in responding to climate change in Jordan, but that the topic should not be discussed only through a gender perspective, as it affects all populations. She also suggested expanding awareness raising in schools and universities.

Moreover, the survey revealed that although women leaders in rural societies succeeded in reaching leadership positions through higher education opportunities, by joining or establishing local charities, by developing networking opportunities or setting up small businesses, they nevertheless held the perception that they were removed from climate change related processes for two main reasons: climate change is not yet considered as a high priority at the local and national levels; and decisions are centralized in Amman and rely on limited local participatory consultation. In response, Alia from Amman argued that climate change should become a national priority in Jordan, but should not be considered as a 'luxury topic of discussion for educated people'.

Overall, based on women's perceptions, the survey revealed an apparent disconnect between rural communities and existing climate change planning processes conducted at the national level. None of the respondents in Irbid and Mafraq knew about institutional or governmental climate change strategies and processes. Respondents from Amman considered themselves contributors to decision making processes as employees of prominent institutions acting on climate change, or through their personal involvement in program management and implementation. Still, these women are conscious that stronger efforts should be made to effectively combat climate change through awareness raising, effective coordination, support to local initiatives, and establishment of inclusive and participatory climate change strategies and action plans.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the survey, a series of recommendations addressed to civil society stakeholders, donors, and authorities were drafted with the objective of strengthening rural women's leadership capacities so that they better engage in adaptive responses to climate change. These key recommendations include the following:

- Enabling a conducive learning environment by building on rural women's existing expertise and ability to communicate to develop a common understanding of key climate change aspects and processes (recommendation 1),

- Promoting sustainable and well-designed gender action plans fostering rural women's capacities to act and make significant achievements in adapting to climate change (recommendation 2),

- Strengthening rural women's voices and leadership capacities to advocate for gender-sensitive strategies and policies of adaptation to climate change (recommendation 3).

Rural Women and Climate Change in Jordan

1. Building on rural women's existing expertise and ability to communicate to develop a common understanding of key climate change processes:

The establishment of an effective knowledge environment on issues of climate change should first contribute to re-position the existing wealth of experience of rural women within the broader discussion on climate adaptation in Jordan, as well as develop positive stakeholder and decision maker perception of the value of this expertise, notably in the sectors of agriculture, livestock and water management. In this context, the empowerment of women through access to information and knowledge resources should then be achieved by:

- **Strengthening rural women's knowledge on key aspects of climate change and adaptation** in Jordan, relying on effective knowledge sharing tools, mechanisms and networks. The establishment of a conducive learning environment of this nature would help create a common understanding of guiding principles on climate change among rural women and female leaders, and subsequently lay ground for sustainable participatory programs to address climate change. In order to stimulate discussions and innovations in knowledge sharing, awareness raising initiatives should rely on interactive gender-sensitive approaches fostering rural women's active participation, as a way of breaking out of their isolation.

  Training and capacity building packages provided to women in rural areas should cover the priority topics of climate change in terms of strategies, policies and actions, allowing these women to acquire a comprehensive understanding of this global issue in Jordan. Amongst others, women should be trained on the legal framework for climate change in Jordan, including the new environmental protection law on the management and control of natural resources.

  In parallel, in a context that was previously marked by relevant capacity development activities being concentrated only at the capital level, the decentralization processes initiated in summer 2017 through local elections in Jordan aim to change this. As a result, local authorities should be supported to reach out to rural women, in order to foster better local planning for environmental protection, including climate change adaptation at governorate and municipal level.

  Finally, the establishment of a conducive learning environment on climate change should rely on evidence-based data relevant to the context of Jordan. This could lead to the launch of a compilation of summary reports on best practices developed by rural women in agricultural and water resource management, food preservation (such as use of aromatic herbs and collection, packaging and storage of plants and seeds), conservation and biodiversity, and forest management.

- **Strengthening rural women's capacities to develop informed opinions, exchange and communicate on new ideas on climate change.** Firstly, Jordanian rural women would benefit from new opportunities to meet, express themselves, think creatively and generate new ideas regarding climate change and adaptation. This process can be harnessed through participatory coaching and mentorship approaches fostering motivation, openness, curiosity, and desire for personal involvement. Jordanian rural women feel particularly concerned when such approaches focus on climate change threats to their livelihoods, and are thus prompted to find and take ownership of new solutions of adaptation to climate change at both the individual and community levels. Secondly, rural women could benefit from a positive communication environment providing fora for a shared vision and common goals in adapting to climate change, and enabling their mobilization and participation in various types of networking opportunities such as trainings, lectures, awareness-raising sessions, roundtables and workshops.

  Furthermore, empowering existing civil society networks - including online community networks - on issues of climate change could create new mechanisms of dissemination of information and best practices, and provide technical support and resources to rural women. Professional networks could also be incited to play a stronger role in the dissemination of information on climate change through agricultural extension service providers, entrepreneurs and private sector companies involved in green technologies.

- **Strengthening the role of community-based organizations and NGOs, including women's organizations**, in conveying key messages and information on climate change adaptation to rural women by: building knowledge and skills of employees and trainers, strengthening capacities to mobilize women and reach out to vulnerable groups and isolated communities, and disseminating standardized tools, resources, and best practices, especially those focusing on gender and climate change. For instance, ACTED's Grassroots Organizational Capacity Assessment (GOCA) toolkit measures and builds upon existing CBOs' organizational and operational capacities in specific fields of interest including gender and climate change.

- **Empowering schools and universities to raise awareness of male and female students on climate change issues** in Jordan, to integrate climate change in curricula and mobilize youth on this topic, in cooperation with local civil society organizations and women leaders. In this context, the establishment of online and offline platforms of exchange and discussion on climate change bringing together students, teachers, parents and local organizations could facilitate mutual dialogue and learning, and stimulate youth-led initiatives within schools, universities and surrounding communities.

2. Fostering Jordanian rural women's capacities to act and make significant progress in adapting to climate change in their communities:

The establishment of effective and well-designed gender-sensitive action plans to address climate change in Jordan could contribute to empower women from rural areas to take concrete adaptive actions. Their capacities to act and make significant progress could be achieved by:

- **Developing new programming, tools, incentives and funding** to improve rural women's livelihoods and income stability through support to climate change innovations and access to the green economy. Firstly, funding for climate adaptation in the sectors of agriculture and water is critical to ensure that rural women in Jordan are better enabled to continue contributing to the food security of their communities. Improving access to funding and financial services - through grants, credit and loans, seed money, opening of bank accounts, savings and other financial services for example - is therefore crucial to achieve inclusive growth and lift financial access barriers that rural women and female entrepreneurs disproportionately face in their daily lives. Rural women could benefit from improved financial inclusion if partnerships are established with financial institutions, if gender-based barriers to the labor market are lifted, and women's business and financial skills are strengthened. This financial inclusion shall finally rely on the establishment of a working environment conducive to the full respect of women's rights, gender equality and equitable access for men and women.

  Secondly, the mobilization of financial resources to address climate change should enable the establishment of a programming framework consistent with local and national adaptation priorities, fostering consultative mechanisms involving civil society and women's organizations. Moreover, rural women should be supported to design and implement efficient initiatives of adaption to climate change, which meet their needs and expectations, rely on and strengthen their existing livelihoods, and promote transparent and effective mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation. In particular, concrete activities and pilot models for mainstreaming gender in sustainable projects (including related to management of land and natural resources, smart agriculture, mitigation of climate change and biodiversity conservation) should be implemented in Jordan.

  Finally, despite the potential that the green economy represents in Jordan, in such sectors as eco-tourism, solar energy, water management or organic agriculture, gender roles are not addressed. In this context, women's potential contributions to social innovation and green enterprises, long been overlooked in Jordan, need to be re-activated so that funding and programs of adaptation contribute to advance the role of women in the green economy.

- **Strengthening Jordan's social and scientific research capacities in the fields of gender and climate change adaptation.** More collaborative applied research on climate change should be conducted in the country in the sectors

of agriculture, livestock and water, involving end users - rural communities and women. These sectors have a strong potential for building innovation and resilience, but their capacities have been strained by the mounting social and economic pressure on rural communities triggered by the Syrian crisis. This trend will only increase with the growing impacts of climate change. By analyzing these impacts, vulnerability and adaptive capacities in these three sectors, research should provide insight into the ways to respond to existing pressure by fostering resilience of rural communities, shifting to proactive models and programs of adaptation, promoting more collaborative governance structures, and re-positioning women's role in decision making and climate change agenda.

Secondly, applied research should help develop a better understanding of potential impacts and consequences of climate change on land resources and environmental health in Jordan. In particular, this research could contribute to evaluating the cost of environmental degradation in Jordan in terms of mortality, loss of income, or use of coping mechanisms adopted by people to protect themselves from environmental risks.

Finally, the involvement of rural women in programming and research about climate change adaptation in Jordan should help determine relevant indicators related to gender and their integration in the monitoring and evaluation systems of national policies, strategies and actions, notably in the sectors of agriculture and livestock, water management, biodiversity and natural resource management.

3. Strengthening rural women's leadership capacities to advocate for gender-sensitive strategies of adaptation to climate change:

Climate change is not just about greenhouse gases, but also about the establishment of a social and economic environment fostering shared and inclusive growth and gender equality. At the frontline of climate effects are the lives and livelihoods of women, especially in rural areas. Rural women have the right to be protected and self-protect from negative impacts of climate change, and live in prosperous communities. Yet, in a country where women are underrepresented in decision-making on climate change, the need for gender-responsive climate change mechanisms and governance is essential to effectively and equitably design, implement, and fund climate solutions. Jordanian rural women advocates should be incited to join forces and develop efficient ways to amplify their voices and bring their messages at the policy level. The role of civil society, women's organizations and media is also critical to convey these messages.

In this context, supporting Jordan's *National Adaptation Plan* (NAP)8, initiated in the beginning of 2017, is a unique opportunity to involve women in local and national decision-making processes. The objective of the NAP is to help the country conduct comprehensive medium- and long-term climate adaptation planning. Its success will rely on the ability of stakeholders and authorities, to foster inclusive and constructive dialogue, coordination and capacity building initiatives for rural women. The process should also enable the launch of a wide consultation with civil society organizations to ensure that rural communities' needs and expectations are taken into consideration. This would also ensure that women are involved in the processes of regional, national and provincial plans for climate change adaptation through legislative and institutional mechanisms or operational activities.

Conclusion

Jordan's active involvement in climate change over the last ten years has led to the establishment of national strategic plans for mitigation and adaptation. At the local level, significant efforts were made to strengthen existing practical knowledge and share good adaptive practices among rural communities. Still, there is a disconnect between global planning and local action plans, between decision makers and rural communities, and mechanisms are not in place for rural women to contribute towards and meaningfully influence strategies and action plans.

Yet, in rural areas of Jordan, women should not just be seen as beneficiaries in need of awareness raising. They are leaders, professional and civil society practitioners, agricultural producers, small entrepreneurs and elected representatives capable of promoting positive change and stronger resilience in their communities. By strengthening their leadership skills,

rural women could help define new strategic adaptation priorities, launch effective actions and programs, coordinate with key stakeholders, participate in 'assessment, monitoring and evaluation', contribute to evidence-based participatory research, and engage in fundraising.

The launch of Jordan's *National Adaptation Plan* is a new opportunity to bridge the gap by empowering women to involve in decision-making, developing gender-inclusive policies and strategies, and fostering the inclusive participation of civil society. Furthermore, Jordan's 2017 agenda for climate change is about to present new opportunities for women advocates to advance women's rights and ensure that policies of adaptation and action plans directly benefit rural communities by fostering peace and inclusive growth. Some of these key milestones comprise Jordan's review of the strategic development goals (SDGs) in the frame of the UN 2030 agenda, the strategic review of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) in the context of the Syrian crisis, the process of implementation of UN Resolution 1325 on 'women, peace, and security' in the country, and Jordan's national framework for decentralization.

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Endnotes

1 Names of study respondents mentioned throughout the Findings section were changed to ensure confidentiality.

2 The abovementioned roof-planting initiative is related to a project launched by ACTED among rural women in Irbid and Mafraq in 2016 with support from FAO and UN Women. This initiative enabled women with no access to agricultural land to use innovative ways to grow herbs and vegetables on rooftops with a reduced amount of water and to improve the nutritive value of the family diet.

3 Available from : http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR16/WEF_Global_Gender_Gap_Report_2016.pdf

4 Available from : http://genderandenvironment.org/resource/jordan-climate-change-gender-action-plan-ccgap-report/

5 Available from : http://www.moenv.gov.jo/AR/PDFs/Climate%20change%20policy_PDF.pdf

6 Available from : http://newsroom.unfccc.int/7368.aspx

7 Available from : http://inform.gov.jo/en-us/By-Date/Report-Details/ArticleId/247/Jordan-2025

8 Available from : http://www.jo.undp.org/content/jordan/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2017/04/05/-middle-east-and-north-african-

9 Available from : http://inform.gov.jo/en-us/By-Date/Report-Details/ArticleId/247/Jordan-2025

10 Available from: http://www.unisdr.org/we/inform/publications/43291

11 Refer to the Nexus approach fostering cross-sectoral integrated approaches achieving water, energy and food security goals while ensuring sustainable use of resources:

12 https://www.water-energy-food.org/about/introduction/

13 Rio conventions on biodiversity, desertification and climate change deriving from the 1992 Earth Summit: https://www.cbd.int/rio/

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Rural Women and Climate Change in Jordan

ABOUT THE PROJECT PARTNERS

UN WOMEN

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality. Refer to the following link for more information *http://www.unwomen.org/en/*

ACTED

ACTED ACT FOR CHANGE INVEST IN POTENTIAL

Founded in 1994, **ACTED** is an INGO with a global headquarters in Paris, France. ACTED is active in 34 countries and implements more than 380 projects a year reaching over 11 million beneficiaries. ACTED has been working in the Middle East and North Africa region since 2003, responding to major emergencies as well as supporting stabilization and development needs throughout the region, following either outbreaks of conflict or more recently the Arab Spring events in 2011. ACTED's approach looks beyond the immediate emergency towards opportunities for longer-term livelihoods reconstruction and sustainable development. In Europe, the annual world forum Convergences, established in partnership with ACTED, highlights key emerging social and economic challenges, including climate change. Contact: *cyril.dupre@acted.org*. Refer to the following link for more information: *www.acted.org*

ARAB WOMEN ORGANIZATION

AWO

The **Arab Women's Organization (AWO)** is a non-profit NGO established in 1970 in Jordan. AWO advocates for the recognition of women's rights as human rights and for the promotion of legal and political reform for positive change. AWO builds partnerships to unite women's efforts in the struggle to end discrimination against women. AWO's vision is the generation and dissemination of knowledge to instigate change in the social roles and the expectations of women and men related to education, politics, economics, and culture. AWO contributes to the strengthening of women's CBOs affiliated with their 'Mosawa Network' in Jordan, and engages with independent civil society organizations in the community-based activities. AWO applies the holistic and participatory Human Rights-Based Approach. Contact: *awo@nets.com.jo*

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