

Proceeding of the Third Regional Coordination
Workshop of GEWAMED Project on

Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions in Water Management for Rural Development

(EU contract INCO-CT-2005-517696)
Tunis, Tunisia, 19-22 May 2008



MAINSTREAMING GENDER DIMENSIONS IN WATER MANAGEMENT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT 19-22 May 2008 - Tunis, Tunisia

**Third Regional Coordination Workshop
of GEWAMED Project
(EU contract INCO-CT-2005-517696)**

Edited by:
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**Third Regional Coordination Workshop of GEWAMED
(Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions into Water Resources
Development and Management in the Mediterranean Region)**

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Foreword

This publication is the third in a series that documents the GEWAMED project covering gender and water management related issues in the Mediterranean region.

This volume documents valuable papers presented at the Third Regional Coordination Workshop of the GEWAMED Project on “Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions in Water Management for Rural Development” held in Tunis (Tunisia) from 12-22 May, 2008.

The aim of the participants attending the workshop was to share their country based experiences in relation to the four main topics covered in the workshop:

1. Law and practice related to women’s land and water inheritance rights in the MENA region;
2. Gender and institutions for rural development (extension services);
3. Gender and national policies for rural development;
4. Gender and capacity building/development for rural development.

By selecting these topics, the partners were given the opportunity to collect pertinent information that could be available in their respective countries. They brought to the workshop concrete examples of their efforts to mainstream the gender dimension into water management for rural development.

For instance, it is clear that the equality of inheritance rights between men and women needs to be addressed, however, inheritance is not the only issue, women who own land may still lack control over it. Furthermore, control over means of production is a source of economic and political power. Where men retain such control by excluding women from their right to inheritance, inequitable inheritance rights perpetuate inequitable economic and political power within communities. This is particularly so in agricultural and rural communities, where land provides the bulk of production.

A review of existing policies and trends finds a significant emphasis on water rights but few examples with explicit gender considerations. Gender mainstreaming is a requirement for all policies and programmes and will help to address gender disparities and to empower women.

Building the capacities of stakeholders for rural development is essential for mainstreaming gender at all levels of the water sectors. Usually, women lack the capacity to fully participate in a meaningful way in the planning and implementation of water programmes. Generally, water sector institutions are dominated by men at management and decision-making levels. A well-directed capacity-building programme targeting women is essential to reinforce their capacities and to sensitize men to the specific and crucial role that women could play.

The workshop was an opportunity to share knowledge, experiences and information about the efforts that are undertaken to mainstreaming gender issues in water management and rural development. We appreciated the time, contributions and enthusiasm so generously shared by those who attended the workshop.

At the same time, we commend the efforts of those who participated in the workshop and are currently taking positive action in mainstreaming gender approaches into their water programmes.

Many thanks to the chairpersons and rapporteurs of the meeting who contributed to the effective conduction and success of the event. Also the contributions of Ms. Ilaria Sisto (FAO), Ms. Dora Chimonidou (ARI), Ms. Sana Ben Achour (ATFD), Ms. Rosanna Quagliariello (CIHEAM), Mr. Atef Hamdy (Consultant, MAIB) and the editors of this publication, Ms. Khadouja Mellouli (CAWTAR) and Mr. Yusef Hatira (CAWTAR) are acknowledged with many thanks.

Dr. Soukeina Bouraoui
Executive Director
CAWTAR

INTRODUCTION

The Third Regional Coordination Workshop on Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions in Water Management for Rural Development is one of the key events within the GEWAMED project. This event is the production of the joint efforts of partners, resource persons and all the participants to gather and generate knowledge on an important issue which is also one of the project objectives. In the terminology of the EC (European Commission), this activity constitutes the Work Package Number 4 and its completion represents one of the Project Milestones.

The main objective of the workshop is to promote the mainstreaming of a gender dimension in sustainable rural development related activities where water plays a significant role. The specific objectives of the third regional meeting were the following (a) increasing the knowledge base of the participants and contribute to the capacity building of the partners but also of other stakeholders (b), enhance cooperation and dialogue at regional and national levels and (c) improve the coordination and collaboration in the implementation of the GEWAMED project activities. The Workshop was attended by nearly 38 participants, including all the project partners, except two that were unable to attend due to unexpected circumstances. The opening session was attended by representatives of the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources, the President of ARMEDD (Associations du Réseau Méditerranéen pour le Développement Durable) and Adviser to the Prime Minister, universities, scholars, NGOs and staff of the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), which, in addition to being one of the project partners, has strongly supported the Workshop. The GEWAMED partners are fully aware of the importance of involving decision-makers in order to raise their awareness on gender issues and to build effective communication channels to succeed in ensuring the development of effective strategies and policies. The Workshop was organized into 4 main sessions:

1. Law and practice related to women's inheritance land and water rights in the MENA region;
2. Gender and institutions for rural development (extension services);
3. Gender and national policies for rural development;
4. Gender and capacity building/development for rural development.

During the workshop a field visit was organised to share the experiences of rural women and their commitment to change their lives and those of their communities. Two Agriculture Development Associations (Groupement de Développement Agricole) of Oued Sbahiya and Jradou in Zaghuan were visited.

Despite the intensive working sessions that required long working days, all the participants were very committed in reaching the objectives of the workshop. This document contains the papers presented during the four sessions and annexes with the agenda of the meeting and the list of participants.

Papers presented during the working sessions related to Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions in Water Management for Rural Development were pertinent to the main theme at hand.

Some of the participating stakeholders have undertaken specific studies at field level on issues pertaining to law and practice related to women's inheritance; the role of institutions for rural development and some have presented interesting national programmes for gender and capacity building/development for rural development.

This publication is largely intended to contribute to disseminating the project knowledge and results, which constitutes an important objective of the GEWAMED project.

Khadouja Mellouli
Program Coordinator
CAWTAR

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
EMPA	Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument
EOWEL	Enhancing the Opportunities for Women in Economic Life
FEMIP	Facility for Euro-Mediterranean Investment and Partnership
IMAP/UNEP	Mediterranean Action Plan / United Nations Environment Programme
MDGs	Mediterranean Development Goals
MPCs	Mediterranean Partner Countries
MSSD	Mediterranean Strategy for Sustainable Development
NIPs	National Indicative Programmes
NSSD	National Strategies for Sustainable Development
RWEL	Role of Women in Economic Life
SIA EMFTA	Sustainability Impact Assessment of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises

LAW AND PRACTICE RELATED TO WOMEN'S INHERITANCE LAND AND WATER RIGHTS IN THE MENA REGION

WOMEN'S INHERITANCE RIGHTS IN ARAB REGION

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Abstract :

There is a double discrimination in Muslim Law. A gender-based discrimination and a religion based one. Moreover, socio-cultural, legal and economic factors constitute blockages to gender equality, and to the property of assets, including of land and resources available on the ground, mainly water resources. This article deals with the issue of equality from a legal perspective. It will examine the Law in terms of succession rights and equality while demonstrating gender and religion based discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

The Muslim Law is a discriminatory law. It contains a double discrimination feature acknowledged by all. The first discrimination is based on gender (men/women) while the second is based on religion. Consequently, the Law of Succession in the Arab region is subject to the same discrimination or masculinity privilege and to the prevailing "Islam" religion privilege. This general characteristic underlines the issue we are gathered for today in this workshop, which is Gender and Inheritance, representing a way to have access to wealth, heritage, and the circulation of assets between people. We note that there are socio-cultural, legal and economic factors hampering access to equality, property of assets, including land as well as resources available on the ground, mainly water resources. Studies conducted by the United Nations, CAWTAR and other institutions, have demonstrated that the Law of Succession is based on inequality between men and women, a factor aggravating the feminization of poverty, as women and men do not start their lives with the same opportunities. The same studies also revealed that when women encounter a difficulty in the course of their lives (divorce, death or illness of their fathers, husbands, etc...), they become threatened by poverty and hence become socially and economically fragile, which is a direct consequence of the discriminatory Law of Succession... All these factors are interrelated, including for instance the issues of housing, rent, child custody, etc... when women's lives can dramatically change.

LAW, SUCCESSION DOMAIN AND EQUALITY: GENDER-BASED SUCCESSION

Why the law? Law is important in society. It is not simply a set of dry techniques but rather a vehicle that conveys representations and ideologies, and then, it is a "Doer". The Law imposes the Shall Be and does not talk about reality simply to describe it but to act upon it. The Law can be a vehicle of equality values as it may be an instrument to sustain inequalities within a given society.

It is not a coincidence if women associations' claims focus on legal issues, not because they want to practice legal techniques, but because they are aware of the central role played by legal rules in modern society, and that it is only through Law that one can change ancestral practices and resist discriminatory socio-cultural habits.

The succession system is a discriminatory system throughout the countries in the Arab region, regardless of legislative developments and diversity in national level situations. One element that everyone agreed upon is the inherent discrimination towards women in the succession domain. Discrimination is based on the fact that the Succession Law finds its roots in holy texts considered to be untouchable. In fact, it is explicitly mentioned in the Koran that: "As for your children, God tells you to give boys twice as much as girls ..." (Women Surat 11). " للرجل مثل حظ الأنثيين ". This means that men enjoy twice as much as women do. It is clear that at the time of revelation, the notion of equality did not even consider the human gender. We know that equality is a modern concept, breaking with traditional and medieval societies. This notion of equality was not on the list of priorities in any civilization in history, be it in the Roman, the Carthaginian, or the Persian civilizations. No civilization could at the time of its revelation think of the concept of equality, and this sacred succession system represented the base for the design of modern legislations.

The States of the Arab region, erected on modern patterns, are nation states with positive legal systems, which have all reproduced, at various degrees, this double-share principle to the profit of men compared to women within the same family. Arab States have extended discrimination in their positive legislation. In fact, at the time of independence and during the establishment of nation states, while holding the monopoly of designing legislations and rules, the Muslim Law was codified in the framework of the Personal Status Code. This Code today represents in this region a positive Law which partly or fully produces rules based on the traditional Muslim Law.

We note that some countries have made some changes, as is the case for Tunisia, where renovations, started from 1956, concerning marriage, divorce, children's custody rights, tutorship, etc... We would consider Tunisian Law in this framework as an advanced Law from a legal perspective. Another such case is Morocco, which introduced changes at the level of the family code after the 2004 reform. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the Personal Status Code is a code inside the family, and that succession issues are covered by this Code. Consequently, even if changes were made in terms of family organization, marriage, divorce, custody, tutorship..., not much has changed at the level of the double share principle in terms of succession.

Not to be critical, one must acknowledge that throughout Muslim countries, some "touch-ups" have been made on succession systems, in order to moderate and temper traditional Muslim Legal concepts. For instance, girls have been prevented from inheriting from their parents as their paternal uncle would usurp their rights to inherit from their parents or grandparents, when their fathers would die before their grandfathers did. This situation can no longer be tolerated today, as children are weakened by a simple rule referred to as the "curtain law" which confirms the masculinity privilege, including the paternal line in the succession of parents and thus preventing children, especially girls, of their rights. Most Muslim countries transformed this rule since the early years of independence, such as Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia.

We note that change is possible whenever situations become unbearable, and legislators then find the capacity to intervene, act upon certain situations and transform them in a positive way.

Therefore, succession related inequalities such as masculine privileges that make up the "agnatic parenthood", as so called by legal experts referring to men's connections, represent family connections that are also reflected in succession jurisprudence that may have very harmful consequences on the conditions of women and on the overall situation of families in general.

LAW, SUCCESSION DOMAIN AND EQUALITY: RELIGION BASED DISCRIMINATION

The last privilege is the religious privilege based on a traditional statement which says "No inheritance between two different confessions" "لا إرث بين ملتين", which means that someone married with a non-Muslim partner (man or woman), shall no longer have the right to inheritance.

Consequently, the non-Muslim partner, even if they have spent their life with someone from a different culture and religion, with whom they may have shared everything; and when the latter passes away, the former will be entirely put at a disadvantage through this discriminatory law.

A study in Tunisia was conducted to examine the most dramatic discriminatory situations (men/women) based on disputes brought before Tunisian courts. Discriminatory cases concerning non Muslim women excluded from inheriting from their partners during succession, and children born out of wedlock revealed to be particularly interesting.

The entire succession system is organized on the principle of the "lawful family"; therefore, children born out of wedlock cannot inherit from their parents. Another case that reflects social and cultural resistance has to do with adopted children. The adoption institution, that does not exist in other Muslim

countries, with the exception of Tunisia since 1956, when the Personal Status Code was promulgated, is unfortunately dramatic when we see the number of cases brought before Tunisian courts where adopted children are rejected for the simple reason that they are denied inheritance from their adoptive parents when the latter have biological children. This is yet another evidence of the importance of blood connections compared to other types of relationships.

The traditional Muslim Law has been modified by legal and social practices from the very beginning of the revelation of Islam. Since the creation of Sunnite Islamic law schools, we observed transgression practices of the sacred character of the Law. As an example, we can cite what we call in the Maghreb region as “Habouss” “الحبس” known as “Awqaf” “الأوقاف” in the Middle East, and translated in English by “dead-hand goods”. This refers in fact to a system where material goods are transmitted between generations, while their property holders cannot sell them.

How does this system transgress the Sharia rule or the Law of Succession? This is the case because the founder of this dead-hand (mortmain) institution appointed his paternal assignee for thirteen centuries to enjoy the devolution of goods through the dead-hand system, and which therefore remains in male hands only.

In fact, women in the Muslim Law are invariably heiresses, and their right to succession cannot be denied from a religious or Sharia perspective. However, the system of dead-hand goods could exclude women for centuries from urban real-estate and rural or land property, to an extent that sociologists today explain the reason for which women want to keep their jewellery in order to partly compensate for this shortfall and to hand these down to their daughters when they marry.

Today, practices have changed as when girls succeed in their studies; their mothers offer them jewellery but exclude their daughters in law. Sociological studies have shown that mothers yield their jewellery to their daughters to compensate for a system that has for hundreds of years kept women away from patrimonial assets.

Considerable changes have occurred in Arab countries, the most important of which being the new structure of Muslim families, which have shifted from patriarchal families to marital ones. In Maghreb countries we can find not only marital families but also single-parent families.

Women have been able to gain an extremely important position in the production of family wealth. In fact, women working either in public or private spheres or even at home, earn money. Sociologists have demonstrated that women manage well their goods and greatly contribute to the wealth of their families, not for luxuries, but for tangible assets such as real estate, urban buildings, land or agricultural properties. They also have good strategies in the management of shortfalls.

The last element that I would like to raise in the framework of this workshop is the role of civil society in the field of inheritance, where the equality issue has been integrated by several civil society associations fighting in favour of legal equality.

Today and for many years now, civil society associations in the Arab region have been working on the inheritance issue. In Tunisia for instance, the Tunisian Association of Women Democrats (ATFD) and the Tunisian Women's Association for Research and Development (AFTURD) have devoted five years to the issue of inheritance in Tunisia. Other associations are currently joining this struggle, such as the Democratic Women's Association of Morocco (ADFM) which put the inheritance issue on the table in Morocco.

CONCLUSION

We are witnessing today an extremely interesting situation that is painful but also and at the same time full of contradictions. On one hand, a growing introversion and conservatism, where society is somehow re-plunging into Islamization, often at the expense of women, and on the other hand, a reverse intellectual trend producing studies on the issue of inheritance and contributing to refreshing our way of addressing the issue of inheritance in Muslim countries. This intellectual movement tries to demonstrate how this issue is far from being untouchable. It claims separation between the universe and faith, and between the universe and social regulation in modern societies where legal rules are primordial and where the Rule of Law is claimed as the new condition for modern societies, and also a new cooperation requirement between people as well as between nation states.

INHERITANCE RIGHTS AND WOMEN'S SITUATION IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR IN TUNISIA

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Abstract

Although the Islamic religion and legal texts have provided for women's inheritance rights, real access to this right is not always guaranteed in rural areas, as situations vary according to regions and families. This practice is usually influenced by traditional concepts concerning women: women's non material responsibility, their dependence and the tribal or Achairi concept. Several diversion patterns have been developed to disinherit women: E Habous, El Faraiedh, El Mgharsa, etc. These practices have determined the situation of women in rural areas: less than 14% are landowners at the national level, while few women run farming lands (less than 10%) and most of them work as family maids and farm workers. This study focuses on the analysis of inheritance practices in some Tunisian rural contexts and their impact on the overall conditions of women.

INTRODUCTION

Access to material property bequeathed by parents provides women with honour, subsistence and a dignified life. More specifically, the right of women to own land property may have positive impacts on their situation in rural environments. Studies have shown that women play a crucial role in agricultural development in spite of their very limited access to land (women land owners often represent very small proportions). This very limited access to land is the result of social practices and the weight of traditions; legal texts, complying with the Islamic Sharia'a (Law) in Muslim countries, are often diverted to the profit of male descendents.

This study provides an analysis of inheritance practices in Tunisia and the evaluation of the impact of these practices on the conditions of women in rural areas. It is based on a bibliographical research concerning inheritance rights, and on case studies in different regions to better understand succession practices and their impacts on the conditions of rural women. These studies are based on observations and questionnaires conducted with women and men in various regions throughout Tunisia.

INHERITANCE IN LEGAL TEXTS AND IN PRACTICE

Before the emergence of Islam, Arab women had no rights to inherit from anyone: fathers, husbands or brothers. Ibn Abbas said: "In the past, properties of the deceased were taken over by their sons. Parents (of the deceased) would inherit only what was written in their favour in the will." Later, Allah abrogated everything that he wanted to abrogate. He granted men twice as much as women, the father and mother of the deceased have the right to inherit each one sixth or one third of the deceased's estate. The wife is liable to inherit one fourth or one eighth, while the husband can inherit the half or the quarter" (as reported by Al Boukhari). The place of women in the Arab-Muslim society represented a break in the enforcement of these rules:

- Women's non material obligations;
- The tribal or Achairi concept, where material and human assets are protected by the close family members of the deceased; this applies to children and widows who may be married to a brother in law for example;
- Women's dependence status towards men: father, husband, son, etc.

Some tribes did not accept the new inheritance laws: "By making inheritance a compulsory right for women, the Holy Book... dealt a blow to tribes; these tribal societies, which more or less voluntarily converted to Islam, have done everything to avoid honoring this obligation."

- The Islamic mullahs invented the Waqf legal institution (one Waqf, plural Auqaf), which is a donation made for life by an individual to a public interest, spiritual or charitable cause (Wikipedia, 2007)
- The Waqf constituted a religious base to exclude girls and their descendants from inheritance.

BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

In Tunisia, as in other Muslim countries, the practice of inheritance has often been subject to controversies, fed by the condition of women and the socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, marriage used to be traditional and not based on contracts, referred to as “Oorfi”, which weakened the status of women and placed them into unstable situations, they could be repudiated for any minor reason. As a consequence, it was considered to be more reassuring to leave women’s portions in the hands of their brothers without women directly being able to benefit from this inheritance but just as a right to survival!!

Before independence, different diversion patterns and rules existed in Tunisia:

- **Faraidh** (inheritance obligations): female descendants may not be declared in the Faraidhs and in death statements: this situation was favoured by the absence of civil status registers until the beginning of the 20th century. Everything used to be done through individual notaries and two witnesses selected among close relatives;

- **Deprivation of inheritance rights:** parents had the possibility to confiscate the inheritance right from one or several descendants by means of a simple will made by a notary, due to a lack of satisfaction or to preserve family assets; in this case, girls were usually the victims of this practice.

- **El Habous:** along with the Islamic code, another religion-based institution dealt with inheritance related issues, the institution of the “Habous” allows women to be completely disinherited (BEN SAAD, 2006). The Habous (الحبوس), in Islamic Law, refers to a type of legislation related to real estate property. They may be classified into three categories: public, private or mixed. They are very similar to Waqf (Wikipedia, 2007). The Islamic legislation concerning the Habous is very flexible, which favoured the exclusion of women from inheritance rights. In fact, Besseis (1981) noted that the “main difference between the Habous transmission system and the inheritance system is the possibility to fully or partially exclude women from succession.” However, the Habous has also been a way to grant privileges to girls in some Tunisian families, or to implement equal distribution of shares between girls and boys; this depends on families and their interests. The most pertinent example is the Habous of the Husseinite family (1705-1957, following independence): Ali Bey (1759-1782) reserved a major part of its assets to the girls in the family while excluding boys; for future generations, this Habous led to the enforcement of equality of shares between girls and boys.

- **El Mogharsa** (agricultural development and promotion): Transfer of land against its development and exploitation according to a contract signed between the father and his son, granting the latter half or two thirds of the concerned area;

- **The formal sale:** to male descendents (El Baa wa Chariaa) at symbolic prices. These practices are based on the fact that men acquire a moral right to land, as they often stay with their parents to work the farms, which enables them to take over and hence have easy access to ownership. On the contrary, girls get married very early and leave their families.

AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE

The Tunisian constitution allowed for the settlement of inheritance related issues through sale contracts between parents and children in order to ensure that daughters received an equal share of the family’s heritage. However, sales between parents and children are often made to the profit of male descendents at the expense of female descendents. From the north to the south, and from one family to the other, the enforcement of the inheritance law is still conditioned by several religious and socio-cultural factors. Several situations may then be encountered:

- Distribution according to the legal code between all descendants;
- Distribution according to a sales contract equally between parents and children (rare);
- Distribution according to a sales contract favouring male descendants;
- Transfer of part of or the entire land by means of donation (Hiba) to a privileged descendant, often sons;
- Transfer of parcels of land through Mogharsa to one descendant, often sons.

In several families, mainly in the southern and central regions of Tunisia, women do not have access to inheritance for traditional reasons strongly influenced by the tribal way of life. According to Cherif Marzouki (1988), there exist in practice general inheritance rights, though all depends on regions:

- In Tunisia's cereal growing regions : Men would always take measures to have exclusive rights to use land funds by compensating their wives and daughters with furniture, cattle or money, whose value and importance are well below their real worth and inheritance rights, as clearly shown in transactions concluded after the death of their common writers;
- In other regions (Sahel): when girls marry, they almost always renounce their inheritance rights to the profit of their biological brothers, sometimes even blood relations, but never to uterine siblings (same mother but different father);
- In Tunisia's coastal regions: the joint ownership system cannot be maintained beyond one generation and women's shares are respected, which is a sign of the emergence of the individual property right concept.

Sociologists continue their analysis by stating that: the fact that women willingly give up their inheritance rights to the profit of their brothers, demonstrates that the status of men as superior beings is still operational in spite of changes that society in general and the family in particular had to "undergo".

ANALYSIS OF THE INHERITANCE PERCEPTION

To better clarify the perception of inheritance in rural environments, questionnaires related to inheritance have been sporadically conducted with men and women in the Cap Bon region, the north-eastern part of Tunisia as well as in the centre (Kairouan).

The following table summarizes results of the questionnaire conducted with a sample of 80 individuals of both sexes:

Synthesis Table:

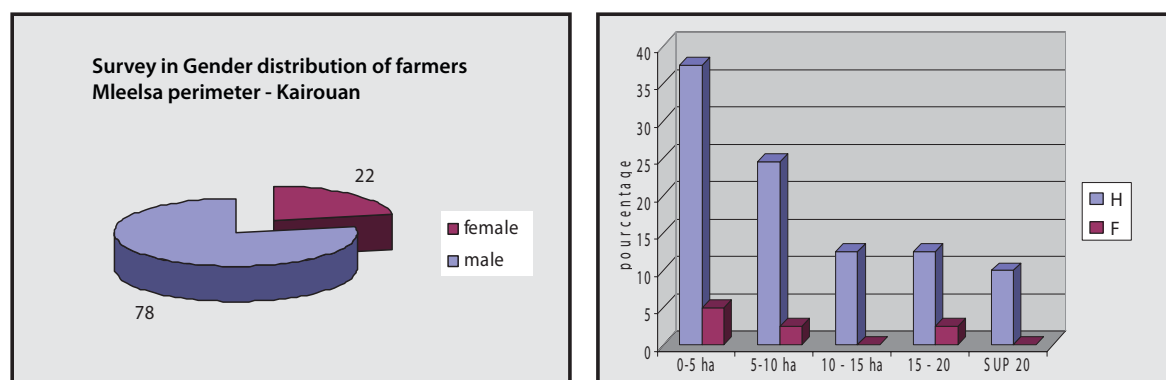
Questions	YES		NO	
	Rate	%	Rate	%
Do you agree with women's inheritance rights?	75/80	93.75	05/80	6,25
Is your inheritance integrated with your husband's?	11/80	13.75	69/80	86.25
Has any in your family been privileged?	21/80	26,25	59/80	73.75
Do you agree with the equal distribution between genders?	18/80	22,5	62/80	77,5

The analysis of this table shows:

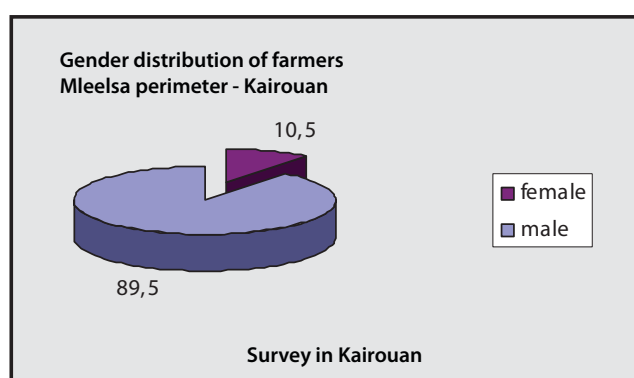
- A small proportion of surveyed individuals do not recognize women's inheritance rights; though this is just a proportion, it reveals a mentality underestimating women's rights in rural areas; in fact women are often considered to be dependants who are at the service of their families, both as daughters and as wives.
- Very often, women do not merge their own inheritance with that of their husbands, which reflects a lack of trust and the fear of losing their property rights.
- Male descendants are often privileged through different means of transmission of rights to land ownership mainly through sales or Mogharsa: nearly one fourth of the surveyed population declared that male members in their families were privileged.
- With the exception of a major segment of women, men are still reluctant with regard to equal inheritance rights between sexes.

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-ACCESS TO INHERITANCE ON THE CONDITIONS OF RURAL WOMEN

It is an obvious fact that women's access to land places conditions on the appropriation of goods and women's strategic decision making. No more than 12% of women own land they exploit themselves and only 2% obtained their properties through inheritance.

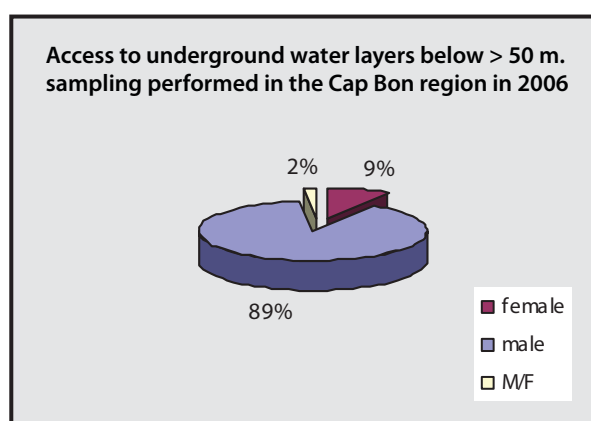


Survey in Cap Bon region



Survey in Kairouan

The poor access to land limits access to water resources. This observation has been proven by analyzing requests for deep well authorizations:



The limited access to production resources (land and water) also limits women's access to agricultural investments. For example, during the 1997-2000 period, the number of projects approved by the Agricultural Investments Promotion Agency to the profit of promoting women reached 775, representing 3.5% of all projects and worth an investment share of 2.5% only of all investments.

The conditions of women in rural areas are hence highly influenced by:

- The number of women running farms is only 9.3% nationwide;
- Women are employed as family maids, seasonal workers and rarely as permanent workers.

Table : Women's conditions in rural areas (ONAGRI, 2006)

Situations	Women	%	Men	%	Total
Farmers	33.000	%6.4	483.000	%93.6	516.000
Permanent workers	4.400	%8.3	48.400	%91.7	52.800
Workers' assistants	610.400	%57.9	444.400	%42.1	1.054.800

Out of 21,297.800 seasonal work days, women covered 38.2%, or 8,134.200 days.

Rural women constitute a labour force reserve offering a more or less abundant work force according to the needs of the crop year. This labour force is particularly employed in intensive production sectors: irrigated arboriculture, market gardening, industrial cultures, etc. for different reasons: it represents a docile labour force that is not demanding, as women accept seasonal jobs and low wages (50% to 70% of wages offered to men), which is in opposition with Tunisian legislation.

CONCLUSION

The high involvement of women in the agricultural sector and in water resources management strongly confirms their growing responsibility and "material" obligations. The argument stating that "women have no material obligation" is then put into question.

While in traditional societies reliance on tribal life systems was necessary to provide greater insurance for all family members, in current societies, where the family is limited to the father, the mother and the children, it is vital to ensure a greater access of women to (land and water) resources to provide security to all family members and to avoid all forms of (modern) slavery.

Finally, in rural areas, the desire to preserve resources is so high that families tend to sacrifice their daughters. In fact, in order to preserve the family's property:

- How many girls have been prevented from marriage?
- How many girls have been bound to marry close cousins?
- How many have endured precarious living conditions after marriage while brothers have led peaceful lives?

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GENDER AND ACCESS TO WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN MOROCCO: CASE STUDY OF OUARZAZATE AND TAROUDANTE REGION

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Abstract

This study features results yielded by the field study conducted by AMSED in two different regions in the south of Morocco. The two regions, Ouarzazate and Taroudant offer socio-cultural characteristics (women status, distinct settings between men and women), and their agro-climatic characteristics (scarcity of resources, mobilization difficulties, recurrent droughts, etc.), as well as a community knowhow in terms of water management. This study describes aspects related to women in the Moroccan rural environment that is traditionally defined according to men, rural women's access to water and water management and information. Finally, the article reports on constraints hindering access of rural women to the management of water resources and their aspirations in terms of participation, access to information and training, as well as to financial and non financial resources.

INTRODUCTION

The GEWAMED project, initiated thanks to a partnership between AMSED and the Bari Mediterranean Agronomical Institute in Italy, globally aims at contributing to the emergence and the constitution of awareness elements about Water on the one hand, and Gender and its relation with this resource on the other.

This study is part of a project titled "Gender and Water: for a better integration of the GENDER dimension in the integrated management of water resources in Morocco" / GEWAMED conducted by AMSED in Morocco. The purpose of this study is also to contribute to better understand the integration of the gender dimension in access to water resources in Morocco and to suggest some actions for further consideration and action. This study focused on the Ouarzazate and Taroudant regions in the south of Morocco due to their socio-cultural characteristics (women status, distinct settings between men and women), and their agro-climatic characteristics (scarcity of resources, mobilization difficulties, recurrent droughts, etc.).

INITIAL HYPOTHESES

In Morocco, a country with a strong water-bound tradition, information concerning gender and access to water has been missing, but we may well consider that during the half of the previous decade there was a growing interest towards the development of knowledge and learning processes in the field of water and access to its management, with a gender based approach.

Relying on this observation and in order to better deal with this issue and understand the subject, the study has tried to answer the following questions:

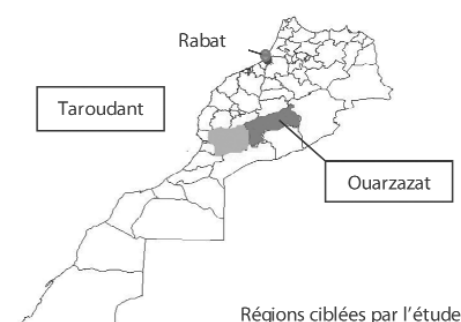
- 1) What is the influence of the gender dimension in the access to and control of water in Morocco?
 - Who has access to and control of water?
 - What community management bodies are in charge of water management?
 - What is women's role in the management and use of this resource?
- 2) Which proposals may help improve access of women to water management?
- 3) What are then the possible bases for the design of a strategic action plan aimed at the real integration and gender in water management?

In Morocco, and as in other developing countries, the relationship between women, land and water is very close. In fact, water represents a recurring element in rural women's various life aspects: they collect water and manage its use at home; they practice irrigation and non irrigation cultures. The same applies for land. Women farmers tend to use and improve traditional cultivation techniques developed over years to protect precious natural resources.

In what follows, we will report results generated by a field study conducted by AMSED in southern Morocco, at the level of two regions in Dades, Ouarzazate and Taroudant, with regard to local characteristics related to the area's climatic and socio-cultural conditions. The study was conducted with the collaboration of women groups, agricultural water users' associations (AUEA) and drinking water users' associations (AUEP) as well as women's associations.

In the rural regions of Ouarzazate and Taroudant in the south of Morocco, women represent more than half the population living in Douars, as men from these regions migrate to other cities within the Kingdom or abroad, which makes women the household's manager. As such, they play a full role in the region's local development and in the economic and social growth of their households; they are also closely related to the development of water resources, particularly irrigation waters, as they are in charge of farming activities, cattle breeding, and hence constitute an important labor force potential with regard to the small size of land parcels and the subsistence type of culture.

The status of women in the Moroccan rural environment is traditionally defined according to men; women shift from their fathers' authority to their husbands' and mainly their mothers in law's authority. They are kept away from the economic and decision making process. This subordinate position is reflected in their exclusion from public life, as women usually devote their lives to socializing with their children, the execution of household activities and some tasks related to water and agriculture.



MOROCCAN WOMEN AND ACCESS TO PROPERTY

The rate of Moroccan women having access to land property is no more than 7% in urban areas and 1% in rural areas. In terms of property size, only 4.4% of farms at the national level are managed by women, holding not more than 2.5% of useful farming areas (SAU) ⁽¹⁾

"Agricultural productivity may increase by 20% if women are granted the same access as men to resources such as land, seeds and fertilizers" ⁽²⁾.

Reasons for this obstacle have to do with cultural factors. While religion and legislation in force recognize women's rights for land property and inheritance, tradition requires that they renounce to their land share to the profit of their brothers, in order to avoid situations where strangers may have access to the family estate and to sons in order to guarantee the line of descent. Access of women to lands is even more limited as women face difficulties to have access to collective lands (property of ethnic communities under the authority of the Ministry of Interior) and mainly state lands (State's private lands including confiscated lands, expropriations, and more particularly recovered lands formerly colonized). Women cannot benefit from possible land distributions made by the State, as when distributions are made, they usually profit men. Interactions between Water and Land further increase this phenomenon. Water rights are not related with land property rights. The right to use water depends on holding lands that can be irrigated and can be awarded only to owners of agricultural funds, which sanctions farmers not holding lands or owning few lands compared to others.

WOMEN IN WATER MANAGEMENT BODIES IN SOUTHERN MOROCCO

Being subordinates, women are easily excluded from processes offering access to water management, but the importance of sustainable development principle and the reinforcement of equity between men and women require the latter's full participation and involvement in order to better express their needs and protect their interest.

In general, the situation of women in this region is characterized by the following elements:

1. She contributes to preserving the family's food safety (preparation, transformation and storage of elementary products) ;
2. She constitutes the bulk of the perimeter's labor force and plays a vital role in subsistence agricultural production (market gardening and cattle breeding);
3. She increasingly contributes to households' revenues by selling products in local markets (market gardening products, milk products, transformed items, handcraft and pottery).

1- 1996 General Agriculture Survey

2- Statement by Ms. Nouzha Skalli, Minister of Social Development, Family and Solidarity, "L'Opinion", on 19/05/2008.

Women's contribution to family economies is hence very important, not reflected on their status within their families and communities.

The field survey highlighted the double comprehension of women's role in the region. Women as right holders of irrigation water, when they play the role of household managers in the absence of their husbands, must look after land work, irrigate parcels and contribute to saving, maintaining and curing irrigation channels by paying their share to AUEA. They do this without being able to attend AUEA's board meetings, as they can rarely attend general assemblies. About ten female members of AUA "Afra Dades" were able to attend the last 2006-2007 general assembly, though in a especially reserved area separate from men's. Women, with the feeling of being inferior, find it difficult to have access to decision making and water management positions (AUEA-AUEP).

Based on the survey's initial analyses, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Access to resources and their use are granted to women but with difference between irrigation and drinking water;
2. the control and management of water resources are still exclusively reserved for men;
3. 80% of all surveyed women (80) know quite well irrigation practices within their perimeter: traditional distribution and sharing of water rights, impact of water on agricultural development;
4. Most women hold an ambiguous vision of agricultural water management systems (AUEA), they do not know well AUEA statute, its operation mode and its constitution objectives;
5. In the framework of the traditional organization (Jemaa), women know well its role, prerogatives and operation;
6. The nature of drinking water operation system, used by women (wells, public taps, individual connections), determines their access to information, adherence or non adherence to community structures (sometimes, individual connections prevent women from having access to information).

Out of the 40 associations covered by this study, only one offers an exception by enabling women to sit at the level of the Association's Board. In this context, women are often excluded from associations in charge of drinking water and irrigation management, preservation and valorizing. By excluding women from management, village communities are seriously disadvantaged, as in more than 50% of these douars, women represent the majority due to men's immigration.

When husbands do immigrate, activities related to irrigation water resources remain men's exclusive prerogative: they have the right to cure irrigation channels, soliciting and receiving information concerning the rehabilitation of channels, participation in AUEA board's activities. They represent women as wives, sisters or simple family relatives.

The social and cultural context, as well as the weight of traditions in these two areas, limit women's access to irrigation water use, and consequently exclude women from management privileges.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND WATER MANAGEMENT

When women are involved in water use, they solicit information pertaining to this resource:

- As users,
- As right holders,
- As community members, present all over the different phases of water mobilization.

As such, women claim their right for information and recognition of their role in terms of water management. Some obstacles facing access to information and water management:

- Weight of customs and traditions ;
- Non recognition of women's rights;
- Women's overloaded daily schedules;
- Lack of information;
- Women's poor instruction level.

It is important to induce target change so that women may reach the status of full members in the community, and some initiatives launched by AUEA do confirm this change. It is important to give some successful examples in Ouarzazate as well as in Taroudant, where AUEA's initiatives can be observed, such as the creation of women associations, as is the case for "Ait Abdun" and "Afra Dades" which encouraged the constitution of women associations: "Shuruk Dades" for the first and "Dades Women" for the second.

These associations aim specifically at promoting and improving women's living conditions. They both cover more than 260 members organized according to legislation in force, with an elected board and well structured administrative and financial structures. Both associations are assisted and supported by the two AUEA, in terms of information, advice and counseling, for the execution of an activity program including:

- Literacy classes ;
- Sensitization sessions related the fight against the pollution of irrigation waters;
- Sewing and embroidery classes;
- Kindergarten management;
- Sensitization sessions for the prevention against some diseases: ocular, leishmaniosis, etc.

WOMEN'S ASPIRATIONS

"We would like to contribute to everything that concerns water management, and we claim our right for information", this is what women members of the Dades Douar Afra in Ouarzazate said. During meetings held with these women, the latter said they were aware their exclusion and they all expressed their need for support and advice to be better empowered in order to integrate water management structures.

These same women identified the following reinforcement topics:

- Water mobilization, use, conservation and valorizing ;
- Creation, organization, and operation of associations,
- Rights and duties of women with regard to the resource as drinking and irrigation water, and its relation with associations in charge of its management (AUEA/AUEP) ;
- Fight against the pollution of irrigation water and the preservation of water quality and hygiene;
- Agricultural techniques, breeding and revenue generating productions, marketing;
- Literacy and schooling of little rural girls.

It is therefore urgent to integrate rural women's needs and aspirations, through clear and precise objectives:

1. Communicate to women and the large public the role of women in food production and the preservation of natural resources ;
2. Reinforce rural women's capacities through awareness campaigns and training sessions on rights and resources management techniques;
3. Create incentive mechanisms to encourage the participation of women in community management structures and entities;
4. Improve rural women's revenues by developing revenue generating activities matching their local know how;
5. Conduct further studies and analyses related to problems preventing women's access to resources in order to provide suitable answers.

CONCLUSION

- Water management is still exclusively reserved for men, both for drinking and irrigation water ;
- Although women play an important role in the mobilization and use of water, their statute still has them as users and not managers;
- Access to the management of water depends on land property, as even women are landlords, men (fathers, brothers, or husbands) confiscate the right to use the land and manage water resources;
- Changes in the current situation are foreseen, offering better involvement for women in the management of their community and water management

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Elaboration of an action plan specific to women and to their relation with water resources (sensitization, training, creation of water management associations, etc..)
- Integration of the Gender dimension in the implementation of Water related projects;
- Implementation of a training/sensitization program on women and their relation with water resources;
- Integration of the gender dimension in the design of budgets related to investment programs pertaining to this domain (Gender budget).

GENDER AND INSTITUTIONS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

THE ROLE OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS TOWARD SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The paper discusses the progress made over the past several years with regards to the involvement and role of women in sustainable development in Jordan. The fertility rate has declined as reflected in the average family size which has dropped from 6.7 to 5.4 persons over the last 25 years. Jordan's constitution guarantees free primary and secondary education for boys and girls. Therefore, the gender differential in education level and literacy rate is rapidly disappearing and access to education at all levels has nearly achieved gender parity.

The Jordanian national strategies call for increasing the role of women's participation in socioeconomic development through training programs. Various NGOs such as the Jordan River Foundation, Noor Al-Hussein Foundation, Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, the General Federation of Jordanian Women, the Business and Professional Women's Club as well as the National Assistance Fund and the National Employment Fund provide training programs for women as well as income-generating projects and loans to enhance their economic independence and participation. Although, women participate in socio-economic development, income generating activities and household activities, there are some constraints hindering women's participation in natural resources management and food production. This is due to the cultural context, lack of technical support, lack of women's organizations in rural areas and weak implementation of participatory approaches.

The number of women who participate in rural development institutions has increased. They represent a high percentage in professional associations composed of engineers, doctors, agronomists.. etc. They are also working in different agencies working in rural development, including private ones. The role of women in the activities of many NGOs dealing with rural development is greater than that of men.

INTRODUCTION

The pressing demand for tangible indicators in human development made the planners realize the important role played by individuals (men and women) in the development process, and the necessity to derive the utmost and the ideal benefits from the human resources. Issues relating to women have topped the priorities of the economic and social plans. A woman's right to total participation in the process of development and equal opportunities between men and women became part of literature and development plans.

Women compose half of society, and as such they are entitled to fully contribute to the development process and to profit from its advantages as well. Based on that, there is a need to detect the different types of predominant gender gaps, and to identify how much they affect the society's development course in order to take the actions required for women's empowerment and equality, not only in terms of burdens and responsibilities, but also in sharing resources and benefits.

Jordan is considered one of the pioneering countries in exerting efforts for improving the situation of the Jordanian woman in all social, economic and political spheres as a fundamental component in comprehensive development. For this purpose, Jordan has established institutional mechanisms and strategies to ensure mainstreaming women into the development process which has lead to tangible achievements in various fields. As a result, women's issue's have accomplished a qualitative leap and progress within the decision making process in the political, economic, social, cultural, health, educational and labor fields.

Despite the fact that the Jordanian constitution emphasizes the principle of equality between the two sexes and the fact that the political environment in Jordan contributes to enhancing women's human rights, there are still some obstacles hindering woman's progress and full equality with men with respect to rights and duties in certain laws, especially those that are related to the labor market and civil status. Since monitoring equality between men and women is a focal point of interest of decision makers and policy planners, and stemming from those tendencies, various countries in the region have acceded to the agreements aiming at the realization of equality between the two sexes.

POPULATION SIZE

The population actually living in Jordan, according to census data, increased from about 0.9 million in 1961 to 2.13 million in 1979, then to 4.14 in 1994, 5.35 million in 2004 and 5.72 million in 2007. Table 1 shows that the increase was higher among males than females. The noticeable increase occurred between 1961 and 1979, where the population more than doubled (137%) in 18 years. This rapid growth in population size was a result of marked differentials in birth and death rates on one hand, and migration flows, particularly forced migration from occupied Palestine in 1984 and the west bank and Gaza Strip in 1967 on the other hand.

Table 1: Number of Population According to the Censuses (1961, 1979, 1994, 2004) and the Estimate Number for 2006 by Sex

Years	Population by Sex		
	Total	Male	Female
1952	0.586	0.302	0.284
1961	0.900	0.469	0.431
1979	2.133	1.115.8	1.017
1994	4.140	2161	1.979
2004	5.350	2.758	2.592
*2006	5.600	2.887	2.713

Source: Department of Statistics, "Statistical Yearbook "2006.

POPULATION SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION

The reciprocal internal and external migration flows, as well as differing levels of regional development, led to substantial disparities regarding the spatial distribution of Jordan's population at both the Governorate and regional levels. The largest proportion of Jordan's population or about two thirds (63%) of the total population lived in the Central Region, which constitutes 17% of the Jordan's total area (the Central Region consists of Amman, Balaqa, Zarqa and Madaba governorates). The North Region, which consists of Irbid, Mafrqa, Jerash and Ajloun governorates, has the second largest proportion of population (about 27%) on almost one-third (1/3) of the kingdom's total area.

Furthermore, the South Region which consists of Karak, Tafeila, Ma'an and Aqaba governorates and forms half of the total area of the kingdom, is the less inhabited region with only 9.5 percent of total Jordan's population.

The high density of the population in the middle region is basically due to the fact that it comprises Amman Governorate (the capital, where about two-fifths (2/5) of the total population live) being an administrative, commercial and economic center, which attracts people, especially males, in search for better job opportunities (Table 2).

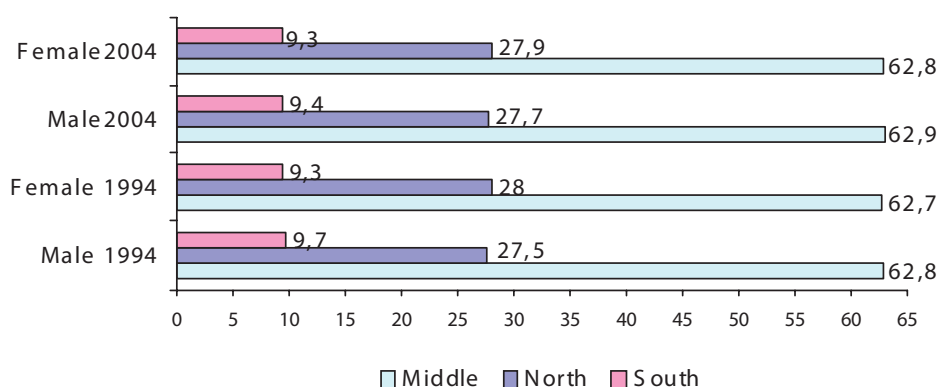
Rural to urban⁽³⁾ migration has been a determining factor in the modification of spatial distribution in Jordan, resulting in the growth of the urban population for several decades. While 51.5 percent of the population lived in rural areas in 1961, the 1994 census figures show that the majority of population nearly 80 percent- were living in urban areas then it increased up to reach 82.6 percent in 2004.

3- The Jordanian definition of urban areas is each locality of 5000 population or more depending on the results of the General Population and Housing Census of 1994 and 2004 rural areas include all localities of less than 5000 population.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Population by Governorate and Sex, 1994 and 2004 Censuses

Governorates	Years and Sex					
	1994			2004		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Amman	38.1	38.1	38.0	38.8	38.7	38.9
Balqa	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	6.7	6.6
Zarqa	15.4	15.4	15.5	14.9	15.0	14.8
Madaba	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.5
Middle Region	62.8	62.8	62.7	62.9	62.9	62.8
Irbid	18.2	18.0	18.4	17.8	17.7	17.9
Mafrq	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.7	4.7	4.7
Jerash	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0
Ajloun	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
North Region	27.8	27.5	28	27.8	27.7	27.9
Karak	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.8	4.0
Tafila	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.5
Ma'an	1.9	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.9
Aqaba	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.3	1.9
South Region	9.4	9.7	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	4.14	2.161	1.979	5.350	2.758	2.592

Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Population by Sex and Region from 1994 and 2004 Censuses (in 000)



Between the two censuses of 1979 and 1994, the urban population grew at an annual rate of 6.4 percent (which was mainly due to the definition used for classifying urban and rural areas), and declined to reach 3 percent between the 1994 census and 2004 census, while the rural population had only a 0.3 percent growth rate between the 1979 census and 1994 census and declined sharply to 0.06 percent during the 1994 census and 2004 census (Table 3).

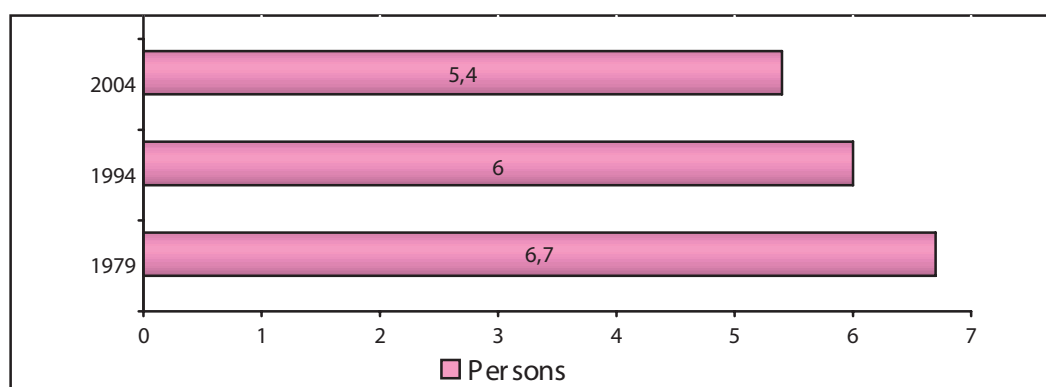
Between the two censuses of 1979 and 1994, the urban population grew at an annual rate of 6.4 percent (which was mainly due to the definition used for classifying urban and rural areas), and declined to reach 3 percent between the 1994 census and 2004 census, while the rural population had only a 0.3 percent growth rate between the 1979 census and 1994 census and declined sharply to 0.06 percent during the 1994 census and 2004 census (Table 3).

Table 3: Population by Sex and Type of Locale from 1979, 1994, and 2004 Censuses.

Years	Sex and Type of Locale					
	Urban			Rural		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1979	1.267	0.665	0.602	0.866	0.451	0.416
1994	3.239	1.688	1.551	0.901	0.473	0.428
2004	4.419	2.275	2.144	0.931	0.483	0.448
2006	4.626	2.381	2.244	0.974	0.505	0.469

AVERAGE SIZE OF HOUSEHOLDS

The decline in the fertility rate prompted a decrease in the rate of the average size of private household from 6.7 persons in 1979 to 5.4 persons in year 2004. It is noticed that there is a variation in family size in both rural and Urban areas especially the large households (more than 7 members) whose rate in rural areas is nearly twice that of urban areas, versus lowered rates of small-sized households in rural areas in comparison with urban areas (Table 4).

Figure 2: Average Households Size, 1979, 1994 and 2004 Censuses

Table 4: Percentage Distribution of Households by Size of Family, 1994 and 2004 Censuses.

No. of Family Members	1994		2004	
	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural
1-4	35.3	33.3	41.3	36.2
5-7	35.7	28.8	41.0	35.6
7+	29.0	37.9	17.7	28.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 5 presents average household size by domains in 1994 and 2004. It appears from the table that the overall average size of household has decreased slightly during the period, from 6.2 in 1994 to 5.4 persons in 2004. This downward trend in the size of household is witnessed in all the domains.

Table 5: Average Household Size by Governorate, 1994 & 2004 Censuses

Governorate	Private Household Size & Year	
	1994	2004
Amman	5.8	5.1
Balqa	6.3	5.6
Zarqa	6.3	5.4
Madaba	6.6	5.7
Irbid	6.4	5.6
Mafrq	6.9	6.2
Jerash	6.6	6.0
Ajloun	6.4	5.8
Karak	6.4	5.7
Tafila	6.4	5.7
Ma'an	6.6	6.0
Aqaba	5.8	5.6
Total	6.2	5.4

Heads of Private Households

A noticeable increase in female-headed households has occurred between 1979, 1994 and 2004 population censuses. The proportion of private households headed by women increased from 8.8 percent in 1979 to 9.6 percent in 1994, then to about 10.5 percent in 2004 (Table 6). The overall increase is mainly due to the dissolution of marriage by divorce or widowhood, as well as to the slight increase in the proportion of one-person female-headed households. The results of these censuses show that rate of female-headed households are approximate in both rural and urban areas.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Households by Sex of Headship and Place of Residence, 1979, 1994 & 2004 Censuses

Sex of Headship	Place of Residence	Years		
		1979	1994	2004
Men	Kingdom	91.2	90.4	89.5
	Urban	90.7	90.1	89.4
	Rural	91.9	91.5	90.2
Women	Kingdom	8.8	9.6	10.5
	Urban	9.3	9.9	10.6
	Rural	8.1	8.5	8.9

Source: Census Population and Household, 1979, 1994, 2004

Table 7 indicates that the percentage of female-headed households in year 2004 census was the highest in Al Tafila Governorate (11.6 per cent). In contrast, the lowest percentage of females headed their households in both censuses was observed in Aqaba Governorate reflecting the clear impact of male migration to the Governorate.

Table 7: Percentage Distribution of Households by Governorate and Sex of Headship, 1994 and 2004 Censuses

Governorate	Sex of Headship & Years			
	1994		2004	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Amman	90.5	9.5	89.2	10.8
Balqa	90.8	9.2	90	10
Zarqa	90.1	9.9	90.1	9.9
Madaba	91.4	8.6	90	10
Irbid	89.9	10.1	89.4	10.6
Mafrq	92.0	8.0	90.5	9.5
Jarash	89.1	10.9	89.7	10.3
Ajloun	89.0	11.0	89.0	11.0
Karak	90.8	9.2	89.4	10.6
Tafila	91.1	8.9	88.4	11.6
Ma'an	91.0	9.0	89.1	10.9
Aqaba	93.4	6.6	93.9	6.1
Total	90.4	9.6	85.5	10.5

Average Size of Private Households

It is noticeable that the women generally head small-sized households, so that the rate of womenheaded households with 1 to 4 members reaches 66.13 while this rate drops to 7.26 when a household is composed of more than 7 members. The same rates for male household-heads amounts to 57.59 and 10.96 successively (Table 8).

Table 8: Percentage Distribution of Households by Sex of Headship and Number of Family Members, 2004

No. of Family Members	Sex of Headship	
	Male	Female
1-4	57.59	66.13
5-7	31.45	26.61
7 and above	10.96	7.26
Total	100.0	100.0

Census Population and Household, 2004 Department of Statistics (DoS)

Education Level

Over the last few decades, Jordan has witnessed a tremendous improvement in the area of female education. Gender differentials in education levels and literacy rates are rapidly disappearing and access to education at all levels has nearly achieved gender parity.

Measuring education levels is important for finding out male and female population educational status. It also makes it possible to forecast the ability of those attaining particular levels to find work opportunities according to the labor market.

Table 9 illustrates the percentage of males and females above 15 years who hold certificates lower than the secondary level had increased during the period 2004-2006. However as for the holders of secondary or intermediate diploma certificates with age above 15 years, the data showed that the percentages for males and females had decreased during the same period.

In addition to what has been mentioned above, the data from the table reveals that the percentage of Jordanian population above 15 years (males and females) who holds a university certificate had increased especially among the female population.

Table 9: Jordanian Population Aged 15 + by Educational level & Sex for 2004 & 2006 Years

Educational Status	Sex	Years	
		2004	2006
Less than Secondary	Male	46.9	52.9
	Female	39.6	45.8
Secondary	Male	22.5	18.6
	Female	23.9	18.9
Intermediate	Male	7.0	6.3
Diploma	Female	10.2	8.9
University+ Over	Male	11.1	12.8
	Female	5.7	8.5

Employment & Unemployment Survey, 2006- Population and Household Censuses, 2004

Jordan's constitution guarantees free primary and secondary education for both boys and girls. This constitution has led to a high gross basic school enrollment rate which is the total enrollment at that level, regardless of age, as a percentage of the official school age population for that level, reached 97.7 % in 2004 (97.6 % for males and 97.8 % for females) compared to 91.2 % in 1979. The secondary school gross enrollment rate also showed a significant increase during the period 1979- 2004 from 77.2 % to 89.7 % (89.0 % for males and 90.3 % for females).

In addition, Gender differentials in education levels and literacy rates are rapidly disappearing and access to education at all levels has nearly achieved gender parity. The data in the table 10 below illustrates these facts.

Table 10: Ratios of Female to Male Students in Basic and Secondary Educational Levels, 2003- 2006

Indicator	Year			
	2003	2004	2005	2006
Female / Male Students Ratio Basic Education	96.6	96.2	97.3	97.1
Female / Male Students Ratio Secondary Education	101.2	100.0	101.5	102.2

Source: Jordan in Figures Booklet

Higher Education and Gender

There are clear gender differences in the subjects that young men and women study at university. Women continue to enroll in the so-called traditional fields of study considered appropriate for girls. For instance, humanities, arts, and education studies are the most popular for women. On the other hand, subjects related to applied science such as engineering, manufacturing and construction are the most popular ones among men (Table 11).

Figure 3: Percentage Distribution of Under-Graduate Students at the Jordanian Universities by Specialization and Sex, 2006

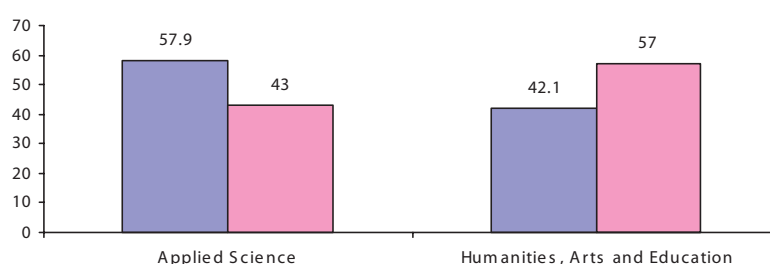


Table 11: Numbers of male and female students at Jordanian Universities

	Female	%	Male	%	Total
University of Jordan	20,644	61.8	12,767	38.2	33,411
Public Universities	80,110	58.1	57,661	41.9	137,771
Private Universities	17,068	32.1	36,033	67.9	53,101
Total Jordanian Universities	97,178	50.6	94,864	49.4	192,042
Agriculture Faculties in all Universities	1,963	57.8	1,431	42.2	3,394
Agriculture Faculty at the University of Jordan	853	65.3	454	34.7	1,307

Social Status of Jordanian Woman

Jordanian women participate in different activities of the national economy. Actually, there were some changes in the nature of activities that women perform and in their contribution rate in economic activities recently. All of that has made a good impact on the living standards and the familial and individual situation of women. However, women's traditional roles regarding household works, taking care of the family, and raising children, in addition to the difficulties stemming from the prevailing customs and traditions that still restrain their broad entrance into the labor market, where various gaps exist in certain professions and activities.

Table 12: Academic staff in the public and private Jordanian Universities

	Female	%	Male	%	Total
University of Jordan	220	19.5	909	80.5	1,129
Public Universities	694	15.9	3,661	84.1	4,355
Private Universities	502	24.6	1,535	75.4	2,037
Total Jordanian Universities	1,196	18.3	5,346	81.7	6,542

Table 13: Gender situation in the professional associations in Jordan (2005)

Associations	Female	%	Male	%	Total
Doctors	2,500	13.5	16,000	86.5	18,500
Agriculture engineers	3,916	33.8	7,668	66.2	11,584
Dentists	1,779	31.5	3,872	68.5	5,651
Geologists	682	34.8	1,275	65.2	1,957
Pharmacists	4,932	52	4,550	48	9,482
Engineers	9,551	14.5	56,095	85.5	65,646
Nurses and midwives	9,710	66.5	4,890	33.5	14,600

Table 14: Gender situation for some leadership positions in Jordan (2005)

Council	Female	%	Male	%	Total
Parliament	6	5.5	104	94.5	110
Senators	6	10.9	49	89.1	55
Ministers	1	4.3	22	95.7	23
Judges	25	3.9	614	96.1	639

Gender Social Indicators

Jordanian women have achieved extraordinary advances over the past several decades. However significant inequalities persist, particularly in women's economic and political participation and in legal rights as they pertain to marriage, inheritance and divorce. The public sphere remains only partially accessible to women, which automatically limits their access to opportunities and knowledge and, consequently, their economic and political power. Fortunately, the status quo can change over time and, globally, such social and attitudinal changes have occurred as a result of the demands engendered by the expansion of national economies. Gender is a dynamic factor in poverty reduction and development, and attention to the shifts in roles and in access to resources and power should be a part of development strategy and implementation activities.

Table 15: Some key economical and social indicators for Jordan

Indicator	2004	2005	2006
Total Population (million)	5.350	5.473	5.6
Population Growth rate (%)	2.6	2.3	2.3
Rate of Natural Increase (%)	2.4	2.1	2.1
Percentage of Urban Population (%)	82.3	82.3	82.6
Percentage of Rural Population (%)	17.7	17.7	17.4
Total Fertility Rate (for Woman 15-49) (2002)	3.7	3.7	3.7
Sex Ratio	106.3	106.4	106.4
Singulate Mean Age at First Marriage (Year)	28.6	28.3	28.3
Male	29.8	29.7	29.7
Female	27.2	26.8	26.7
Jordanian Married Population of Total	49.9	52.5	51.9
Average Household Size (person)	5.4	5.4	5.4
Crude Birth Rate (Per 1000 Population)	29.0	27.8	29.1
Crude Death Rate (Per 1000 Population)	7.0	7.0	7.0
Life Expectancy at Birth (Year)	71.5	71.5	71.7
Male	70.6	70.6	70.8
Female	72.4	72.4	72.5
Illiteracy Rate (Population Age 15+Year)	10.3	8.9	9.3
Male	5.6	4.8	5.1
Female	15.1	13.0	13.2
Crude Activity Rate (%)	23.5	23.9	23.8
Male	39.8	40.1	40.1
Female	6.6	7.3	7.5
Refined Activity Rate (%)	37.4	38.3	37.7
Male	63.7	64.4	63.1
Female	10.4	11.7	11.9
Unemployment Rate (%)	12.5	14.8	14.0
Male	11.8	12.8	11.9
Female	16.5	25.9	25.0
Females in the Labor Force; Age 15+Years (%)	13.7	15.1	15.9
Females of Total Employed Persons Age 15+Years (%)	13.1	13.2	13.6
Inflation Rate (%)	3.4	3.5	6.3
GDP per capita (JD)	1.515.6	1649.1	1805.1
Employed Persons in Agriculture (%)	3.6	3.4	3.1

Rural poverty

Lack of rain, lack of food`

Jordan is classified as a chronically water-scarce country. Less than 5 per cent of the land is arable. For farmers, little or no rainfall means severely reduced cultivation and production. Not only do poor farmers have fewer products to sell, they also have less to eat. Hunger and food insecurity are constant threats.

Population in rural areas

About 20 per cent of Jordanians live in rural areas where poverty is more prevalent than in urban areas. Approximately 19 per cent of the rural population is classified as poor. Because of the arid nature of the land, many of the rural poor cannot grow enough crops to feed themselves and their families. People who find other ways to supplement their incomes generally earn very little. Regular drought exacerbates the situation. For example, during the drought of 1999/2000, wheat production dropped from 70,000 tonnes to 9,000 tonnes, an amount that fell disastrously short of the country's demand for about 650,000 tonnes of wheat annually.

In addition, 90 per cent of the population lives on only 10 per cent of the country's surface area. As a result of the prolonged conflict in the Middle East, Jordan has hosted several waves of refugees, displaced persons and returnees. This has had a significant impact on the population growth rate. Since 1961, the population has increased fivefold, leading to increased pressure on natural resources, income disparities and increasing poverty. Since 2000 the rapid growth rate has slowed.

Many of Jordan's rural poor live in extremely difficult conditions:

- They have limited access to alternative sources of income
- They have limited opportunities to diversify their farming enterprises because of low rainfall, poor soil quality and the topography of the land that they cultivate
- They lack collateral and cannot obtain loans needed for investment in farm activities that could lead to higher incomes
- They do not own land and they are unwilling to make long-term investments on the land they cultivate as tenant farmers

The most vulnerable groups include large rural households (with eight family members) headed by illiterate or poorly educated people, households headed by women, households with sick or elderly people, and households that do not own land or have very little land.

Families headed by women tend to be among the poorest of the poor. They have fewer economic assets than households headed by men. For example, only 44 per cent of households headed by women own agricultural land and 30 per cent own livestock. Instead, 68 per cent of households headed by men own land and 36 per cent of them own livestock. Similarly, only 21 per cent of women who are heads of households receive loans for agricultural development and 9 per cent for incomegenerating activities, compared to 43 and 14 per cent of men who are heads of households.

Causes of poverty

Poverty is not concentrated in a particular region or regions of the country. It is found in urban centers, refugee camps and rural areas. The poorest of the poor tend to be in low rainfall zones where agriculture is severely limited and where the environment is significantly degraded, leading to widespread erosion and desertification.

The most significant causes of poverty in rural Jordan are high unemployment as well as low wage rates in rural areas, drought seasons (a decrease in average annual rainfall decreased of about 18 per cent between 1994 and 2004), large family size, desertification, and uneven economic growth.

Rural poverty in Jordan has its roots in the following basic conditions:

landlessness The landless usually depend on wage labour and informal employment in rural areas as sharecroppers. They may have limited access to government services and may rely on their employer for additional assistance in the form of small loans to pay medical expenses if they are not beneficiaries of the social safety net.

small-scale farms Unless the family owns livestock or has access to additional off-farm income, small-scale farmers are forced to enter into less profitable farming arrangements, such as renting land and sharecropping. They may be indebted to middlemen who help them market their products.

large families The average Jordanian family has six children, and many families have nine or more members. The composition of the family varies and may include small children, elderly parents and unemployed young adults. Lack of resources to pay for health care and school fees can reduce the living standards of these families to a level of extreme poverty.

access to resources Various development programmes provide access to improved services for rural and agricultural development. Rural women and isolated and illiterate poor farmers have inadequate access to credit and other services.

Institutions Involvement in Rural Development

Public Institutions

Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI)

The MWI was created in 1988 bringing the WAJ and JVA under one umbrella. Under the Water Authority law of 1988. The MWI was given full responsibility for all water and sewerage systems and related projects, as well as strategic planning and resource development programs, formulating water allocation options, monitoring and controlling water quality and analyzing and drafting water policy. The number of female engineers and policy makers represents about 20% of the work force in the Ministry. Among about 20 engineers and high ranking decisions makers, there are 5 engineers who are responsible for strategic planning and development of water resources. They work in all different aspects in water management and development in rural and urban areas.

Water Authority of Jordan

Law No. 34 of 1983 brought together various water sector service providers under a single entity called the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) as an independent body. WAJ is now under the umbrella of the MWI and is responsible for municipal and industrial water supplies and wastewater. In addition, it is responsible for planning water and wastewater projects, implementing and operating all water supply and wastewater facilities in Jordan, exploring existing water resources and developing potential resources plus allocation of water for various municipal uses. Female engineers in WAJ are working in the planning, design, and implementation of water works as well as the supervision of projects.

Jordan Valley Authority

The Jordan Valley Authority (JVA) was established in 1972 and operates under Law No. 19 of the Jordan Valley Development Law of 1988. JVA is responsible for social and economic development of the Jordan Rift Valley (JRV). JVA is also responsible for developing the water resources of the JRV, planning, and implementing and operating irrigation project, and dam projects.

JVA law was recently amended reliving it of many of its social development duties. JVA is also under the umbrella of MWI. In JVA, the number of female engineers has exceeded 15. They are working in the division of studies and design, research and development, and operation and management. Some are involved in soil-water management and some have an extension role in the irrigation advisory services.

Ministry of Agriculture

The MOA is responsible for setting and implementing the country's agricultural policy including livestock and forest resources. Furthermore, Agriculture Law No. 20 of 1973 authorizes the Ministry of Agriculture to exploit surface water resources through construction and operation of small dams and other facilities for production of livestock feeding crops. The female engineers in MOA have a major role in rural development in the irrigated areas in the Jordan valley. The ministry has established a gender unit with a main task in enhancing the role of women in development. Accordingly, the policies of the MOA have a profound effect on the water resources of the country since they affect water policies as well as the planning and management of water resources.

Affiliated with the MOA is the National Center for Agricultural research and Technology Transfer (NCARTT), which was established in 1986 as a result of the reorganization of the Departments of Agricultural Research and Extension within the MOA. The center is an autonomous public institution governed by council chaired by the Minister of Agriculture. NCARTT's mandate is coordinating all agricultural research and technology transfer activities within the Kingdom of Jordan. Water management in addition to rain-fed and irrigated agriculture are among the programs implemented by the Center. In addition to the main headquarters near Amman; NCARTT has six regional centers located throughout the country. Each regional center has a large experimental farm. The center has established major programs in land, water and environment, which have ambitious goals for the management of irrigation in the Jordan Valley and the highland. Out of the 22 engineers working in this program, there are 6 female engineers. A female researcher has a leading role in the Irrigation Information System and Irrigation Advisory Service. In addition, they conduct research on integrated watershed management.

Agricultural Credit Corporation (ACC)

The ACC plays a great role in agricultural development. Since 1994, the corporation focused on rural families through the activation of women's role. Total number of granted loans was 162000 with a total amount of 287 million JD. The numbers of female working in ACC are about 20%. Some of them are supervising loans which are intended to install new irrigation system. While others have a big administrative role.

Private Sector and NGOs

Jordan has a strong and active NGO sector. Some of the NGOs working in the country have existed for over twenty years and have developed clear objectives, long-term strategies, management procedures and specific areas of operation. The women's NGO sector is particularly active and sophisticated and has benefited from strong support and encouragement provided by members of the royal family, particularly Her Majesty Queen Rania and Her Highness Princess Basma Bin Talal.

There are clear gaps in women's access to the public sphere, relative to men, and the NGO sector provides a way for women to fill that gap. Educated, ambitious women have found the NGO sector an important entry point into participation in public life. It also exonerates them from having to deal with accountability issues that are found in public office or high level government positions.

Below are some of the larger Jordanian NGOs that operate at the national level and have mandates to advocate for women's issues and/or implement programs at the grassroots. This is not a comprehensive list, but rather an illustrative list that demonstrates the depth and variety of the women's NGO sector.

Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Development (JOHUD)

The objectives of the Fund are to have a direct presence at the grassroots level, provide skills and knowledge for people to improve their lives, and to promote sustainable development using local resources and to provide training. They have approximately 63 community centers throughout Jordan.

Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women

- Provision of free legal counseling for women.
- Advocacy and lobbying to amend laws affecting women.
- Start up services for women planning new businesses including training.

Jordan River Foundation (JRF)

Their major objective is to empower communities through:

- Economic empowerment: Cluster village program for income-generating activities that also include design of new products, a form of production line among the villages, and marketing mechanisms.
- Child abuse program: prevention, intervention, training.
- Cultural and natural heritage.

Jordan Women's Union

The Union undertakes activities related to legal services, women's rights, violence against women, and hotline counselling. They run a shelter for physically abused women and a guest house.

Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW)

A semi-governmental commission established by a Cabinet decision in 1992. They act as liaison between the government and NGOs.

Overall objectives:

- Improving the status of women and enhancing their role in national development;
- Increasing and encouraging the participation of women in the economy, politics, and decisionmaking; and,
- Strengthening women's legal status. Current Work:
 - Set up the higher women's commission for elections to support all women candidates and raise public awareness.
 - Working with the GOJ on mainstreaming gender within ministries and their strategic plans and establishing gender focal points in ministries.

Mizan

Provides legal counseling services as well as legal rights and human rights education for women in low-income communities.

National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA)

A key feature of the NCFA is its involvement in various aspects and levels that constitute, affect and influence a family's life. The NCFA conducts research on family-related issues such as disadvantaged children, legislation, early childhood development, and family protection. Their mandate is to work in multiple sectors to improve the quality and level of life for the Jordanian family.

Princess Basma Youth Center

Outreach and community level programs including programs that target the youth and programs related to Information Technology training and education.

Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID)

- ZENID is the implementation arm of JOHUD (Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Development) and undertakes training, qualitative research, and policy change.
- Provides linkage between local community and policy makers.
- Operates the Princess Basma Youth Centers. There are 63 centers throughout Jordan and they concentrate on four main areas:
 - a. communication skills program,
 - b. adolescent healthy-life program,
 - c. sexual education, and
 - d. ITC training program in partnerships with AMIR.

The Princess Basma Women's Resource Center (PBWRC)

The Center was established in March 1996 as a support for women's organizations and policymakers. It has four functional areas: social policy and population; women in development; advocacy and decision making; and research and development, which includes a media unit. It also has a meeting place (Al Multaqa), where women can hold informal meetings and where lectures, seminars and workshops are also held. The idea is to make the Center accessible to women especially to youth.

Other activities of the Center are as follows: training of trainers on enterprise development, funded by DFID; media services for women running for election, funded by the EU; and a policy project training trainers on women's political participation, funded by USAID.

The Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF)

The QAF was established in 1978 by royal decree that gave the Fund its own legal status. The Fund is headed by HRH Princess Basma. The objectives of the Fund are to have direct presence at the grassroots, provide skill and knowledge for people to improve their lives, to promote sustainable development using local resources. Women and children have been a key focus since inception. The Fund offers vocational training for women and is involved in small income-generating projects. Specific agricultural projects have included training women in sheep husbandry, milk and cheese production and processing, domestic bird-rearing, and home-gardening. The QAF has the largest outreach of any community-based organization, with 50 community centers nationwide. The centers house kindergarten classes, training rooms, and places for crafts training. They are run by local NGOs while training and supervision are provided by the QAF.

Queen Noor Al-Hussaim Foundation

The Foundation was established in 1985 and its strategy focused on ensuring sustainable development through improving the character of life for the local community. The foundation has many projects, among these are the agricultural projects, which aim to train women on different productive skills and techniques to benefit from the local resources available in rural areas and improve the income of women working in agriculture. The activities are distributed in 21 villages, 1639 family benefit from different projects, total amount of granted loans was 555,293 JD. Women contribute in two programs to 40% and 65% of the total number of granted persons.

The National Strategy for Women outlines an agenda for advancing the status of women. The Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) and the Jordan National Forum for Women provide leadership and coordination of development programs for women including working with NGOs. The Jordanian Women's Union, established in 1945, was the first women's NGO in Jordan. It was dissolved in 1975 and again in 1981 and finally reestablished in 1989. The union is financially independent and has 9 branches operating DevTech Systems Inc., 11 USAID/Jordan Gender Assessment all over Jordan with a membership of 6,000, and runs 16 centers. The Union undertakes activities related to legal services, women's rights, violence against women, and hotline counseling. They run a shelter for physically abused women and a guest house. The JNCW was established in 1992 by a decree of the Prime Minister as the official organization for women's affairs, both governmental and non-governmental. The board is headed by HRH Princess Basma and consists of representatives of several ministries including Planning, Justice, Social Development, and Labor and Rural Affairs as well as representatives of NGOs and the private sector.

A particularly interesting aspect of the implementation mechanism for the National Strategy for Women is that, unlike most other countries where the plan is usually tasked to a gender unit in a ministry or a women's ministry, in Jordan, the government has given the job to an NGO. This has positive implications because NGOs do not suffer from the inertia that plagues bureaucracies nor do they feel compelled to maintain the status quo in order to protect their positions in the system. This advantage is apparent in Jordan, where the JNCW has been able to amend many laws in favor of women and has successfully mainstreamed gender into the work programs of several key ministries.

Women and Agriculture

Women, especially in rural areas, contribute in agricultural activity. However, It has been found that a small percentage of women in these areas own plots of land. This is due to habits and traditions which are widespread in these areas. Moreover, despite the numerous social changes the Jordanian community has encountered, women are still in danger of being deprived of their proper ownership in comparison to men. Changes in Jordan such as the improvement of women's status and the rise in land and property prices played a significant role in bringing about crucial and effective changes on the widespread traditions of inheritance. As a result, women have begun to liberate themselves from those traditions, particularly those related to their rights under legitimate inheritance.

The findings of the agricultural census of 1997 demonstrates that females make up a small percentage of the total agricultural plot owners (2.7 percent), while males constituted the great majority of agriculture plot owners (97.3 percent).

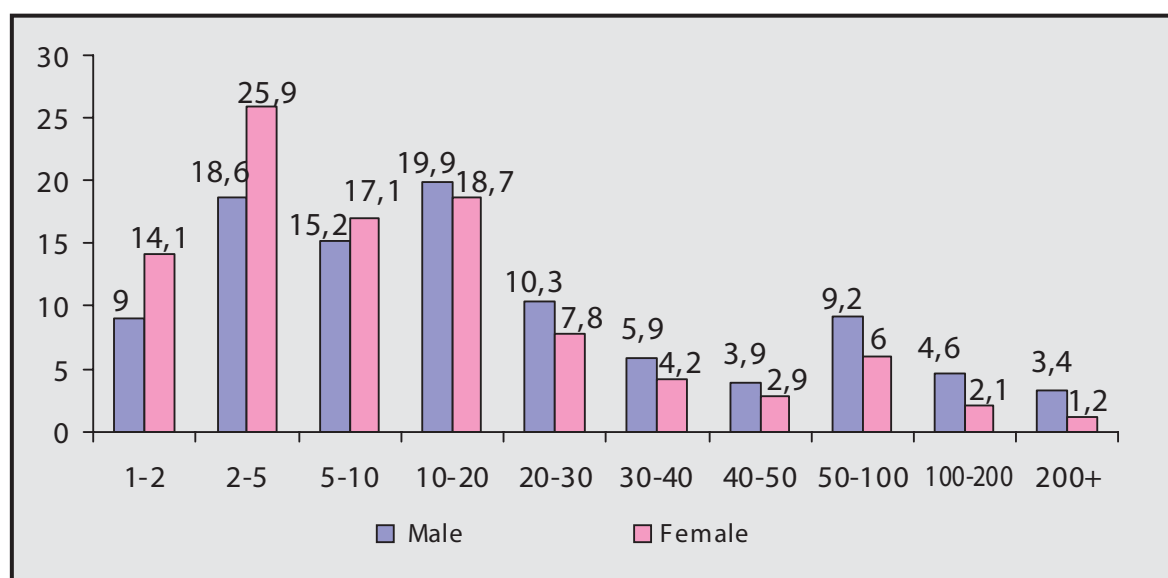
Table 16: Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Landowners by Land Area and Sex, 1997

Land Area (dunoms)	Sex	
	Male	Female
1-2	9.0	14.1
2-5	18.6	25.9
5-10	15.2	17.1
10-20	19.9	18.7
20-30	10.3	7.8
30-40	5.9	4.2
40-50	3.9	2.9
50-100	9.2	6.0
100-200	4.6	2.1
200+	3.4	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0
	(69841)	(1940)

Table 16 shows the relative distribution for owners of agricultural holdings according to sex and land size. Data indicates that forty percent of female owners own plots less than five dunoms, while 28% of the males own plots of that size. Less than one tenth (1/10) of female owners own plots of 50 dunoms or more compared to 17% of the males.

While ownership of agricultural plots provides females with the opportunity to control economic resources and ensure a fixed source of income, the sizes of plots they frequently own are small and more likely to be divided and sold to males, leading to a decrease in the degree of their ownership. This is most prevalent in rural areas, where women are denied the freedom to dispose of their own property under such justifications as preserving the collective property of the family or fear that their ownership will be transferred to their husbands. This situation puts women who supposedly own property in the same boat as women who do not.

Figure 4: Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Landowners by Land Area and Sex, 1997



Source: Department of Statistics "Agricultural Census, 1979", 1997.

Table 17 shows the ratio of agricultural plot owners according to sex and plot size. Data clarifies that male ownership dominates all the plot size categories, while females make up a small percentage of agricultural plot owners. The ratio of female owners ranges from 0.9 percent of the total agricultural plot owners for plots of 200 dunoms and above to 4.2% for plots of one to two dunoms.

Table 17: Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Landowners by Land Area and Sex, 1997

Land Area (dunoms)	Sex		
	Male	Female	Total
1-2	95.8	4.2	100.0
2-5	96.3	3.7	100.0
5-10	97.0	3.0	100.0
10-20	97.5	2.5	100.0
20-30	98.0	2.0	100.0
30-40	98.0	2.0	100.0
40-50	97.9	2.1	100.0
50-100	98.2	1.8	100.0
100-200	98.7	1.3	100.0
200+	99.1	0.9	100.0
Total	97.3	2.7	100.0
	(69841)	(1940)	(71781)

Table 17: Percentage Distribution of Agricultural Landowners by Land Area and Sex, 1997

Woman and Livestock Ownership

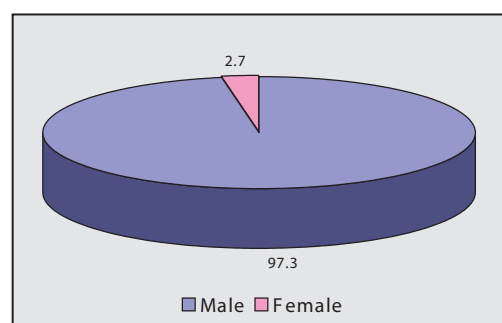
Data obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture indicates that males outnumber females in livestock ownership (97.5 % for males compared to 2.5 % for females).

Table 18 shows the percentage distribution of livestock owners by sex and Governorate. Data indicates that female owners are significantly low compared to male owners in all Governorates. The average rate for males range from 92.8 % in Ajloun Governorate to 99.3 % in Zarqa and Madaba Governorate.

Loan Accessibility

Income generating projects are considered among the main tools to assist women's economic status, particularly in rural areas. However, women's lack of acquisition of the tools of production and lack of regular income preclude their utilization of services provided by financial institutions, which link funding to traditional guarantees.

Data from the Agricultural Credit Corporation ACC (an institution that helps support, develop and improve agriculture as well as increase production both qualitatively and quantitatively. In addition, ACC seeks to help increase living standards of farmers be means of credit programs especially those targeting certain community members and groups. Such programs include loans of several types, terms and aims; they are rendered in accordance with laws and by-laws ruling over the Corporation mandate), shows that male farmers benefit more from loans.

Figure 5: Percentage Distribution of Livestock Owners by Sex, 2005

Table 18: Percentage Distribution of Livestock Owners by Governorate and Sex, 2005

Governorate	Livestock Ownership by Sex	
	Male	Female
Amman	97.2	2.8
Balaqa	98.2	1.8
Zarqa	99.3	0.7
Madaba	99.3	0.7
Irbid	97.6	2.4
Ma'raq	99.0	1.0
Jerash	98.0	2.0
Ajloun	92.8	7.2
Karak	94.3	5.7
Tafila	97.5	2.5
Ma'an	95.6	4.4
Aqaba	97.2	2.8
Total	97.5	2.5

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, 2005

For example, the number of female farmers who benefited from loans were 35.4% in 2004 compared to 64.6 for male farmers and this number dropped to 30.3% for female farmers in year 2006. Furthermore, female farmers obtained 25.8 of the total loans granted in 2004 and this amount dropped to 22.2% in year 2006 (tables 19 and 20). It may be useful to note that the emergence of small loans programmes funded by Non-Governmental Organizations who perform the same task were the main reason for this reduction.

Table 19: Percentage Distribution of Borrowers by Sex, 2004-2005

Years	Sex of Borrowers		
	Total	Male Farmers	Female Farmers
2004	100	64.6	35.4
2005	100	68.7	31.3
*2006	100	69.7	30.3

Source: Agricultural Credit Corporation, 2004-2006

Table 20: Percentage Distribution of Granted Loans by Sex, 2004-2006

Years	Population by Sex		
	Total	Male Farmers	Female Farmers farmers
2004	100	74.2	25.8
2005	100	76.2	23.8
*2006	100	77.8	22.2

Source: Agricultural Credit Corporation, 2004-2006

CONCLUSION

The status of women in Jordan has improved significantly for the last two decades as reflected by the increase in their participation in the labor force, high life expectancy and improvement in their education attainment. Their involvement in irrigated agriculture as farm managers, decision makers and extension agents has increased. The performances of female irrigation and agricultural engineers are much better than men as they are easily accepted by farmers. Many of the University graduates in agricultural science and water resources are working in the private sectors as design engineers or salespeople.

In spite of the significant improvement of women's movements in Jordan and their high potential in social development, the role of men remains dominant. As a result of that, the women's activities are directed through NGOs or private societies. The number of females in the NGOs represents about 70% of the total number. Most of these NGOs are working with women in rural communities, in income generating projects, improving irrigated agriculture, rehabilitation of water harvesting works and land water conservation. By including a gender perspective and approach, projects will become more successful, better suited to the people and environment, more sustainable and more cost effective.

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GENDER AND WATER MANAGEMENT INSTITUTIONS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY

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Abstract

The global water shortage represents a full-scale emergency where the world water cycle seems unlikely to be able to satisfy the demand of the coming decades. In such a condition enhancing food security through a more efficient water use and the involvement of all stakeholders in water management are the most outstanding challenges for future policies. Renewed efforts have to be focused on transferring responsibility for operating and maintaining irrigation systems to farmers organized in Water User Associations (WUA). All this highlights the need for building and developing managerial capacities among stakeholders - especially women.

The Italian Land Reclamation Consortia (CB) are very similar to the WUA model used around the world. According to the Italian law, the CB are self-governing public authorities. With the establishment of the 20 Italian districts or regions, the decentralised administration of the agricultural activity, including land reclamation and irrigation, came under the control of each region. Therefore, the land reclamation and irrigation planning and control functions are reserved for the regions, while the carrying out of works, the soil conservation and protection and the utilisation and safeguard of water resources and environment are delegated to the CB.

Currently in Italy, there are 178 CB spread over 60% of the Country's surface. Part of the land surface governed by the CB is reclaimed land and part is land equipped for crops irrigation. A brief examination of the indicators, which show a good participation of female farmers in the CB Management Board, reveal a well established sharing of responsibility of women farmers in land reclamation and irrigation management in Italian CBs. It is also remarkable that women have a significant presence in the CB Regional Union Boards. Although women manage a modest part of the irrigated land, their representation in the CBs is comparatively higher than that of men. Furthermore, women holding irrigated farms are oriented to a more sustainable agriculture, revealing a particular concern for environmental protection.

INTRODUCTION

Food production is intrinsically linked to water availability especially in arid and semiarid countries where water security means the possibility of irrigation. Until quite recently water resources were still adequate to meet all requirements. Currently, higher water demand from raising population and climate change make water the most critical resource facing the world. The global water shortage represents a full scale emergency where the world water cycle seems unlikely to be able to satisfy the demand of the coming decades. In such a condition, enhancing food security through a more efficient water use and the involvement of all stakeholders in water management present the most outstanding challenges for the future policies. Renewed efforts have to be focused on transferring responsibility for operating and maintaining irrigation systems to the farmers organized in Water User Associations (WUA).

The intention is that these organizations must be representative of all water users and will facilitate effective participation in water resources management. Consultations with various stakeholders are essential to obtain their participation in water resources management, revitalisation of irrigation schemes and establishment of WUAs. Proper functioning of WUAs means representing farmers and being self-financing. However, both of these circumstances develop two further needs: 1) cooperation between individuals and 2) long time for implementing their structure.

All this highlights the need for building and developing managerial capacities among stakeholders - especially women - while confining irrigation system administration to the role of water service provider. Empowerment alone may not be sufficient unless deficiencies in design and operation of infrastructures are addressed. Irrigation modernization is a process that involves institutional, organizational and technological changes and transformations. The transfer of some management responsibilities to WUAs has been carried out in several countries.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Italy, due to its geographic and orographic features, was always affected by water problems caused by river overflowing, difficulty of drainage and presence of swamps, marshes and lagoons. The Italian peninsula is surrounded by the sea in the west, east and south and is bounded by the Alps Mountains to the north. Moreover, its mountainous topography, latitudinal extension and proximity to the sea mean that there is a great deal of climate variability. Italy has a surface area of about 301,000 Km², much of the land being either hilly or mountainous. The largest plain, the Po plain placed to the south of the Alps, was very often flooded by the Po Tributaries Rivers. The Po plain and other less extensive alluvial plains are the result of land reclamation carried out over the centuries.

In ancient times land reclamation was undertaken by the Etruscan peoples involving mainly land drainage. Important land reclamation works including building of roads, aqueducts and canals to complete the drainage and irrigation projects occurred during the development and spread of Roman civilization. After the fall of the Roman Empire and the barbarian invasion, which brought about war and destruction, many reclamation and drainage works were destroyed causing water logging of the land, the spread of malaria, and people's exodus from the lands to villages. At the end of the 7th century the Benedictine monasteries undertook the first land reclamation works again for land protection and marshes draining.

Afterwards, land reclamation progressed according to political and economic events in Northern Italy mainly in the Po valley where large drainage canals were built by Communes. At that time the first WUAs among peasants, land-owners and monasteries appeared in Northern Italy. The structures of the associations have been improved through the centuries and became more and more widespread in the country.

The consolidated act of 1933 provides for the establishment of a WUA named Land Reclamation and Irrigation Consortia (consortium in Latin language means association) for those land and property owners benefiting from land reclamation. Integral Land Reclamation Consortia may be set up either voluntarily or compulsorily where there is a majority of land owners favouring the setting up of associations and where there is an urgent need for land reclamation for which the Ministry of Agriculture may propose the establishment of a consortium office.

THE INSTITUTIONAL STATUS OF LAND RECLAMATION CONSORTIA

The Italian Land Reclamation Consortia (CB) is very similar to the Water Users Association model used around the world. According to the Italian law the Land Reclamation Consortia (CB) are self governing public Authorities. They have to operate within the limits laid out by its statutory law and are able to collect the fees from farmers. The CB are statutory bodies that have their jurisdiction in defined water management areas to govern water resources and to coordinate water related activities; they are cooperative associations of individual water users who undertake water related activities for mutual benefit. They operate in terms of a formal constitution and are expected to be self supporting from income receiving through water user charges.

With the establishment of the 20 Italian districts or Regions the decentralised administration of the agricultural activity, including land reclamation and irrigation, came under the control of each Region. Therefore, the land reclamation and irrigation planning and control functions are reserved to the Regions, while the carrying out of works is delegated to the CB that have professional competence and experience. Moreover, the Regions have ascribed new and important duties to the CB with the aim of soil conservation and protection and the utilisation and safeguard of water resources and environment. The Regions, according to the national law, have settled again the CB boundaries so that these correspond to catchment basins, and issued their regional laws establishing functions and duties for the CB.

Therefore, the Land Reclamation Consortia have to provide mainly land reclamation and irrigation works and management. More particularly the CBs tasks are:

- planning and building, by Authority's permission, land reclamation works for public benefit
- maintenance and management of the reclamation works
- delivering irrigation water to irrigation schemes to improve agricultural production
- land conservation, water management and safeguard of the water quantity and quality.

RECLAIMED AND IRRIGATED SURFACES COVERED BY CB

Currently in Italy, there are 178 operating Land Reclamation Consortia that spread over 60% of the Country's surface (tab. 1). The highest numbers of the CB are located in Northern Italy whereas the largest area governed by them is placed in the South.

Table 1: Number, percentage and surface (Km2) of the CB operating in Italy

	Country surface	CB n°	CB surface	%
North	120,000	82	56,600	47.2
Centre	58,000	28	37,300	64
South	123,000	68	85,300	69
Total	301,000	178	179,200	60

Part of the land surface governed by the CB (tab 2) is reclaimed land (69,800 Km2) and part is land equipped for crops irrigation (33,600 Km2). However, the actual irrigated lands are: 29,400 Km2 of which 24,700 Km2 are managed by the CB. The other irrigated surface is directly operated by farmers who, in this case, are drawing irrigation water from groundwater.

Table 2: Surface reclaimed and surface equipped for irrigation by CB (Km2)

	Reclaimed surface	Irrigation equipped surface	Irrigated surface managed by CB	Total irrigated surface
North	35,600	23,500	15,800	17,900
Centre	13,300	1,200	1,800	2,700
South	20,900	8,900	7,100	8,800
Total	69,800	33,600	24,700	29,400

Land drainage involves a coordinated system of engineering works – comprising canals, pipes, embankments, reservoirs, wells, pumping stations – designed to control the water regime and prevent flood. The largest reclaimed land surface (tab. 3) is drained naturally by gravity (57,800 Km2); the other part is drained by water pump lifting (12,000 Km2).

Table 3: Land reclamation

	RECLAIMED LAND SURFACE (Km ²)			River and coast banks (Km)	Weirs and barrages (n°)
	natural drainage	Mechanical lifting	Total		
North	25,000	10,600	35,600	3,300	9,300
Centre	12,500	800	13,300	4,000	3,900
South	20,300	600	20,900	1,900	9,600
Total	57,800	12,000	69,800	9,200	22,800

Other reclamation works managed by the CB are: 9,200 Km of embankments to protect the rivers and the sea coasts and 22,800 weirs and barrages. Moreover (tab. 4) the CB are accomplishing the operation and maintenance of the irrigation water delivering through the irrigation schemes (12,450 Km2), 914 storage reservoirs, 601 stream diversions, 1,300 pumping station devices and 1790 tube wells.

Table 4: Irrigation works

	Irrigation schemes (Km ²)	Storage reservoirs (n°)	Stream diversions (n°)	Pumping stations (n°)	Tube wells (n°)
North	2,350	51	497	720	1,180
Centre	1,220	71	31	90	100
South	8,880	792	73	490	510
Total	12,450	914	601	1,300	1,790

In Italy irrigation is mainly governed by CB (88%). The irrigation water is mainly derived from the surface water courses in North Italy and from reservoirs and wells in Central and Southern Italy. A network of 181,300 Km of main and secondary canals (tab. 5) are maintained and managed by CB for land reclamation (44,350 Km), for the irrigated commands (35,850 Km) and for dual-purpose drainage and irrigation (47,650 Km), almost all located in the North. On the contrary the pipelines networks for irrigation - for a total of 53,450 Km - are operating mainly in the southern Regions.

Table 5: Canals network (Km)

	Drainage canals	Irrigation canals	Drainage/irrigation canals	Pipelines	Total
North	17,450	21,550	42,800	10,800	92,400
Centre	10,650	900	2,700	2,250	16,500
South	16,250	13,400	2,150	40,400	72,200
Total	44,350	35,850	47,650	53,450	181,300

Other main works carried out to control water bodies were built and are still operated by CB (tab. 6): 754 water lifting devices, mainly in the northern Regions, 18,000 Km of modified streams, 786 Km² of reforested lands, mainly located in the South of the Country, 14,300 ha of lands irrigated with waste water and 116 hydropower devices to generate energy, almost all placed in the North.

Table 6: Other works built and operated by CB

	Lifting devices (n)	Stream regulation (Km)	Afforestation (Km ²)	Irrigated lands with waste water (ha)	Hydropower (n)
North	563	2,800	27	10,000	100
Centre	108	10,800	59	0	2
South	83	4,500	700	4,300	14
Total	754	18,000	786	14,300	116

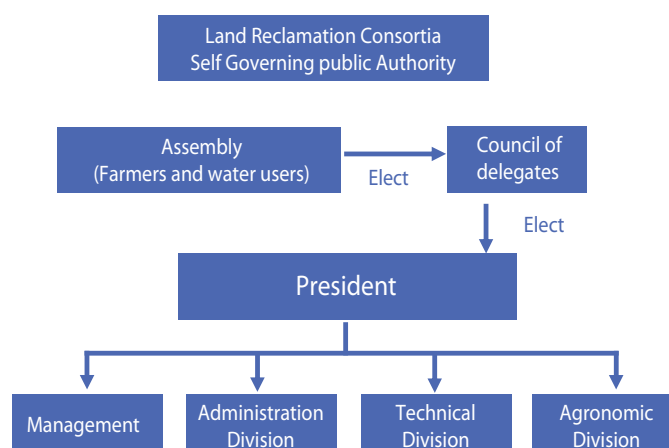
THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF CB

In accordance with the last rules and the soil use law 183/89, the CBs represent a common place where different issues are converging: agriculture, land reclamation, land use and management, irrigation, runoff control, environment.

The governing bodies of the CBs are made up of (figure 1):

- the Assembly
- the Council of delegates
- the President
- the administration and technical units

Figure 1: The organization structure of Land Reclamation Consortia



The Assembly is composed of all farmers, directly or indirectly benefiting from land reclamation and irrigation works, who have the right to vote the Council delegates. The Council of Delegates, whose number is established according to the surface covered by the CB, are elected by the Assembly and in turn does elect the President.

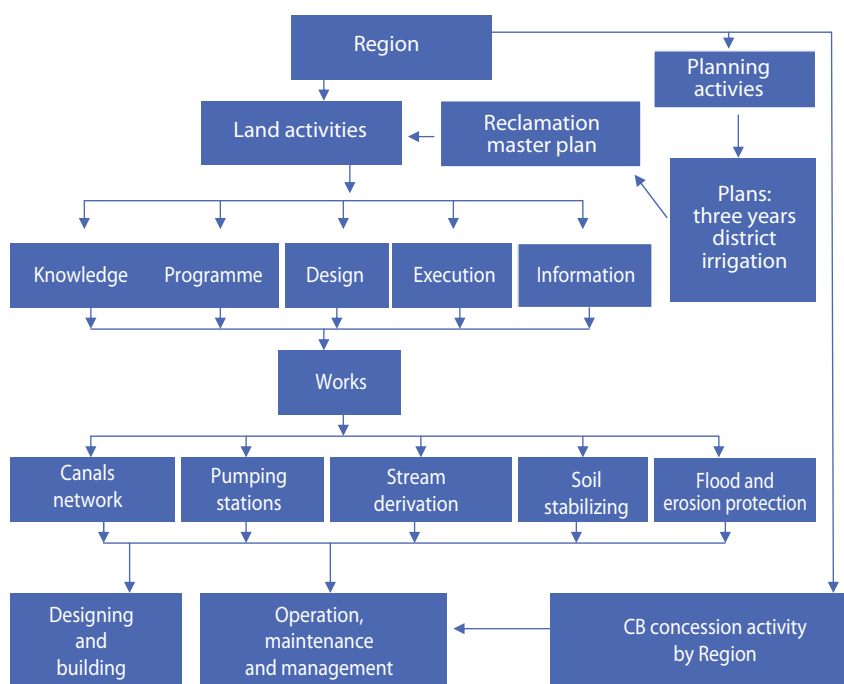
The management of CB is usually structured according to its technical and administrative requirements in four divisions or units:

- management Division
- administrative Division
- technical Division
- agriculture Division

REGIONAL LAWS AND THE ROLES OF CB

Water resources will be a strategic element in the near Italian future. The Country is exposed to excess of water, floods, droughts and land degradation. A portion of the temporary excess of water should be stored and this will be one of the main aims of the water management strategy. Moreover climate change can increase the irrigation water demand that at present is already impossible to be fully satisfied. As regards the future development program, based on the agro-ecological aspects, in the case of water resources management there will be in the near future many tasks to be accomplished by the CB. One of the most crucial tasks will be to satisfy the rising demand for irrigation water that is mainly caused by the higher incidence of drought. As already reported, the Italian Regions have issued their own rules on land reclamation and irrigation. As an example here is reported, the concerned law issued by Lombardia Region. (Figure 2)

Figure 2: The role of CB according the regional law



The Region promotes and organizes the activities of land reclamation, irrigation and land protection for its whole territory through the Master Land Reclamation Plan, performed on the base of the “Three years Plan”, the “District Planning” and the “Irrigation Rearranging Plan”.

The activities include:

- knowledge activity
- programming activity
- designing activity
- execution activity
- information activity

With the aim of establishing the following hydraulic works:

- canals network
- water lifting pumping devices
- derivation from streams
- protection devices from flood and erosion
- soil saving and stabilizing structures

To operate, control, manage, and monitor the regional reclaimed surface, the Region must delimit the districts as land homogeneous units eventually corresponding with the watershed. Moreover, the region will deliver the concession to the CB with the aim of carrying on the activities designed in the Reclamation Master Plan and particularly:

- designing and execution of the works
- operating, maintenance and management of the works

Aiming mainly at:

1. water saving
2. improving efficiency in the use of irrigation water

GENDER AND CB

To realize full potential irrigated agriculture the essential issues are:

- participation of stakeholders
- promotion of the WUAs
- human resources development particularly enhancing the role of women

The key premise of the whole process is that, as a result of improved communication and understanding of the real problems in the management of irrigation services, there will be a better chance of WUAs attaining better social and financial viability to improve the quality of irrigation services and the distributive equity of water. The awareness-building process is also to ensure that all members, women and men, are equally informed about future innovation and are not marginalized.

Currently in Italy, the percentage of irrigated farms managed by females is 13%. Women managing irrigated farms mainly use as irrigation water that derived from water surface courses and do prefer micro-irrigation (23% against 16% of males). In the last decades of the past century the growing acknowledgement of women's role as farmers encouraged the CB to change their intervention approaches by including female farm leaders in their CB Decision-making board. In addition, efforts were undertaken to ensure that the gender composition of the CB Council may reflect the gender farm holdings situation. At present the average numbers of women directly involved in the CB Boards are 5% whereas women involved in decision-making positions in the CB Regional Union Boards are 11%. (Table 7). Women's participation in CB management of North, Centre and South Italy varies (Table 8) whereas a higher women presence is noticed in three Regions: Lombardia (North: 7%), Lazio (Centre: 15%) and Sardinia (South: 12%)

Table 7: Indicator: average of women farmers participating to CBs Board

Women heading irrigated farms	13 %
Women participating in the CB Regional Union Board	11 %
Women participating in the CB Boards	5%

Table 8: Indicator: share of women farmers participating to CBs management Board

North	Centre	South
4%	5%	6%
7% (Lombardia)	15% (Lazio)	12% (Sardinia)

CONCLUSION

The brief examination of the indicators, which show a good participation of female farmers in the CB Management Board, reveal a well established sharing of responsibility of women farmers in land reclamation and irrigation management in Italian CBs. Considering that the number of farms managed by women is 13% a representation of the 5% in the management boards represents a share of 38%. This percentage is much higher than that of the males managing irrigated farms. It is also remarkable that women have an important presence in the CB Regional Union Boards (11%). One could say that although women manage a modest part of the irrigated land, their representation in the CBs is relatively higher than that of men.

Women holding irrigated farms are oriented, as reported, towards a more sustainable agriculture, revealing a particular concern for environmental protection. In our country, where the risk of land degradation is high and the reduction of natural resources is in progress, it is imperative to identify innovative strategies to be implemented by decision makers to fight agro-forestry and water degradation. In this regard, rural women can significantly contribute to achieve this objective.

All the reported data have been provided by the National Association of Land Reclamation Consortia (ANBI).

WOMEN AND WATER PROBLEMS IN AFRICA: A FOCUS ON RAINWATER HARVESTING AND MANAGEMENT TO SOLVE WATER PROBLEMS, AND MANY OTHER PROBLEMS TO IMPROVE STANDARDS OF LIVING, PARTICULARLY FOR WOMEN IN RURAL AFRICA

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Abstract

This paper focuses on harvesting rainwater to solve water shortages and many other problems. The paper also urges governments and their partners to come up with an immediate strategy of harvesting rainwater for drinking and agricultural purposes and for increasing food security and safety. Harvesting rainwater is also seen as one way for fighting poverty in most areas of Africa and harvesting it reduces environmental hazardous situations created on African lakes and rivers in an attempt to get water from them to meet people's needs. However, this is not the only reason why Africa should harvest the rainwater. There are many other reasons why Africa should strategize rainwater harvesting and these have been highlighted with relevant arguments in the paper: 1) Rainwater as the source of all waters on earth; 2) It saves time which is wasted by women and children who walk long distances in search of water; 3) In some African areas, especially in parts where there is inadequate groundwater supply or surface resources are either lacking or insufficient, rainwater harvesting is an ideal solution since Africa has adequate rains; 4) Africa could easily compile the needed reliable data on factors influencing rainwater harvesting to understand what needs to be done and how to do it; 5) It recharges water into the aquifers, which helps in improving the quality of existing ground water through dilution. Most of rains falling on the surface tend to flow away rapidly leaving very little to recharge groundwater; 6) It helps in utilizing the primary source of water and prevents such water, as the runoff, from getting polluted and/or contaminated, thereby reducing the treatment costs; 7) It reduces both rural and urban flooding; 8) Methods of harvesting and storing rainwater use simple materials and can be adapted to any region and for any purpose. They have low cost solution, they are easy and efficient; 9) Rainwater harvesting and management are related to national food security; and 10) It could help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals if it is targeted as strategy and implemented all across.

These issues were discussed in full in the paper and supported by clear examples of success stories from Kenya and Egypt. The paper concluded by an address to African Governments inviting them to realize the great potential in harvesting more of the rainwater whenever and wherever it falls, to greatly enhancing drinking water supplies and small holders' agricultural production.

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a simple logical analysis, but very critical, of why Africa should focus on rainwater harvesting to solve many problems, particularly related with what is still referred to as "women's work". As I generally reflect on this topic, I recalled my childhood experiences and the rain floods reports of late. I grew up in rural Uganda. As a child, I used to walk about one Kilometer to fetch water from the well or stream on daily basis and sometimes made several trips a day. This was the work of children and women. Forty five years later, the children of primary age, together with their mothers, are still doing the same way like we did. However, there is so much rain that when it falls it floods all over. At our childhood time, whenever it rained, we would collect enough water, using small containers like pots and twenty liters' tins, from our iron sheets roofed houses, the "rooftop runoffs", to last for some days. People from rural Africa are still doing like that today, although much more water goes untapped and yet, all over Africa, you hear of water scarcity, water problems, lack of access to clean water, etc; as well as "floods, disasters and crisis".

With the understanding that rainwater is a source of all waters on earth, this paper focuses on harvesting rainwater to solve water shortages and many other problems to improve standards of living, particularly for women in rural Africa. Based on the presented analysis, the paper also urges governments and their partners to make an immediate strategy of harvesting rainwater for drinking and agricultural purposes, to increase food security and safety.

Harvesting rainwater is also seen as one way to fight poverty in most areas of Africa. Since, rainwater is the source of all waters in rivers, lakes and/or groundwater, harvesting it reduces environmental hazardous situations created on African lakes and rivers in attempt to get water from them to meet people's needs. However, this is not the only reason why Africa should harvest the rainwater. There are many other reasons and a few of them are discussed below.

WHY HARVEST RAINWATER IN AFRICA?

Climate is changing very fast. African countries are having fewer annual rainy days than before. Thus, Africa itself is experiencing longer dry periods due to climate change. Ponds have been drying up, levels of lakes and rivers have been reducing due to longer dry periods. This could also be a sign of reduced ground water. If rainwater could be harvested at large scale, the tremendous pressure on rivers, lakes and groundwater sources due to the water got from them for domestic and irrigation use could be reduced. For example, Africa could greatly extend the availability of clean water, without touching the rivers and lakes, if it captured the rains that fall all over during rainy seasons.

Secondly, rainwater harvesting is a good method of collecting freshwater if it is intercepted before it encounters hazards associated with the ground. Even when it is on the ground, it can easily be filtered for use as freshwater when properly harvested. There are various filtering methods used to effectively remove the bulk of solids, debris, dirt, turbidity (suspended particles like silt and clay), colour and microorganisms and microbes, etc. Thus, with rainwater harvested, various filters are already available on the market and could be used.

Thirdly, Africa still gets rainwater which is more than enough for drinking, irrigation and to recharge groundwater aquifers. Recharging groundwater aquifers can be done in suitable structures like borewells, dugwells, recharge trenches and recharge pits. These are simple structures which can be constructed at low costs.

In addition to the above reasons, many other reasons can be advanced for harvesting rainwater. However, for purposes of simplified analysis as to why Africa should strategically harvest rainwater, this paper focuses on the following:

- Rainwater is the source of all waters on earth.
- It saves time which is wasted by women and children who walk long distances in search of water.
- In some African areas, especially parts where there is inadequate groundwater, supply or surface resources are either lacking or insufficient, rainwater harvesting is an ideal solution since Africa has adequate rains.
- Africa could easily compile the needed reliable data on factors influencing rainwater harvesting to understand what needs to be done and how to do it.
- It recharges water into the aquifers, which helps in improving the quality of existing groundwater through dilution. Most of rains falling on the surface tend to flow away rapidly leaving very little to recharge groundwater.
- It helps in utilizing the primary source of water and prevents such water, as the runoff, from getting polluted and/or contaminated thereby reducing the treatment costs.
- It reduces both rural and urban flooding.
- Methods of harvesting and storing rainwater use simple materials and can be adapted to any region and for any purpose. They provide a low cost solution, are easy and efficient.
- Rainwater harvesting and management are related to national food security.
- It could help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals if it is targeted as a strategy and implemented all across.

Rainwater is the source of all water

It is very important for African countries to recognize that all water on Earth can be traced to rain. It is an undeniable fact that all oceans, seas, lakes, rivers and underground sources, which we get water from for all purposes (domestic and agricultural purposes mostly), receive water from rains. Thus, we could harvest some of it for the same purposes as well. When rainwater is harvested, it could solve water shortages for various purposes in the continent. It could also save time for women, particularly in rural areas, who walk long distances in search of water. Time wasted could be used to do other things which could be more economically beneficial to them.

Harvesting Rainwater can save time

In most parts of Africa, as stated above, there is just too much time lost by women and children in search of water. They walk long distances and waste a lot of time on daily basis. This has been going on for too long, as if there is nothing more that could be done to improve the situation. Once rainwater can be harvested and stored for use as is needed, it could minimize the time wasted in search of water, time which could be used for other economic development activities. In the past, these issues have been pointed out many times by many people but there seems to be little effort to address them by doing the right thing. Everybody complains about water problems but not many attempts to solve it by harvesting rainwater. It needs combined efforts. I therefore add my voice to those voices which have come out before and called for governments' and partners' action to harvest the rainwater.

Considering Africa's situation where people walk for long distances in search of water and the amounts of rains it receives, harvesting rainwater is the appropriate action to pursue and an ideal solution. It is past due. The little that has been done has been successful. For example, in 2006, Loikert said "Rainwater harvesting has helped women and children a lot," adding that women used to walk up to 10 km every day in search of water, leaving their school-aged children unattended, before the mini-reservoirs [earth pans] to conserve rainwater were installed at Kisamese village, Kenya.

"Women now have more time to engage in other economic activities," she added (<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportd=61546>). In Africa, studies show that in water harvesting, there is a human-rain-land synergy. The rainwater harvesting is possible in all human-land-rain scenarios. Synergies exist between rainfall, human population density and land availability. These synergies are very clear in Africa's cases of how people settle. When synchronizing the requirements of the African settlements, availability of land and rain in such areas are essential ingredients.

Thus, the rainwater harvesting is not only possible in Kisamese Village, Kenya, but also in other parts of Africa. What was done there can be adapted elsewhere in various parts of Africa. In fact it has been done in other parts of Africa, as is shown below, but not as much as it should be done or it would be required. In Africa, there are enough rains that produce adequate water for harvesting.

Adequate rains

Most parts of Africa receive a lot of rains several months during the year. These rains fill lakes, rivers, ponds and cause floods everywhere in cities and rural areas when they fall. However, Africa also experiences droughts and water scarcity during the dry seasons. These problems could be solved by harvesting the rainwater. What is needed is to know how many hours of rains do we get out of the hours we have in a year. How much water do we receive if it is to be harvested, how can it be stored, distributed, and how much and when in each particular area? Once this is known, rainwater could be harvested and used appropriately to solve such problems and be used to fight poverty among other things.

"In the popular mind, Africa is seen as a dry continent," said Dennis Garrity, Director-General of the World Agro forestry Center (ICRAF). "But overall, it actually has more water resources per capita than Europe. However, much of Africa's rain comes in bursts and is rapidly swept away or is never collected" (<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportd=61546>).

This statement, like many others said in the past, clearly points out the adequate rains Africa has yet Africa has not done much to harvest it in order to solve its water problems. People die from floods and many animals die during the dry period due to droughts. Such droughts appear to indicate water scarcity and conversely there is so much rainwater during the rainy seasons that it causes floods that kill people. These are two contradicting extremes of water problems and yet they could be solved by having a balance, which is achieved through rainwater harvesting that, minimizes floods and saves water to use during the dry period.



Photo : **Mike Pflanz/IRIN**

Rainwater harvesting could solve water problems, say experts
(Direct Quotation of the picture and words from the same article
(<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportd=61546>).

According to an article entitled "Africa: Rainwater Harvesting Could Solve Water Shortages", it was reported in NAIROBI, 13 November 2006 (IRIN) that "Rainwater harvesting has the potential to solve most of Africa's water shortages. This was according to a new study, which had been released. In the same article, furthermore, it was noted that "Africa is not water scarce. The rainfall contribution is more than adequate to meet the needs of the current population several times over," as it was referred to in the article several times over," as it was referred to in the article Similar comments have been said and reported in reports compiled by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Agroforestry Center (ICRAF).

According to the studies which have been carried out, Kenya for example, has enough rainfall to supply the water needs of six to seven times its current population of about 33 million people. It has the capacity to harvest rainwater of 12,300 cubic metres and yet its annual renewable water availability is just over 600 cubic metres. The capital city, Nairobi, alone has the capacity to provide enough water for the population of 6-10 million, supplying each one with 60 litres a day if rainwater was efficiently harvested (<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportd=61546>). Only a very small population of Nairobi, out of its current population estimated at 3 million, is served water by the city's existing water system.

Egypt is harvesting rainwater but more efforts are still needed. Although considered very dry and as desert, the annual rainfall ranges from 0 mm/year in the desert to 200 mm/year in the northern coastal region. The country has various ongoing projects with a focus on rainwater harvesting activities. They are involved in the constructions of cisterns and reservoirs for storage and dykes (earthen, stone and cemented) for spreading the water. The water balance Egypt has shows that the available water supply is sufficient for the future years (El-Hakeen, 2007) but it is not available in most places where it would be needed.

Morocco started solving its water problems some years back when it embarked upon the program of building a certain number of dams a year to harvest the rainwater. At present, it has over one hundred dams with total storage capacity of about 16 billion cubic metres. These dams are used to regulate about 12 billion cubic metres of surface water while underground water resources supply a volume of 2.8 billion cubic metres per year (Maaroufi 2008). Some parts of Morocco now have enough water harvested to last for some years even if it stopped raining today. However, much more dams are still needed across the country to solve the water shortages and to increase farming activities for higher food production.

Else where in Africa, in Ethiopia, only a fifth of its estimated 77 million people are connected to the domestic water-supply system. However, it has the potential rainwater harvesting capacity to meet the needs of more than 520 million people. For example, it has rainwater harvesting potential of 11,800 cubic metres compared with annual renewable - river and groundwater - supplies of about 1,600 cubic meters. Why should 46% of its population suffer food shortage due to lack of water, while harvesting such amounts of rainwater would increase its food production? Why would it be among the countries hit hardest by droughts all the time? (<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportd=61546>)

With rainwater tapping, the Ugandan capital of Kampala alone would be able to provide adequate drinking water for about 4.5 million people, each one receiving 60 cubic meters daily (<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=61546>). Only a small percentage of its population has access to running water and is served by its existing system.

In the above cases, the rainwater harvested so far is used for domestic needs, drinking and sanitation, for animals and supplemental irrigation purposes. In many parts of Africa, most purposes of the water use are still commonly referred to as “women’s work”. Thus, “women work” are the ones mostly affected by water shortages.

It is clearly known that about a third of Africa is considered suitable for rainwater harvesting using 200mm of rainfall (as recorded in areas of Egypt) a year as the threshold. What encouragement about adequacy of water from rainfalls to solve Africa’s water shortages? However, one wonders why the governments, International organizations, planners, etc; have not shed much light on solving this problem of water shortage through rainwater harvesting! Why should drought, dying people and animals, food shortage and hunger, etc; still be a frequent problem due to water scarcity with such capacity of rainwater harvesting? Perhaps, the beginning point is to have a clear and reliable data on factors influencing the “rainwater harvesting” to prove the adequacy rain water and to convince them of such facts.

Reliable data on influencing factors

The quantity and pattern of rains are some of the factors that are very important in influencing rainwater harvesting. These two factors help to determine the potential amount of rainwater received from any given catchment. On the positive end, Africa has adequate rains and rainy seasons are known. However, it is very important to have clear and reliable data on rainfall. Reliable data for period of several years, perhaps not less than 10 years, should be compiled by experts to give a picture of how rainfall and rainwater have been changing over time. It may possibly exist, but it is not known by those who matter. These data help in designing how to harvest rainwater and what to do with it.

The annual rainy periods or days influence the need and design for rainwater harvesting. Knowing such information helps to determine the need for rainwater collection and storage tanks or other means, and the feasibility to use rainwater to recharge the groundwater aquifers. For example, in places with fewer annual rainy days or longer dry periods, there is more need for rainwater collection. If the dry period is too long, then larger storage would be needed. However, in such regions, it is better to use rainwater to recharge groundwater aquifers. Once data are available, one gets an idea about the potential rainwater supply or the volume of water expected to be received in a particular area. A case in point and in simple terms, the volume of water to be received is calculated from the “Area of catchment (Sq.M) x Amount of Rainfall” and the water harvesting potential would equal (=) “Rainfall (mm) x Area of catchment X Runoff coefficient” (<http://www.rainwaterharvestin.org/urban/ThePotential.htm>). In order to apply these formulae and get accurate results, it requires reliable data.

Thus knowing quantity and pattern factors is critical not only for rainwater harvesting but also management. Even though rainwater harvested may be used to solve the immediate problems, there is need to have long-term plans and management. One way is to use it to recharge aquifers in the communities on a continuous basis and then withdraw and distribute it as needed.

Recharges water into the aquifers

When it rains, the rainwater flows rapidly off the surface thereby leaving very little to recharge groundwater. Consequently, it flows away in uncoordinated or uncontrolled manner and ends up anywhere. However, when rainwater is harvested, it flows in controlled networks. For example, if it is harvested in structures like borewells, dugwells, recharge trenches, and pits, it recharges water into the aquifers. By recharging water into the aquifers, it helps to improve the quality of existing groundwater through dilution.

Also, both in urban and rural areas, runoff rainwater from rooftops can be collected and diverted through drainage pipes to a settlement or tanks from which it can be channelled into recharge wells, borewells or dugwells. Caution must be taken to prevent other things like mosquito breeding, leaves and debris in such areas. Harvesting rainwater, in the controlled networks, does not only help to recharge water into the aquifers but also prevents pollution of such freshwater.

Prevents pollution of fresh rainwater

If rainwater is neglected and falls into disuse, it worsens the fresh water scenario and leads into water pollution. The rainwater which is not harvested causes huge losses of freshwater that simply wonders anywhere due to absence of well-controlled networks in rural areas in particular. For example, whenever it rains, the runoff water goes anywhere and gets polluted or contaminated. Sometimes it discharges through pit latrines which get flooded and collapse. It carries all kinds of waste, including plastic bags, which are environments' risks, and all these eventually end up either in those waters used for consumption and agriculture. Rainwater, which is uncontrolled, causes floods that lead to cholera outbreak and other water borne diseases, which kill many people in rural areas.

Also, the polluted water infiltrates into ground water and pollutes it as well. In urban centres it goes into sewer and storm drains and gets contaminated. It eventually ends up in general sources of water being used in several ways such as domestic purposes, including drinking water, and crops. Therefore, the treatment plants, especially in urban centers, are forced to do more work to treat these huge amounts of contaminated water that comes in at once.

When rainwater is harvested, it is in well-controlled networks or areas and it is easy to treat, reduces the costs and risks. It also allows for easy utilization of the primary source of fresh water while preventing the runoff from going into sewer and storm drains and thereby reducing the load on treatment plants in urban areas. Above all, it reduces floods that often lead to disaster/crisis in African countries.

Harvesting rainwater reduces floods in rural areas and urban centers

Most often, in Africa, there are torrential rains across a broad band of land stretching from west to east and north to south, however, in countries south of the Sahara, they cause very serious floods. These floods affect thousands upon thousands of people in each country and millions of people across Africa. The floods destroy houses thereby leaving many people homeless and displace millions of people across African rural areas. They destroy crops, as farms get submerged. They also impact water and sanitation facilities, particularly pit latrines which get flooded and collapse. In addition, floods destroy schools, many roads and bridges are ruined or become impassable, dams and health centers are wrecked as well. The most vulnerable people are women and children who make up the largest percentage of the overall affected population. They become homeless, have no access to food, and are the hardest hit with cholera outbreaks and other waterborne diseases which cause very high deaths. Usually, water does not relieve the droughts because it comes in torrents that can not be absorbed by the soil.

In urban areas, floods destroy homes as well as kill people and sometimes wreck existing water pipes that supply water extracted from lakes. Although urban centers as well often get flooded during rainy seasons, the floods do not stay for a prolonged period of time as they do in rural areas. In rural areas, when it floods, Humanitarian Agencies like the Red Cross, World Food Program, United Nations' Humanitarian Agency, other international and local organizations and individual countries have to appeal for relief aid funding. They raise and use millions of dollars in each country every time it floods and sometimes it happens repeatedly in one country in one rainy season.

Last year, 2007, in September alone, the United Nations Humanitarian Agency launched an appeal for 43 million dollars in emergency assistance to flood- affected people in Uganda. Kenya was to spend 97 million dollars to bolster flood defences solely in the western part of the country where fifteen people

had died as of result of floods. Ghana and Togo were looking for 2.1 million for emergency supplies only (<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5j33OFaJmytc8YvIKscNF3EoOMSww>). More that 22 countries were affected including Sudan, Rwanda, Zambia, Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone. The hardest hit is the rural population and mostly the poorest countries. Most often, Women and children form the largest percentage of the affected population.

The rainfalls that cause floods produce huge amounts of freshwater which flows away rapidly, in an uncontrolled manner, and causes all the above mentioned problems. All these problems could be minimized if there were organized ways in which the countries harvest the rainwater. They could instead have it in well controlled networks and use it in the appropriate manner. Usually, it gets these countries unaware and unprepared, and puts them in unexpected budgets of millions and millions of dollars. The amount of money that is used when the disaster of floods hits, is probably much more than what is required to do a good job in rainwater harvesting, which creates controlled networks that this water could be channeled through into dams. It is precisely in the view of the above few mentioned problems that I feel governments and donors should take actions to harvest rainwater. This is the most ideal solution to minimize the floods, save lives and solve or minimize other problems mentioned above as well. The methods of harvesting and storing rainwater are ideal because they have low costs.

Methods of Harvesting and of storing harvested rainwater provide a low cost solution

There are many ways and places of harvesting rainwater. However the following surfaces can be targeted as effective to harvest runoff: Rooftops (with gutters all around), paved or unpaved areas like landscapes, open fields, parks storm water drains, roads or paths and pavements, etc. Open areas in case of storm water drains particularly in residential areas have proper networks which could offer simple and cost effective means for harvesting rainwater, if they are neatly maintained. All these areas could be linked to channels and other controlled networks that lead to dams and water reservoirs.

What is more remarkable and seems obvious, the rainwater harvesting and storage for such water (for drinking and agricultural purposes) does not require large capital investment. It requires only simple technology which is involved as said by Achim Steiner, UNEP's Executive Director. He further said during the news conference, on 13 November 2006, to announce the findings of the study at the conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Nairobi that "As we look into what Africa can do to adapt to climate change... rainwater harvesting is one of those steps that does not require billions of dollars, that does not require international conventions first - it is a technology, a management approach, to provide water resources at the community level" (<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportd=61546>). Some methods of storing harvested rainwater use simple materials and can be adapted to any region and for any purpose. Thus, it has a low cost solution of storing harvested water that is easy, efficient, and ready for distribution to where it is required.

I completely agree with Steiner in his statement that, "Large-scale infrastructure can often bypass the needs of poor and dispersed populations"... "Widely deployed rainwater harvesting can act as a buffer against drought events for these people while also significantly supplementing supplies in cities and areas connected to the water grid," he added, urging African governments and international aid donors to put more resources into rainwater harvesting projects on the continent. This was said in 2006, and yet not much has been done since then. African Governments and International Aid Donors should seriously consider rainwater harvesting as an urgent matter and put resources into such projects. In practice, rainwater harvesting should be included in States' policies because it is very much related to the national food security.

How harvesting and management of rainwater are related to the national food security?

First of all, it is very important to note that available quantity of water has a direct impact on each country's capacity to produce food and therefore a direct influence on national food security. Most parts of Africa have adequate rainfall as mentioned earlier. Thus, Africa should harvest rainwater through capturing and manage it through storing, distributing and recharging, and use it as needed especially during the prolonged droughts in rural areas. These are the key components of water management this paper refers to.

With such water management systems, Africans can create zones for intensive agricultural production in rural areas. These will be attempts to help local farmers to produce enough food for their consumption and even generate an excess for sale. That is, if African countries can ensure good agriculture systems in all types of villages and farms. This could generate a marketable surplus of agricultural produce. The countries can set up public food procurement and distribution systems. They can create a purchasing power through cooperatives to buy green food or fresh food from farmers and take them to markets in cities. This system can be set up to help poor farmers, who may not have access to such markets and ensures that their food can fetch affordable and reasonable prices to motivate them to carry on their farming activities. Having rainwater harvested is the prerequisite of all these activities to ensure availability and reliability of water supply for their agricultural purposes.

As earlier said, in most African countries and in rural areas in particular, farming and collecting water are still referred to as "Women's work". Improved systems of having available and reliable water from rains, for domestic use and agricultural purposes, benefit women most. First of all, such systems could help to improve women's life by having water within reach for domestic use. Secondly, they would help women in rural areas to increase their income through increased agricultural production and having extra time for doing other economic activities, from time saved by stopping the walking of long distances in search of water.

Also, with better rainwater management systems, the harvested rainwater can create large irrigation systems, more so than canals and irrigation pumps from lakes and rivers. Canals do not reach everywhere and pumps make groundwater table fall. The few structures of agricultural irrigations and production currently available in the south of the Sahara, allow water for intensive crops driven by market based and are not people based. The rainwater harvest strategies could be more people based and can achieve affordable irrigation systems for local food security. One way of doing this is to harvest and store the water in areas near the rural people's farms and construct efficient channels to bring such water to gardens or farms with minimal losses.

Thus, there is a need of pursuing rainwater harvesting and food security policies that can help to achieve the aim of food meant for the poor and those who need it most, and particularly in the rural areas. This will not only help governments to achieve food security programs and to ensure that proper nutritional entitlement is achieved, but also to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Helps to achieve the Millennium Development Goals if it is targeted as strategy and implemented

According to UNDP assessment reports, African countries are far from meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015. Some of these goals are related to finding a solution for water shortages first. Thus, there is urgent and immediate need for Governments' officials and international organizations to focus and strategize any potential source for solving major and longstanding water problems. Rainwater harvesting is one potential source that has an ideal solution that could help to quickly achieve some Millennium Development Goals of safe water for drinking, securing water for improved rural livelihoods and to increase food production.

Whereas securing rainwater, through harvesting and managing it effectively, will help to achieve the safe water for drinking, to improve rural livelihoods and to increase food production, could also help to meet the following Millennium Development Goals:

- To improve the income of some of 315 million people – one in two people in Sub Saharan Africa who survives on less than one dollar per day.
 - To improve the lives of some people out of 184 million people – 33% of the African population who suffer from malnutrition.
 - To increase the average income per capita, which decreased in 20 African countries during the 1990s.
 - To increase access to safe water of many people out of 300 million Africans who did not have access to safe water in the year 2000.
 - To increase African children enrollment in schools especially those who are not in schools because they have to spend their time searching for water, by walking long distances away from home on daily basis.
- daily basis. Only 57% of African children are enrolled in primary education, and only one of three children does complete school. Besides, the increase in income could be used to pay for their schools' needs.
- Increase hectares coverage of forest that has been lost partly due to droughts and climate change. The African continent lost more than 5.3 million hectares of forest during the decade of the 1990s. (Source (<http://www.africa2015.org/factspoverty.html>)).

There are many clear examples which show that the above could be achieved from the success stories in Africa:

- One of the examples is from Kenya. A pilot rainwater harvesting project in the Kisameese area of Kajiado District in southwestern Kenya solved most of the water problems experienced by the local Maasai community as was reported by Agnes Loikert, a community leader from the area. The Kisameese project has the capacity to store more than a million litres of water, some of which the community was using to irrigate small vegetable gardens, thus enhancing the community's food security (<http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=61546>).
- Another example is of Water Harvesting by Matrouh Resource Management Project (MRMP) Egypt. This has focused on constructions of cisterns and reservoirs for water storage and dykes (earthen, stone and cemented) for water spreading. According to reports, water harvesting had significant impact on productivity enhancement mainly on fruits. The ten year weighted-average increase in physical productivity had grown by 91% and the weighted annual net income increased by 52%. The water harvesting had impact on basic needs and also reduced women's time and drudgery in collecting water. It was reported that the project built 7170 cisterns and 421 concrete reservoirs "to create annual storage of about 1.2 million m³. This harvested water was used for domestic needs, for animals and for supplemental irrigation purposes and "was" likely to mitigate drinking water and sanitation problems of about 6,000 households within the project area" (El-Hakeem, 2008). It was further reported that water harvesting structures in this project were to be constructed to improve crop production and vegetation covering an area of about 4,000 fd. Dry stone dykes were constructed to support crops and also minimize soil erosion in the streams by reducing the flood velocities within the reaches of the dyke.

CONCLUSION

In summary, these are some of the clear examples showing that rainwater harvesting is an ideal solution to solve water problems, and many other problems, and to improve standards of living for women in rural Africa. This is the time for Africa to realize the great potential, by harvesting more of the rainwater whenever and wherever it falls, to greatly enhance drinking water supplies and smallholder agricultural production. This will greatly improve the household food and income as well as nutrition and diet of people. African rains produce enough water to meet needs, provide food security and eradicate rural poverty. It could also help to achieve some of the Millennium Development Goals.

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GENDER AND NATIONAL POLICIES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES IN SUPPORT OF RURAL WOMEN: THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

In recent times the role played by women in rural development has been given an ever increasing attention, culminating in the insertion of specific measures in Agenda 2000⁽¹⁾. The EU programs for rural development aim at singling out the factors hindering the full participation of women in the public and economic life at local level and at developing specific initiatives for this category. The Italian State, in agreement with the EU Commission and by means of Structural Funds, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF), plays an important role in reducing inequality among men and women in matters of rural employment.

In Italy, women comprise 28% of all beneficiaries of Rural Development Programmes and this means that the integration of a gender perspective in rural development programmes at regional level has become a priority, and increasingly greater importance is being given to female entrepreneurship in agriculture which is considered a dynamic sector propelling economic growth.

In the Italian National Strategy Plan 2007-2013, which is part of the EU Rural Development Policy, first of all attention is being paid to improving access to public services, since many are the rural areas where the difficulty in accessing these services, the lack of alternative job opportunities, and the ageing population are significantly reducing the potential for development and particularly jeopardizing future prospects for women and youth. Therefore, one of the main goals of the Italian rural development policy is to improve the quality of life in rural areas and encourage diversification. The available measures should be used for promoting the development and acquisition of skills and should aim at formulating local development strategies and preserving the amenity value of rural areas for future generations. Information and training are thus fundamental and should be promoted but first of all it is necessary to take into account the specific needs of female, young and old workers.

Moreover, in order to make rural areas more “attractive”, the Italian rural development policy intends to promote a sustainable development and create new job opportunities for women and youth, as well as facilitate access to the most state-of-the-art technologies in the field of communication and information. In this regard, diversification into non-agricultural activities and the development of the relationship between agriculture and other rural economic sectors are extremely important.

In that sense, there exist specific tools in support of female entrepreneurship in agriculture. Law No 215/92 (“Positive Actions for female entrepreneurship”) has been implemented by the Ministry for Economic Development to promote substantial equality and equal opportunities for men and women in economic and entrepreneurial activities. The Italian Agriculture Federations and the National Observatory for Female Enterprise and Labour in Agriculture (ONILFA) play a crucial role in helping women’s role in agriculture be acknowledged. They are fundamental means of communication and information as well as providers of gender-disaggregated data. Information on women’s needs and opinions is of utmost importance when it comes to formulating policies and collecting genderdisaggregated data is an indispensable step towards making women visible as human beings, social actors, and farmers as well.

The analysis conducted in this paper clearly demonstrates the importance of women in agriculture, their multiform contribution to European agriculture, and the need to strengthen their role in rural areas by initiatives in the field of agricultural development.

1- Agenda 2000 is an action programme whose main objectives are to strengthen Community policies and to give the European Union a new financial framework for the period 2000-06 with a view to enlargement. It was launched in 1999 in the form of twenty legislative texts. Agenda 2000 introduces a comprehensive rural development policy which recognises the multifunctional nature of agriculture and which promotes measures to support the broader rural economy. Measures have been brought together in one regulation which aims at contributing to the regeneration of rural areas and the promotion of diversification.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing attention has been paid in recent years to the problem of the role of women in rural development, resulting in the insertion of special measures in Agenda 2000. Programmes for rural development aim at identifying the constraints on women's full participation in local public and economic life and at developing specific initiatives in favour of women. In particular, Reg. 1257/99 and subsequent implementation regulations define the strategies and objectives of the new rural development policy oriented towards integrated, sustainable development (multifunctionality, efficiency and coordination of action) and aim at creating jobs in such a way as to guarantee better use of existing human resources, not least promoting equal opportunities for women. The aim of this paper is to assess the outcome of EU and Italian policy trends in terms of employment and/or supplementary income for women in agriculture, investigating in particular certain aspects of farm management by women. The research intends to emphasise the importance of the various contributions of women to rural development.

WOMEN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN EUROPE: FROM ANTIQUITY TO MODERN TIMES

Since the dawn of European history, women's productive activities have been primarily directed towards the maintenance and growth of nuclear families and their respective communities. An important part of these activities has centred on the domestic sphere where they have produced goods and food and where labour power has been reproduced. Food processing, the making of clothing and tools, carrying water, gathering wood, keeping the fire burning, caring for domestic animals, selling agricultural or handmade products in local markets, raising children, preparing and administering remedies and medicines, cleaning, etc., constitute productive labours without which no human group can reproduce itself or prosper. These conditions have a particular impact on pre-capitalist societies, where production and kinship are profoundly interwoven. In these circumstances the majority of women were exploited simultaneously in both their working and reproductive capacity. The product of their labour and their body was controlled by a husband, a father, a guardian or an employer. Management and control were, in general, in the hands of men, via the marital or parental bond or by means of the dependence which was reinforced by the public and political position of men.

Throughout history women have been in charge of maintaining and reproducing these domestic units by means of their labour, time and skill. Women's domestic labour has not been regarded as it actually was, but rather as a fundamental part of their "virtue" as women, which has been essential for the family and proves key to the well-being of society. A landed holding without a woman is unthinkable. No man can take on the running of one if he doesn't have a woman in his house. However, working in the countryside has almost always seemed like an extension of domestic work and thus formed part of women's "natural" activities. It is certainly difficult to separate them. As stated above, production and kinship are intimately linked in pre-capitalist societies, and agricultural duties were an integral part of the home.

Recently, European policy makers have expressed an increased interest in issues related to women's contribution and presence in agriculture. The latest Eurostat indicators reveal that women make up 37% of the EU agricultural workforce. Rural women play a crucial role in agriculture since they are able to satisfy the need for agricultural multifunctionality that is being promoted by EU rural development policies and programmes. The choice of quality or food safety-oriented productions, family labour and the capacity of reconciling work and family responsibilities are indeed a clear example of multifunctionality.

Women's contribution to agriculture is thus fundamental for the socio-economic development of rural areas. They are extensively involved in agriculture as female farm-heads, co-owners, family farm workers and also employees. 38% of family workers in agriculture are women. But, although their contribution to local and community development is significant, their role still goes unnoticed and they are still not fully involved in decision-making. Moreover, many of them don't even receive an income since their work is considered integral part of the family income. This is partly due to their multiple roles and workload, but also to the persistence of traditional views about women's and men's roles in society. Indeed, marriage in the agricultural sector means the effective involvement of women in agriculture without their official recognition as agricultural workers or farm managers.

Rural population ageing is another crucial issue to take into account. Indeed, 19% of the female workforce is aged over 65, and this rate reaches higher percentages (27 to 37%) in the Mediterranean area.

Therefore, a main priority is to encourage young women to contribute to the agricultural sector. In this regard, government institutions should introduce effective measures to support and develop female entrepreneurship by encouraging women to undertake rural entrepreneurial activities and find effective tools to improve farm efficiency. Rural development entails the expansion into new sectors and the development of alternative activities in order to create new job opportunities particularly for young women who can otherwise decide to migrate.

The development of agro-tourism activities, concerning the handmade production of food products and beverages or environment improvement, demonstrates the capacity of women to significantly contribute to the diversification of rural areas and to consolidate the European model of multifunctional agriculture.

In such a context, all services supporting female entrepreneurship play a key role. Information, training and adequate professional re-qualification are thus of utmost importance. But to acquire professional skills, women need a specific training in a sector where they usually don't have the time for such activity due to their workload and family duties they have to carry out. As previously mentioned, work-family conciliation is a persisting issue that today has become one of the "hottest" topics in all economic sectors, especially agriculture, where this represents one of the major constraints that prevent women from undertaking managerial roles. Thus, measures should be taken to emphasize the ability of women to reconcile work and family life which is one of the main and typical features characterizing women in agriculture.

GENDER EQUALITY IN EU POLICIES AND PLANNING

With the European Union programmes for rural development that give primary importance to improving the economic and social condition of rural men and women, and particularly to ensuring them equal opportunities, gender issues in agriculture and rural development are becoming high on the governments' agenda. The challenge for rural development programmes is to identify the constraints on women's full participation in economic and public life at local level, and to develop specific initiatives in their favour.

These programmes are particularly directed towards diversification and strengthening of the economic fabric of rural areas, the possibility of promoting entrepreneurship and creating employment and/or supplementary income, for women as well, the exploitation of local resources (quality products, local ecological potential, workforce), and the full involvement of women and young people in the agricultural sector.

European Union programmes have already provided significant backing to developments in rural areas that have benefited women. The most significant actions include: i) **Regs. 1257/99 and 1260/99**, which define the strategies and objectives of the new rural development policy (multi-functionality, multi-sector approach, efficiency and coordination of action, application of new measures, etc.) and aim, among other things, at creating new jobs, so as to guarantee better use of existing human resources and promote equal opportunities for men and women; ii) **Leader+** initiative for rural development, in which an improvement in job opportunities and/or the creation of jobs for women and youth is an EU priority and contributes to improving the conditions of women in rural areas by providing incentives for the development of new activities and sources of employment; iii) **NOW** (New Opportunities for Women) is an EU employment initiative that has been widely used to support training, employment creation and enterprise support projects for rural women.

National and regional action is also moving in this direction: the planning of action for agriculture and rural development in EU countries aims at exploiting local resources and providing favourable conditions for training and the development of production activities, also involving workers not directly connected with the agricultural sector. The development of the entrepreneurial spirit is considered indispensable for the creation of new jobs and to increase education, training and the possibility of reconciling work and family life.

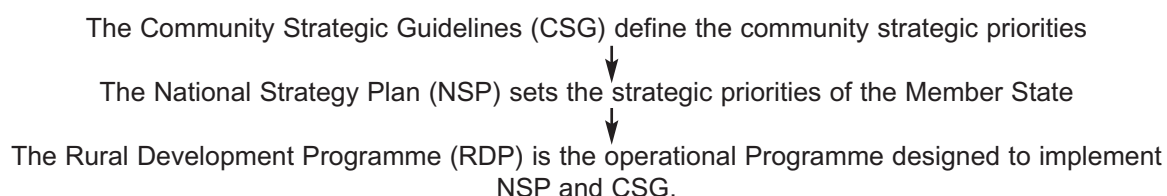
THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2007-2013

The objectives of the EU rural development policy - also known as the second pillar of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) – focus on the enhancement of the social and economic cohesion, on the improvement of competitiveness in farming and forestry sectors, and on the amelioration of the environment aiming at landscape conservation and sustainable development.

The European Union action in favour of the rural world combines national policies implemented by each Member State, in a framework of subsidiarity, additionality of resources, partnership and participation of the various stakeholders.

How is it implemented in Europe?

Regarding the programming period 2007-2013, the European Union has adopted a so-called "multilevel" approach, including: Community Strategic Guidelines, National Strategy Plan and Rural Development Programme.



How is it implemented in Italy?

The Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies (Mipaaf) has developed a National Strategy Plan (NSP) that is the outcome of consultations, partnerships and negotiations with the major institutional, economic and social actors. It identifies four strategic priorities in line with the Community Strategic Guidelines:

- 1) Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector;
- 2) Improving the environment and the countryside;
- 3) Improving quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy;
- 4) Leader approach.

The strategy, as defined by the NSP, is carried out through 21 Rural Development Programmes (RDP), managed by each Italian Region and Autonomous Province, and through the National Rural Network Programme, which is under Mipaaf direct management with the support of the Monitoring Committee of which ONILFA is member. Each RDP consists of 4 Axes, corresponding to the strategic priorities set in the NSP. The total available resources amount to Euro 16,687 billion, of which 8,292 billion are funded by the EU through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

WOMEN AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ITALY

Socio-demographic features of rural women

Italy has one of the lowest employment rates for women (42,0%) as compared with the European average (55,6%). In addition, an unemployment rate of 12,2% as compared with an EU average of 8.8%, confirms Italy's position as a late developer in the EU.

It should be pointed out that the progressive deregulation of the labour market and the high unemployment rates in certain European countries in the '90s led to the introduction of policies and legislative measures to support entrepreneurship, mainly aiming at reducing the barriers to setting up self-employed business (simplification of procedures, reduction of the costs involved in setting up new businesses, easier access to credit, improvement of social security services for self-employed workers, etc.) and promoting entrepreneurial capacities. Some of the measures adopted address exclusively the insertion of young people and women in enterprise. In Italy, Law 215/92 introduced measures to

support the creation and development of female enterprises, including cooperative businesses, training and qualification, access to credit, and the promotion of enterprises in innovative sectors.

According to the ISTAT (National Institute of Statistics) data of 2003, women manage 17.3% of Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) and 27.3% of farms all over Italy. That means that from 1999 (see table 1) to 2003 there has been a slight increase in the number of women-run farms (from 26.3 to 27.3%), and even if this percentage is still low as compared to men, their number is increasing. This confirms women's will to gradually assume a role as juridical-economic farm managers.

Table1: Number of farms, Total Surface Area and Utilized Agricultural Area (UAA) broken down by sex in the years 1990, 1998 and 1999

	Year				Year		
	1990	1998	1999		1990	1998	1999
Farm Managers	thousands				%		
FARMS							
Male	1.998	1.701	1.674		75	74	73.7
Female	667	599	596		25	26	26.3
TOTAL	2.665	2.300	2.270		100	100	100
TOTAL AREA (ha)							
Male	18.361	16.784	16.899		85.5	83.1	83.8
Female	3.105	3.413	3.265		14.5	16.9	16.2
TOTAL	21.466	20.197	20.164		100	100	100
UAA (ha)							
Male	12.706	12.425	12.454		85	83	83
Female	2.241	2.541	2.543		15	17	17
TOTAL	14.947	14.966	14.997		100	100	100

Rural population ageing is one of the main constraints on rural development. Indeed, in agriculture, there is a high percentage of women in the age class 35-54 (59.4%), a small percentage of 15-34- year-old women (22.9%), while women over 50 total 33.9%. On the contrary, in the industrial and service sectors, there is a higher percentage of young women in the age class 15 to 34 (39.2%) and a lower percentage of women over 50 (17.8%).

Table 2: Percentage of women in agriculture and other sectors broken down by age group for the year 2001

AGE GROUP	Agriculture	Other sectors
15-19	0.8	1.2
20-24	3.7	7.5
25-29	7.5	14.1
30-34	10.9	16.4
35-39	14.2	16.4
40-44	14.6	14.3
45-49	14.4	12.3
50-54	16.2	9.9
55-59	11.0	5.0
60-64	4.0	1.9
65 and over	2.7	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Most of the time, the level of education of women occupied in the agricultural sector is lower than the national average. According to the ISTAT data of 2001, 5.6% of rural women didn't get any certificate, 36.5% have a primary education certificate, 16.6% have a secondary school certificate, and only 1.7% possesses a university degree. These data show that women in the agricultural sector are much less educated than those occupied in other sectors, but at the same time reveal that their level of education is almost the same as men's (see figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Percentage of women in agriculture and other sectors broken down by level of education (ISTAT 2001)

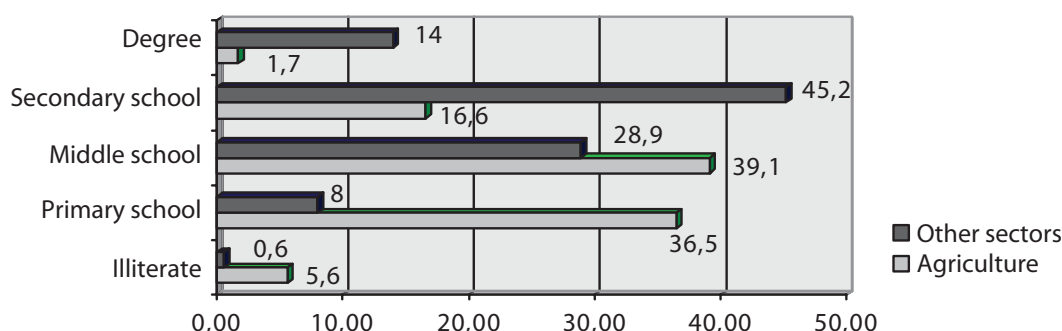


Figure2: Percentage of women and men occupied in agriculture broken down by level of education (ISTAT 2001)

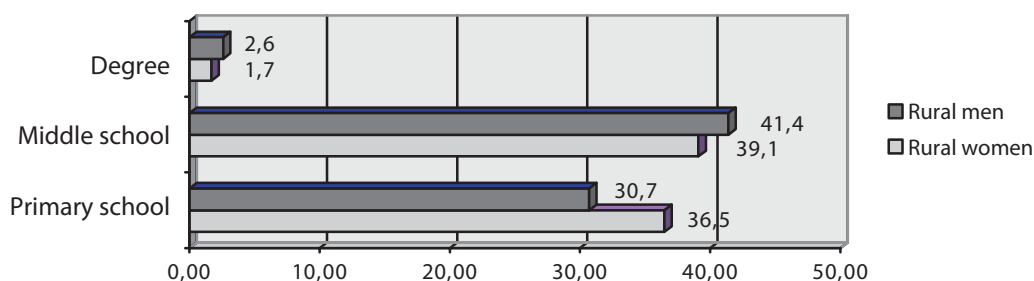


Table 3: Percentage of women occupied in agriculture and other sectors broken down by work hours (ISTAT 2001)

Work Hours	Agriculture	Other sectors
none	10.0	6.5
Less than 12	5.3	3.2
12-24	13.7	18.0
25-35	16.1	13.4
36-40	30.1	46.6
40 and over	24.8	12.3
Total	100.0	100.0

As shown in table 3, rural women work longer hours than the other female workers. According to the ISTAT data of 2001, 24.8% of women occupied in agriculture work more than 40 hours/week, and this percentage is much higher than that of women occupied in other sectors (12.3); only 27.5% work parttime and 72.2 women out of 100 work full-time. Thus, it is clear that rural women are able to combine household chores with their occupation. Although gender equality has not been fully achieved yet, women's empowerment continues to grow partly due to the fact that the roles within the family structure are intensively interchanged by each member.

Diversification and multifunctionality in women-run farms

The majority of women-run farms are effective, innovative and dynamic, but the real characteristic featuring them is their orientation towards diversification and multi-functionality. Diversification refers to the use of the land and of the other farm's primary inputs (capital, labour) to produce goods and services not directly related with the primary sector, such as tourist, recreational, educational and therapeutic activities. Traditional forms of diversification away from agriculture include, for example, on-farm processing; direct marketing¹ of farm products, and agro-tourism. The diversification process can then lead to exiting from agriculture, that is to a complete deactivation in the agricultural enterprise of the agricultural production function.

A second type of adjustment that farms are undergoing refers to the activation of functions different from the productive one, such as ecological, social (cultural diversity and heritage conservation, positive contributions to the viability of rural areas) and economic functions (spillover effects of agriculture on other economic activities, for example on tourism).

In other words, the farm becomes multi-functional. The concept of multi-functionality relies on the recognition that agriculture, in addition to producing food and fibres, also produces a wide range of non-market goods and services, shapes the environment, affects social and cultural systems and contributes to economic growth. The conservation of environmental, cultural and social values traditionally produced by the agricultural sector is increasingly demanded by urban dwellers. The two main forces driving this growth in demand for goods and services different from food and fibers are 1) a greater awareness of the value attached to the environmental and social functions; and 2) the growing concern for their increasing scarcity, arising from the shrinking role played by agriculture in the rural areas and from the mounting pressures of urbanization on rural traditions and way of life, and of anthropic activities on the natural ecosystems.

Differently from diversification that may lead to exiting from agriculture, the adoption of multi-functional practices strengthens and deepens the agricultural production function of farms. Sustainability and quality of life are thus two fundamental principles rural women want to respect. It is well known that rural women play a significant role in food safety and biodiversity conservation. Indeed, when evaluating a crop women take into account not only its market value but also its organoleptic and gastronomic properties as well as their family's food needs. Table 4 shows rural women's main strengths and weaknesses.

Table 4: Rural women's main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
Wide range of domestic skills	Little awareness of their rights as citizens and workers that makes them vulnerable to discrimination.
Management skills which can lead to the development of rural and agro-tourism	
Strong relational and communication skills useful for developing additional activities such as didactic farms and direct selling	

Didactic Farms

Didactic farms constitute one of the several aspects of farm multifunctionality, as well as a possible income-generating activity. Didactic farms are intended to educate future consumers on food and environment through the valorisation of agricultural resources. They receive food and environmental education, being made acquainted with the local produce, the relation between food and environment, food and health, as well as with environmental sustainability. Visiting a didactic farm represents a great opportunity for children, young people and students to know their own environment from a cultural and productive point of view, being directly involved in agriculture and livestock activities. They are also made acquainted with the cultural, historic, environmental, and gastronomic traditions of the territory, and are given the chance to participate in a wide range of practical and theoretical activities through some didactic material, such as posters, pictures, DVDs and other digital supports concerning aspects of rural life, local history and agricultural and zootechnical activities.

Pedagogic approach

Through the pedagogic approach young students are given the opportunity to:

- Learn through practical activities, teamwork, and direct field experiences (seeding, harvesting, produce processing, etc..)
- Enter into contact with the animal and vegetal life, learning to respect them;

1- Both on and off-farm, for example in farmer's market or in a shop located outside the farm.

- Be responsible for their own health and environment, and conceive the value of daily work;
- Become acquainted with agriculture and its activities and relevant aspects, such as cultivation and breeding systems, nature's cycles, organoleptic features of food, energy production, sustainable development, and the importance of food safety.

Main objectives

- Improve the relation between urban and rural areas;
- Stimulate students' interest in discovering the environment and the agricultural activity;
- Further the recovery of the environmental and cultural value of one's own territory;
- Emphasise and acknowledge the social role and the importance of agriculture;
- Raise environmental awareness and respect among people;
- Acquaint people with the origin of food products;
- Educate future consumers by making them aware of the existing relations between productive systems, food consumption and environmental protection; and
- Explain food processing.

Direct selling

The real strength featuring rural women is their ability to process agricultural products. Their century-old experience as women, mothers and wives living and working in a rural environment has developed unique but unnoticed skills and has produced over centuries many of the excellent products which are currently the proud of Italy and at the same time are highly appreciated all over the world. Thus, in 1999 the idea of selling these high-quality products directly to the consumer materialised. Direct selling by producers offers an alternative in which producers and consumers can form a symbiotic relationship depending on their individual desires. This may include a desire for a more environmentally friendly form of farming.

Direct marketing plays a role in rural development by encouraging a climate of entrepreneurship and innovation, attracting agricultural tourists, and promoting alternative forms of agriculture and source of income for small farms, organic farms and other alternative farms. In a highly urbanized society, direct farm marketing provides a link between urban consumers and rural food producers that can be valuable in developing sustainable communities. Farmers, extension workers, and government officials look to direct marketing as a means of identifying alternative income sources, preserving small farms, strengthening economic and social ties between farms and urban residents, and as an outlet for organic and specialty farm products. Direct sales to consumers can benefit small farms and rural communities in general by channelling a larger share of urban residents' spending on food and recreation back to the communities where food is grown. Direct purchases from farmers provide city residents with a source of inexpensive fresh produce and an opportunity to get in touch with their rural roots.

Increased interest in food safety, the environment, and alternative agriculture has also supported growth of direct sales. Consumers of these specialty products like to deal directly with growers to ensure that products were grown chemical-free or with other desired techniques. Complementing that preference, ecological awareness spurs consumers' interest in agricultural tourism, farm-based recreational activities, and direct-selling arrangements that involve contact with farms and farmers.

Main tools in support of women in Italian agriculture. The crucial role of information.

In Italy, the integration of a gender perspective in Regional Rural Development Programmes has become a priority in almost all regions. The previous programming period (2000-2006) gave birth to specific gender approaches that in some cases have been translated into information actions specifically directed to women entrepreneurs, a target group often difficult to reach through the traditional communication channels used by Public Administrations.

It is worth stressing that women comprise 28% of all beneficiaries of rural development programmes and this means that greater importance is being given to female entrepreneurship in agriculture which is considered a dynamic sector propelling economic growth. Within the framework of the Italian

National Strategy Plan 2007-2013, which, as explained above, is part of the EU Rural Development Policy, it is worth mentioning some interesting opportunities. First of all, attention is being paid to improving access to public services, since many are the rural areas where the difficulty in accessing these services, the lack of alternative job opportunities, and the ageing population are significantly reducing the potential for development and particularly jeopardizing future prospects for women and youth. Therefore, one of the main goals of the Italian rural development policy is to improve the quality of life in rural areas and encourage diversification, which is one of the six EU Strategic Guidelines. The available measures should be used for promoting the development and acquisition of skills and should aim at formulating local development strategies and preserving the amenity value of rural areas for future generations. Information and training are thus fundamental and should be promoted but first of all it is necessary to take into account the specific needs of female, young and old workers.

Moreover, in order to make rural areas more “attractive”, the Italian rural development policy intends to promote a sustainable development and create new job opportunities expressly for women and youth, as well as facilitate access to the most state-of-the-art technologies in the field of communication and information. In this regard, diversification into non-agricultural activities and the development of the relationship between agriculture and other rural economic sectors are extremely important.

The National Rural Network

What is the National Rural Network?

- Coordination
- Supporting
- Sharing

It is a Programme approved by the Rural Development Committee of the European Commission on 20 June 2007 to support the implementation of rural development policies in Italy for the period 2007-2013. It enables the coordination and support of the twenty-one regional Rural Development Programmes and aims at strengthening their impact on the territory as well

as enhancing inter-territorial and transnational cooperation projects, encouraging cooperation, exchange of good practices, and sharing of innovation.

Why should the Network be established?

- Participation
- Knowledge
- Strengthening

In order to:

- **overcome the sectoral isolation of the rural development policy**, thus encouraging a more participatory approach (namely bottom-up") that allows the involvement of actors operating in the rural world as well as of other individuals from different sectors, either national or international;

- **large-scale promotion of the knowledge of rural development policies** being implemented in Italy. That brings out the positive impact RDPs may have on the environment and quality of life as well as their significant role in the improvement of agricultural holdings' competitiveness, in the encouragement of agricultural activities diversification and in the enhancement of culture and rural traditions;

- **outline the effects and strengthen the performance of measures** being co-financed by the European Union through the above-mentioned 21 Rural Development Programmes.

Who are the main beneficiaries?

All organizations and administrations acting directly or indirectly in the field of rural development at international, national, regional and local levels, can become effective members of the Network. In particular:

- Regional and national administrations involved in the implementation of rural development programmes and structural funds;
- Local Action Groups and their networks;
- Professional organizations, forestry associations, cooperatives, local institutions (local councils, Provinces and mountain communities), environmental associations and NGOs, chambers of commerce and industry.

What is the strategy?

Three main objectives		
1. Improvement of governance - Supporting central, regional and local Administrations in the improvement of rural development programmes' performance, in terms of efficiency, efficacy and integration with other policies. - Encouraging the connection of national, regional and local Institutions with horizontal and vertical partnership in the implementation of rural development policies and their coordination with other policies.	2. Strengthening of the managerial and planning - Supporting the acquisition, updating and improvement of managerial and planning capacities of individuals involved in the implementation of Rural Development Programmes, also with a view to integration and coordination with the other policies. - Supporting partnership capacity between territories and actors involved in rural development.	3. Diffusion of good practices and knowledge - Capitalizing, diffusing and transferring experiences, good practices and innovations - Promoting and encouraging the diffusion of possibilities and results of rural development policies. Law

Law No 215/92: "Positive Actions for female entrepreneurship"

Quality support services for rural women venturing into self-employment, or starting their own businesses or co-operatives, are imperative. Experience shows that, prior to starting a business; women often prefer to participate in women-only courses and groups. But once their business has been established they want access to support services appropriate to the type and size of enterprise they have created.

In the early stages, women may need back-up counselling to help develop their ideas, identify their skills and capacity, and increase their confidence. Later, a range of business support is needed:

- specialised business start-up courses and technical assistance;
- improved access to finance and credit – through credit guarantee funds, special loan funds or positive action in credit applications at start-up and development phases;
- for women farmers, training and technical advice in new farming techniques, diversification and management.

For 15 years rural women entrepreneurs, as well as women workers in other productive sectors, have been benefiting from the subsidies allocated by the Law No 215/92 ("positive actions for female entrepreneurship"), especially for business start-up and innovation projects. This Law was implemented by the Ministry for Economic Development (previously Ministry for Industry) in order to promote substantial equality and equal opportunities for men and women in economic and entrepreneurial activities. Its main objectives are:

1. Decrease of gender inequalities: the main aim of Law 215/92 is granting capital account funds in order to make fixed investments and acquire real services aimed at the creation and development of women's enterprises. Therefore, the Law represents a strong commitment by the central government and the regional authorities towards promoting and developing small businesses run predominantly by women. The businesses may be in any sector, and the investments for which the incentive is awarded can be made anywhere in the country. The key target is micro enterprises which meet local and market needs.'

2. Access to the labour market: the general objective is favouring women's access to the labour market, with a special reference to self-employment and enterprise.

3. Networks and cooperation: within the Law 215/92, a Committee for Women's Entrepreneurship was established at all Italian Chambers of Commerce (more than 100 at provincial level) in order to promote and implement measures to favour women's enterprises on the territory. Such a body, made up of the representatives of several business organizations, including the agricultural ones, is particularly important since its role is to mainstream gender in the economic institutions most concerned with local development.

4. Development of theoretical approaches: promoting women's involvement in professional sectors and in production segments where they are under-represented, especially in the technologically-advanced sectors and on levels of responsible positions.

The innovative element of the legislative tool 215/92 is that it is not limited to granting subsidies for creating and/or developing women's entrepreneurial initiatives, but it is aimed at removing those socioeconomic constraints that actually limit or prevent women's access to the labour market and to the world of jobs and enterprise.

In fact, within the Regional Programmes for women's entrepreneurship, interventions are implemented that are aimed at:

- Entrepreneurial training in favour of women
- Information guidance and support to promote a more entrepreneurial culture among women
- Technical and managerial assistance and advice in favour of women's entrepreneurship
- Reconciliation of work and family life for women
- Opening of Centres for Women's employment

These programmes are entirely funded with public resources (based on a 50/50 split between central government and the regional authorities).

Those who can have access to the subsidies provided for by the Law 215/92 are:

- Individual concerns owned by women;
- Partnerships with a majority of women (no less than 60%);
- Joint-stock companies where the shareholdings are kept by women (at least 2/3) and the management is made up of women for at least 2/3.

The participation to the calls "215/92" is open to all the women's small enterprises depending on the programmes implemented throughout the national territory and aimed at their creation and/or development. The Ministry for Economic Development establishes the guidelines for defining the Regional Programmes for Women's Entrepreneurship on the basis of the information and requests received by the representatives of the Regions and by bodies that are institutionally engaged in the promotion of equal opportunities and in the activation of policies supporting women's entrepreneurship (national network).

The Regions (Council Departments for Equal Opportunities) take care of their realization in collaboration with bodies and associations, public and private, committed in the above mentioned activities on a local scale (regional network). 50% of the resources provided for by the Law 215/92 are allocated in the form of grants, while the remaining 50% take the form of easy-term loans lasting no more than 10 years. However, the Law is currently under revision.

Another important activity carried out in 2004 within the framework of the Law 215/92 that is worth mentioning, was the launching of the "First National Report on women-led enterprises", promoted by the Ministry for Productive Activities, "Unioncamere" and the "Committee for women's entrepreneurship". The Report represents the first statistical analysis concerning women-led businesses and was carried out at national level. Therefore, for the first time, a huge amount of data is available for technicians, analysts, policy makers and others involved in female entrepreneurship issues.

Italian Agriculture Federations: the Role of the Private Sector

The main agricultural employer organizations in Italy are:

- **Confagricoltura** (Confederazione Generale dell'Agricoltura, General Confederation of Agriculture), which represents various types of farmer – independent farmers, leaseholders, family businesses or partnerships; its members usually operate medium to large-sized enterprises;
- **Coldiretti** (Confederazione Nazionale Coltivatori Diretti, National Confederation of Independent Farmers), which mainly represents medium to small enterprises;
- **CIA** (Confederazione italiana agricoltori, Italian Farmers' Confederation), which aims at protecting and representing the socio-economic and cultural interests of farmers and of those living in rural areas, and at emphasizing the crucial importance of the socio-economic role of agriculture at national and international level.

These Federations have a representative office in Brussels and they are the main interlocutors in the definition and implementation of European policies. Their provincial or more generally “territorial” branches have an extremely significant role because decentralised bargaining has now become of great importance in the sector.

They are also essential support organizations for rural women since within their structure they have female associations, represented by rural women entrepreneurs and officers, that constitute active female units specifically dedicated to rural women at national, regional and provincial levels whose main goal is to achieve effective equality between men and women at all levels and help women's role in agriculture be acknowledged by carrying out close research studies and organizing awareness and information conferences, markets, fairs, seminars, training courses and other public initiatives. They particularly aim at promoting and developing women's entrepreneurship in agriculture and more generally at improving women's condition in agriculture and rural areas by:

- Promoting women's involvement in decision-making;
- Encouraging an equal participation of men and women in farm activities and management.
- Promoting action to facilitate above all access to credit, training and the creation of advisory services.

and by providing aspirant entrepreneurs with:

- Initial information and guidance;
- Advice;
- Information and training for starting a business;
- Information and training on the fundamental use of communication and information technology;
- Legal consultation, training and technical assistance in the management of their agricultural enterprise;
- Guidance to help them participate in networks of rural women entrepreneurs.

They also promote information and awareness activities involving children in order to help them to develop a positive attitude towards agriculture and at the same time deal with food safety issues. They develop projects for promoting direct-farm-market selling, an essential tool for increasing the value of local and typical productions. With reference to Rural Development Plans these federations play a fundamental role in disseminating information since they represent a bridge between workers in the agricultural sector and regional, national and European institutions allocating funds, and often act as spokespersons for both. Without information, women would not be aware of the existence of community and national initiatives in their favour and consequently supply without demand would not exist. Information and training are thus crucial for increasing the demand for specific programmes.

“We think our mission is to make people aware of the crucial importance of women's role in rural entrepreneurship. We want everybody to understand to what extent rural women contribute to the country's development and we want to help these women benefit from national and community rural development policies and programmes”.

(Alessandra Oddi Baglioni, representative of Confagricoltura's National Coordination of Female Entrepreneurship).

“Our role as reference points for women's entrepreneurship can be summarized in two words: coordination and monitoring of all rural entrepreneurial activities all over Italy”.

(Carolina Marino, representative of Coldiretti's Women's Association, Donne Impresa).

“Donne in Campo-CIA has the main role of bringing together women entrepreneurs with the main aim of developing a relational network of enterprises and supporting their activity by providing them with training courses, legal counselling, initiatives promoting multifunctionality with a particular emphasis on environmental and cultural conservation and on establishing a direct contact with consumers”.

(Serena Giudici, representative of CIA-Donne in Campo).

The National Observatory for Female Enterprise and Labour in Agriculture (ONILFA)

The idea of establishing an Observatory for female enterprise and labour in agriculture was developed by the female representatives of the professional agricultural organisations, prompted by the European Day for the Female Agricultural Worker held in Brussels in 1996. On that occasion the Ministry of agriculture, food and forestry policies (MiPAAF) officially accepted the proposal to set up such Observatory.

The Observatory was thus founded in 1997 by the Ministry of agriculture, food and forestry policies (MiPAAF) further to a Ministerial Decree (D. M. dated 13 October 1997). It is made up of 30 members, who represent the main and lesser institutions connected with the national agricultural and rural sectors. In particular, the Observatory, headed by the Minister, comprises the following representatives:

- Ministry of Agricultural and Forestry Policy;
- Ministry of Employment and Social Policy;
- Ministry of Manufacturing Industries;
- Ministry of Economy and Finance;
- Equal Opportunities Department;
- The agricultural organisations CIA, Coldiretti, Confagricoltura and Copagri;
- Regions and Autonomous Provinces;
- INEA and ISTAT.

The Observatory's main aim is to verify actual employment possibilities for women in the rural sector, and formulate the necessary strategies. In particular, the Observatory aims at:

- Gathering and processing statistical data;
- Analysing the legislation regarding female employment and equal opportunities;
- Examining the actions undertaken by the European Union and Central and regional governments that are aimed at promoting various initiatives in the field of female entrepreneurship;
- Creating links with information sources and with the research field;
- Promoting pilot schemes, together with Regions and Autonomous Provinces, aimed at supporting women in rural enterprise.

The Observatory's main activities involve:

- The organisation of conferences, seminars and information days, with the aim of creating opportunities to talk about important issues, spread knowledge and compare experience on matters regarding women's condition in rural areas;
- The undertaking of information-gathering surveys on matters concerning the role and function of women in the development of rural areas, in order to provide the public administration with useful indications needed for the planning of specific interventions;
- The processing and publication of information about issues the Observatory deals with;
- The designing and setting up of a website as a means of dissemination of information.

It is worth mentioning that, every year, the Observatory organizes the Italian celebration of the World Rural Women's Day as a way of emphasizing women's vital contribution to food security and safety and to the development of rural areas that goes largely unnoticed. Within such event ONILFA has been organizing since 2001 another event called “De@Terra” Award with the aim of giving recognition to some women entrepreneurs for their contribution to the development of Italian agriculture and as a way to encourage female entrepreneurship in the rural sector.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The role of women in agriculture throughout the world is instrumental. Be it in Africa, Europe, Asia or America, the role women play in contributing to the world's food supply is immeasurable, therefore, women's equal participation in developing policy and implementation of policy is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but it is a necessary condition for women's interest to be taken into account. Agriculture means one thing for a woman in a particular country and something entirely different for a woman in another country. Some women in the world are part of large business ventures, while others are trying to maintain a consistent source of food for their families. Nonetheless, they all share the commonality of being farm women and devoting their lives to their families and food security. Therefore, even though women farmers' conditions differ greatly from country to country and even within the same country, common objectives can be found. We can learn much from one another at the global level, and this comes by educating and training one another.

The analysis conducted in this paper focuses on the main rural development policies and programmes in support of rural women at European, national and regional levels. The research clearly demonstrates the importance of women in agriculture, their multiform contribution to European agriculture, and the need to strengthen their role in rural areas by initiatives in the field of agricultural development.

Although specific actions in favour of rural women have been undertaken at both national and European levels, much remains to be done to eliminate the gap between men and women, which is still too great. It is sufficient to recall here that almost half of the situations of inactivity on the part of women are due to family and domestic commitments.

First of all, specific socio-economic actions for rural women should be necessarily included in all Rural Development Programmes and Policies at national and regional levels. Secondly, in order to overcome the constraints and barriers that still prevent the full realization of rural women's potential and in order to enable women to fully contribute to the development of their communities, rural areas should be able to meet certain essential conditions:

1. The opportunity to acquire work experience and professional qualifications;
2. Local education and training services;
3. Services for enterprise supporting projects and initiatives presented by rural women;
4. Public transport services compatible with working hours;
5. Local childcare facilities, such as rural kindergartens, and social services for the elderly to help women reconcile work and family life;
6. Professional and public support organisations.

In particular, policies should be oriented towards:

1. Facilitating women's participation and access to the labour market also stimulating the development of alternative activities for rural women (i.e. small scale enterprises, organic agriculture; agritourism);
2. Facilitating women's access to training, technology, and information to enhance their vocational skills;
3. Planning interventions for the equal distribution of family responsibilities;
4. Strengthening rural women's participation in decision-making processes at all levels.

Information is a basic tool that can go two ways: to and from. Often the tendency has been to try to inform women, the up-down approach. It is however obvious that information on women's needs and opinions is of utmost importance when it comes to formulating policies since they are frequently formulated on the basis of the misconception that everyone's needs and interests are similar. Collecting gender-disaggregated data is an indispensable step towards making women visible as human beings, social actors, and farmers as well.

Networking is a key word. By facilitating networking among women and combining this with information and training women will gain the knowledge they need. Consequently:

- Agriculture should be analysed as a part of a larger context, economically, socially and politically, so that rural women's needs are not narrowly identified in relation to a special, other technically defined "sector". In many societies, living in a rural area is not a synonym for gaining your living by farming - consequently a wider thinking is important.
- "Information/participation" in relation to rural women should not be seen primarily as a question of enhancing efficiency or effectiveness in order to raise production or the quality of planning but be analysed foremost from the perspective of equity, power relations, political and Human Rights. The point of departure should be constituted by women's own realities, needs and aspirations, in relation to their different inter-linked productive and reproductive roles.

In particular, the priorities should be:

- Continuing to demonstrate the importance of information and dissemination of information about rural women's capabilities and their contribution to agriculture in order to promote more gender responsive policy-making and planning;
- Improving the knowledge-base on local initiatives for development in rural areas, especially those focusing on farm and rural women;
- Establishing information networks and strengthening communication channels among rural women and between rural women and government institutions through the use of professional and civil society organizations and the media;
- Setting up a monitoring system such as the Observatory for Rural Women Entrepreneurs;
- Continuing to provide assistance to the promotion of the World Rural Women's Day and developing other sensitization, mobilization and advocacy activities in favour of rural women.

The strengthening of the above mentioned services would provide an increasingly higher number of women with entrepreneurial, employment and training opportunities, would improve women's skills and professional qualifications, and would be a real investment in human resources. By supporting rural women, innovative solutions for local development and new services would emerge, and this would improve the quality of rural life contributing at the same time to the conservation of rural communities.

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THE STREAMLINING OF WOMEN AND GENDER EQUALITY CONCERNS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION: AN OVERVIEW OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

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Abstract

This paper describes some of the efforts towards the streamlining of women, gender equality and rural development concerns in policies and strategies in the Mediterranean region. Emphasis has been given to initiatives undertaken in the framework of the main regional political fora/processes, namely the Barcelona Convention, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the European Neighborhood policy with particular emphasis on:

- The importance of promoting rural development, gender equality and women's role, including rural women, as expressed by the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development (MSSD), a framework strategy adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2005 to guide national sustainable development strategies and initiate a dynamic partnership between countries at different levels of development.
- The reiteration of the need to enhance gender equality and women's role in the Five Year Work Programme (2005-2010) of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership that has triggered a set of policy commitments and recommendations in this direction, such as the Framework of Action to strengthen the role of women in society recently endorsed by the competent Ministries, as well as special programmes, such as the Euro-Med Women's Rights launched in 2005.
- The inclusion of urgent rural development and gender related issues in the short and medium-term (3-5 years) agenda of political, economic and social reform described in the Action Plans that have been developed between the EU and each Mediterranean Partner Country in the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and whose implementation will be supported financially and technically by the EU.
- The recent establishment of an ad hoc Committee on Women's Rights in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), the parliamentary component of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to make women's issues a central concern of the Assembly.
- The potential adverse impacts that the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA) scheduled for 2010 in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership could have on rural populations in the Mediterranean Partner Countries if appropriate preventive and mitigating measures are not applied.

INTRODUCTION

Rural development and sustained growth of the rural economy are essential processes towards the well-being of rural men, women and children, the reduction of migration's trends from the countryside to urban areas (inside the same country or abroad) and the preservation of balanced fluxes between rural and urban systems.

In the Mediterranean, the fact that poor populations mostly concentrate in the countryside, highlights the urgent need for alternative development strategies at the national and regional levels that could secure the future of rural communities and reduce poverty, by providing infrastructure and basic services, diversifying the rural economy and improving local governance. Gender-related considerations and approaches are not yet an integral part of rural strategies. A number of initiatives are taking place in most of the countries in order to address these issues.

However, it has been observed that whenever regional framework policies exist on a particular issue, countries are encouraged in a more effective way in adopting and implementing policies of change. This is even more evident when the changes touch upon cultural and socioeconomic issues.

In the following chapters we describe some of the efforts towards the streamlining of women, gender equality and rural development concerns in policies and strategies in the Mediterranean with focus on initiatives undertaken in the framework of the two main regional processes, the Barcelona Convention and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

THE MEDITERRANEAN STRATEGY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Adopted by the Contracting Parties to the Barcelona Convention in 2005, the Mediterranean Strategy on Sustainable Development (MSSD) is a framework strategy aiming to adapt international commitments to regional conditions, guide national sustainable development strategies and initiate a dynamic partnership between countries at different levels of development. The Strategy calls for action to pursue sustainable development goals with a view to strengthening peace, stability and prosperity, taking into account the threats and weaknesses in the region as well as its strengths and opportunities. It also takes into consideration the need to reduce the gap between developed and developing countries in the region.

The MSSD pursues four main targets (see below) and proposes a set of specific objectives, orientations and actions to achieve them:

1. Contribute to economic development while building on Mediterranean assets
2. Reduce social disparities and fulfil MDGs while strengthening diversity
3. Ensure sustainable management of natural resources and change consumption and production patterns
4. Improve governance at local, national, regional levels

MSSD objectives, orientations and proposed actions need to be integrated into Countries' policy frameworks and instruments so that they can be translated in concrete work. This is mainly achieved through the formulation and implementation of National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD). The formulation of such strategies is supported technically and financially by the Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP/UNEP).

Since 2005 and thanks to the financial assistance of Italy and Monaco, four countries have been supported: Egypt, Montenegro, Morocco, and the Syrian Arab Republic. The pace in strategy's formulation varies significantly according to the countries and they consequently have reached different phases. However there are some common features in the different country processes. NSSD formulation builds upon the MSSD; most countries have used the catalytic MAP support to mobilize additional financial resources. Thanks to Spain's financial assistance four additional countries are soon to be involved: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon and Tunisia. With eight countries embarking and following similar approaches, a significant mass of experience will build up and allow stimulating better synergies and cooperation.

The effective realization of the MSSD calls for concrete and coordinated initiatives at the national and regional levels. At the national level, the Contracting Parties are at the core of implementation that, apart from the formulation and realization of a NSSD, also entails:

- Engagement of stakeholders and forging of partnerships;
- Capacity building;
- Management of knowledge and information; and,
- Mobilization and allocation of resources

Rural Development and gender issues in the MSSD

The MSSD mentions gender issues while stressing on the crucial need to develop human resources and foster the capacities of all the various actors as the basis to achieve protection of the environment, economic development and sustainable progress. It recognizes as necessary to foster gender equality, promote the role of women in society and support the upgrading of rural areas, which are too frequently ignored. In particular the MSSD clearly mentions the urgency of enhancing the role of rural women in the decision-making process through local rural development initiatives and programmes in order to strengthen negotiation and governance capacities of local communities and local actors.

Sustainable agriculture and rural development are one among the seven priority fields of action and synergy identified by the MSSD (the other six are: water, energy, transport, tourism, urban development and sea and coastal management). If translated into concrete policies at the National (through NSSD) and regional levels and supported by concrete implementation work, the objectives and actions proposed in the framework of this specific priority are likely to benefit the entirety of rural populations and particularly women, reducing rural poverty, revitalizing inland areas, developing internal and foreign market outlets and safeguarding environmental public goods. The Strategy recognizes local development as essential to improve the living conditions of the rural population and mitigating social inequalities.

In this context, improving infrastructure and services and promoting economic diversification, especially through rural tourism, cleaner production and the agro- industry are considered of great importance as also enhancing the multi-functionality of agriculture and its potential to contribute to ecological and economic value of landscapes, traditional knowledge and skills and cultural heritage, through tourism and other economic activities.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP (EMP)

Since 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Partners agreed, through the Barcelona Declaration, to cooperate in modernizing and restructuring agriculture and in promoting integrated rural development as an essential move towards economic and social development in the Region with a view to achieving their objective of creating an area of shared prosperity. It was proposed that this cooperation focus, in particular, on technical assistance and training, on support for policies implemented by the partners to diversify production, on the reduction of food dependency and on the promotion of environmentfriendly agriculture. They also agreed to work together towards the improvement of basic services and the development of associated economic activities, cooperation among rural regions, exchange of experience and know how concerning rural development.

In line with this funds have been channeled through the MEDA Programme, the main financial instrument for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, to the promotion of rural development initiatives and projects in the various countries (The Barcelona Process, five years on, 1995-2000).

The importance of promoting rural development is also pointed out in the **Five Year Work Programme** that was endorsed in 2005 by 35 Heads of State at the 10th Anniversary Summit of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Barcelona + 10). This Programme, drafted in accordance with the Barcelona Declaration of 1995, is designed to provide the basis for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation for the next five years. Women and gender equality issues, also an integral part of the Barcelona Declaration, have been recently placed at the heart of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in recognition of the need for increasing efforts by all Euro-Med partners in this direction and gender equality was included in the Five Year Work Plan as one of its major priorities.

This work programme, along with the implementation of the Association Agreements and the **European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans**, is supported through technical and financial assistance provided through the MEDA Programme, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), bilateral contributions from Member States, FEMIP and other relevant financial instruments.

In line with the reiterated interest for women and gender equality a conference dedicated to gender issues identified a range of activities which could form part of a gender action plan. These were subsequently refined and ratified at a preparatory conference in Rabat in June 2006 attended by more than 130 representatives from government and civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean partner countries.

Ministerial endorsement and political backing for this work was finally agreed during the Ministerial meeting on 'Strengthening the Role of Women in Society' (Istanbul, 14-15 November 2006).

The Framework of Action (Ministerial Conclusions on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society at http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/euromed/women/docs/conclusions_1106.pdf) agreed in this occasion is based on the following interdependent and interlinked priorities:

- Women's political and civil rights;
- Women's social and economic rights and sustainable development;
- Women's rights in the cultural sphere and the role of communications and the mass media.

In order to realize the objectives described in this document Euro-Mediterranean partners commit, among others, to:

- include women's political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights in their dialogues including in the framework of the Association Agreements, the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plans and in the EU programs and projects.
- mobilise financial resources to support the implementation of the Framework of Action. In addition to national funding, the European Union will provide adequate resources for its implementation at national and regional levels through technical and financial assistance provided through the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI), bilateral contributions from EU Member States, FEMIP and other relevant financial instruments.

They also recognize that a strengthened dialogue and cooperation between governmental and nongovernmental actors across the Euro-Mediterranean region is necessary and stress on the importance of promoting dialogue between Parliamentarians within the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA), as well as with civil society organizations, women's associations, youth, trade unions, business and professional associations, in accordance with national legislation as appropriate and cooperation between national, regional and local administrations.

The Framework of Action makes specific reference to rural women and to the need for working towards the reduction of disparities between rural and urban women and a better knowledge of women's contribution to the overall economy. Appropriate actions to this end are proposed, including the launching of literacy campaigns (with the objective of halving female illiteracy by 2010) targeting especially rural and poor women and providing more incentives to encourage women to demand literacy and families, especially in rural and poor areas, to send girls to school.

The Euromed Programme "Euro-Med Women's Rights"

In line with emerging policy commitments and recommendations, the Euromed Programme launched in 2005 aims to promote women's role in the economy and strengthen cooperation in this area between the EC and the 10 countries which are part of the Euro Mediterranean partnership. The 3 year regional programme covers 10 countries in the MEDA region and is managed by the British Council in partnership with the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies in Cyprus. The technical and financial management of this contract is with the Commission's Europe Aid Cooperation Office in Brussels. The programme consists of two main components:

Training and Capacity building

For the first component the EC provided grants to 7 NGO consortiums in the MEDA region to implement projects aiming at "Enhancing the Opportunities for Women in Economic Life (EOWEL)" with the objectives:

- to improve integration of women in the labour markets;
- to facilitate the creation and the management of enterprises by women;
- to provide better access to financial tools and mechanisms;
- to develop capacity building, education and vocational training for civil servants and members of nonprofit organisations, NGOs, Mediterranean resource centres and focal points

The 7 EOWEL partners started up activities as of January/February 2006 with project duration between 18 and 30 months. Some of the projects target specifically women in rural areas.

Information, Communication and Networking:

The second component, the "Role of Women in Economic Life" project (RWEL) aims at building a knowledge base and facilitate the exchange of experiences, research and information among the EOWEL partners and key actors involved.

THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBORHOOD POLICY (ENP)

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in 2004, with the objective of avoiding the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and instead strengthening the prosperity, stability and security of all concerned. It applies to the EU's immediate neighbours by land or sea. The Mediterranean Partner countries to which it applies are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria and Tunisia.

At the outset of the process, the Commission prepared Country Reports assessing the political and economic situation as well as institutional and sectoral aspects, to assess when and how it is possible to deepen relations with that country. Country Reports are submitted to the Council which decides whether to proceed to the next stage of relations.

The next stage was the development of ENP Action Plans with each country. These documents are negotiated with and tailor-made for each country, based on the country's needs and capacities, as well as their and the EU's interests. They jointly define an agenda of political and economic reforms by means of short and medium-term (3-5 years) priorities. They cover political dialogue and reform, economic and social cooperation and development, trade-related issues and market and regulatory reform, cooperation in justice and home affairs, sectors (such as transport, energy, information society, environment, research and development) and a human dimension (people-to-people contacts, civil society, education, public health ...).

The EU provides financial and technical assistance to support the implementation of these objectives, in support of partners' own efforts, as well as greater integration into European programmes and networks and enhanced market access. ENP Action Plans are being implemented with the Mediterranean Partner Countries Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory and Tunisia since 2005 and with Lebanon and Egypt since end 2006/beginning 2007. Since the ENP builds upon existing agreements between the EU and the partner in question (Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, or Association Agreements in the framework of the EMP), the ENP is not yet 'activated' for Libya and Syria since such Agreements are not yet in force.

The implementation of the mutual commitments and objectives contained in the Action Plans is regularly monitored through sub-committees dealing with those sectors or issues.

Rural Development and Gender issues in the ENP Action Plans

Rural development and gender related issues of crucial importance for the Mediterranean Partner Countries are mentioned in the respective Action Plans agreed between the EU and the specific country within the ENP (information for Algeria is missing).

The most recurrent rural development concerns are the following:

- Identification and adoption of measures for quality production (local products, food safety, organic products, geographical indications, etc.), which would encourage the diversification of activity and the creation of new remunerative and sustainable trade flows (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco).
- Increase of economic integration with the EU, particularly by taking steps to the gradual liberalization of trade in services and on the right of establishment and to liberalize trade in agriculture, processed agricultural products and fisheries, and enhancement of the export potential to the EU market by upgrading the quality of agricultural production through improving sanitary and phytosanitary standards and rural development (Egypt, Morocco).
- Enhancement of co-operation in the field of international marketing standards for fruits and vegetables, and for other agricultural and processed agricultural products; promote equivalence schemes of certification for organic products (Lebanon).
- Reduction of regional disparities in social and economic development, in particular in rural areas (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco). - Improved accessibility and affordability of public health including in rural areas and with a focus on poor, women/children including those with disabilities (Egypt, Lebanon)
- Exchange of experience on protection of biological diversity and rural landscape, with special attention to the relevant migratory species.

- Promotion of rural infrastructure (electricity, water supply and quality etc.) (Morocco, Palestine)
- Improvement of rural development and reduction of rural poverty (Tunisia)

Gender & child related concerns:

- Enhancement of women's participation in political, economic and social life as well as of their role in the political decision-making process (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon).
- Promotion of gender equality and reinforce the fight against discrimination and gender-based violence, including strengthening the activities of the National Council for Women including its periodic review of the relevant existing legislation and recommendations for new legislation (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia).
- Support to the efforts of the Government to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation including through appropriate legislative actions and the raising of public awareness (Egypt).
- Fight against illiteracy and achievement of education for all, especially for women and girls, by continuing the reform of the education systems, and pre-school education aiming at early childhood development (Egypt).
- Support of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) encouraging investment climate, contributing to improve their access to finance, promoting youth and women entrepreneurship, enhancing productivity and competitiveness including through a better access to market opportunities (Egypt, Syria).
- Incorporation into national legislation of international Conventions concerning women's rights, including the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia).
- Promotion of the rights of the child; application of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and revision of existing legislation taking into account the recommendations of the relevant UN Committee (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco).
- Access to the optional protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (Lebanon).
- Development of a child welfare strategy and related national action plans and formulation of a child protection policy targeting neglected and abused children (Lebanon).
- Increased protection of children rights and intensification of efforts to progressively eliminate child labor (Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco).

The Country Strategy Papers and National Indicative Programmes (NIPs)

The Country Strategy Papers establish a strategic framework for EU cooperation with the single countries under the ENPI over the period 2007-2013 (national allocation). They are a clear indication of priority areas eligible for technical and financial cooperation between the single countries and the EU in the near future and based on the Country Assessment Reports.

Table 1 (see annex 1) lists in a concise way the issues related directly or indirectly to rural development and/or gender that the various countries are working on based on what is described in the National Indicative Programmes (NIPs), the Commission's operational response for the period 2007-2010. Enhancement of economic diversification (agriculture/rural development, tourism, some industries), development of the competitiveness and productivity of agriculture, support to education and employment policy, improvement of infrastructure, institutional support of competent agencies are among the priorities identified, with specificities depending on countries' features and particular needs. The NIPs are a good indication for the short-term objectives, expected results and conditions to be met in the priority areas of cooperation together with the relevant budget allocated taking into account the priorities of countries' domestic policies into which EU priorities have to fit.

THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA) is the parliamentary dimension of the Barcelona Process.

The EMPA was set up in 2003 to monitor the Barcelona Process and implementation of Euro-Mediterranean association agreements and it replaced the earlier Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Forum. The purpose of the EMPA is to provide parliamentary stimuli for the development of cooperation between the EU and the Mediterranean region, adopt stances on the Mediterranean partnership and implementation of association agreements as well as to issue recommendations and declarations for deliberation at Euro-Mediterranean ministerial conferences.

The membership of the EMPA comprises the parliaments of the EU member states, the European Parliament as well as the parliaments of the EU's cooperation partners in the Mediterranean region (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey). The EMPA has three committees, which are:

- the Committee on Political Affairs, Security and Human Rights;
- Committee on Economic, Financial and Social Affairs and Education; and
- the Committee on the Promotion of the Quality of Life, Human Exchanges and Culture

In addition, an ad hoc Committee on Women's Rights in the Euro-Mediterranean Countries has also been established, making woman issues a central concern of the Assembly. The ad hoc Committee drafts Recommendations on urgent women issues that are endorsed by the EMPA Plenary and subsequently forwarded to relevant stakeholder, such as Speakers of Parliaments, members to the Barcelona Process, Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conferences, European Commission and Council, Governments of the countries members to the Barcelona Process, as well as concerned institutions.

Issues related to rural women and their rights have been included in the EMPA Recommendation on women's rights in the Euro-Mediterranean countries recently adopted in Tunis

(http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/empa/plenary_sessions/tunis_march_2007/women_committee_en.pdf).

In particular, referring to the Millennium Development Goals the ad hoc Committee calls upon:

- the countries to pay particular attention to the education of girls, including those from rural areas, so that they are not forced to leave schools prematurely, to provide them with the conditions required for personal growth and to allow them to fully utilize their abilities.
- the states participating in the Barcelona Process to undertake all efforts required to enhance the access of Euro-Mediterranean women to full healthcare in all regions, especially rural areas where there is an important lack of healthcare infrastructure for women. In this context the ad hoc Committee attaches special significance to the situation and health-related problems of elderly women.

THE SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN FREE TRADE AREA (SIA EMFTA)

A sustainability impact assessment (SIA) study was undertaken for the European Commission to assess the economic, social and environmental impacts of the evolving Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EMFTA). The final results of the study, recently submitted to the EC, are intended to provide information for the trade negotiations and for the development of parallel policy measures to enhance the beneficial impacts of the EMFTA and to avoid or mitigate adverse ones, together with recommendations for negotiators and policy-makers in the EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPCs). They are intended to form a basis for discussion among stakeholders on the most appropriate means of incorporating the SIA findings into the future development of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The SIA study describes several potential adverse EMFTA impacts on rural populations that could result in the absence of appropriate preventive and mitigating measures. Among these figure negative effects on the status, living standards and health of rural women, associated with accelerated conversion from traditional to commercial agriculture. The study also proposes a set of initiatives for better integrating rural into national development in the MPC. Some of these (such as the promotion of rural infrastructures, credit unions, viable rural industries, incentives for farming communities to improve their living environments) are being already approached in the framework of National policies and strategies in some countries while other actions can be identified tapping the experience made in other countries, including the EU counterparts. The SIA study suggests that EU support for economic development in either urban or rural areas could be designed in such a way as to promote these types of measure within an overall framework for integrating urban and rural development (http://www.siatrtrade.org/emfta/en/final_report_nov07.pdf).

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that at regional level in the Mediterranean Region women and gender equality issues have received recently the needed attention they deserve. Much of this attention is linked with the key political processes present in the region namely the Barcelona Convention, the Euro Mediterranean Partnership, which in turn is linked to the EU Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

Apart from changing and adapting institutional frameworks and the EMPA ad hoc Committee on women's rights, a Euro-Med women's rights program was launched in 2005 while many scattered activities are undertaken in the various countries and at other levels. However, in view of current and upcoming environmental (eg climate) or socioeconomic changes (see the EMFTA) etc, which will all add pressures on the status and real conditions of women in the region it is particularly urgent to strengthen their role, reducing inequalities and cultural bias that still prevent them to be recognized as important actors in rural socio-economic development and to contribute even more effectively to it. This is crucial also in light of the fact that women represent a considerable share of poor rural populations.

Annex 1

Table 1: Rural development and gender-related issues described in the NIPs

Country	NIP Priorities	Expected Results (ER) & Performance Indicators (PI)	Short description of the Programme
ALGERIA	1) Diversification of the Economy: Support for economic diversification (agriculture/rural development, tourism, some industries). 2) Employment: Improve information, mediation, monitoring and steering functions in the labour market through the modernization of the national employment agency (ANEM), acting in liaison with other institutional actors, in particular the social partners: effective labour market information system, better statistics and forecasts, mediation between supply and demand, also at international level	ER - define growth strategies sector by sector (environmental and heritage tourism, agricultural and rural development geared to the modernization of farms and rural communities, including capacity building at Algeria's national agricultural research institute, certain industries, etc.) - identify, together with concerned stakeholders, measures to reduce sector-specific constraints and additional infrastructure investments in the sectors; - to shift to the manufacture of higher value-added products PI - sectoral strategies adopted; - productive and trade structures diversified, new higher value-added products; - follow-up of consultations with all sectoral actors concerned, including trade associations: new legislative, regulatory and administrative measures and specific investments providing sectoral support; - new private investments in the target sectors; - jobs created in the agriculture and tourism sectors, helping to improve living conditions in rural communities; ER - coordination and collaboration between the employment service and the national institute of statistics is ensured; - reliable, operational statistics and forecasts are produced and used on labour market in and outflows; - the coordination, effectiveness and management of active employment measures is ensured; - public employment services, labour exchanges and recruitment agencies are adapted to the Algerian context; - access to information on the employment market is open to all on a fair, efficient and effective basis; - information, mediation of supply and demand and consultancy services (in particular for jobseekers) concerning the active employment measures available are provided at national and local level and pay special attention to women; - proper labour market management is provided, in particular on a gender disaggregated basis.	The purpose of the sectoral approaches is to reduce sector-specific constraints. Though not exclusive, these plans and activities - which must involve the private sector in order to succeed - could initially concern: tourism, agri-food, petrochemical industries, business services (in particular offshoring, or the export of high value-added services), building, public works and hydraulics (separate projects could be carried out in each) and textiles/clothing, a sector in which a high-level Euro- Mediterranean dialogue has been ongoing since 2004 leading to the formulation of practical projects in which Algeria might want to be involved. No sector should be excluded from the outset. Measures derived from the above sectoral strategies could include, as appropriate, specific infrastructure investments, the development of dedicated land areas, applied training programmes, the reduction of regulatory constraints in these sectors, subsidies to technical centres or SME services for these sectors, etc. The programme could include the following strands: - training for the Employment Ministry (MESN); - organisation and introduction of central and local information, mediation and consultancy bodies on the employment market and training of the relevant staff; - creation of an integrated, computerised information and communication system for the ANEM (central and local bodies) for the production and supply of qualitative and quantitative data on inflows and outflows and employment supply and demand; - information campaign on learning skills and the availability of job-searching tools; - support and promotion of jobs aimed at vocational training centres and university leavers on the basis of calls for proposals in universities.

		PI - employment and unemployment indicators by category, economic sector/district are known, updated and used; - staff of the various institutions involved are trained; - ANEM's coverage of industrial districts and wilayas; - a national index of occupations and jobs is prepared and regularly updated; - the unemployment rate, in particular of first-time jobseekers with qualifications and training is reduced in the medium-term; - higher female participation rates.	
EGYPT	1) Promotion and protection of human rights and involvement of civil society in protecting the environment: - <i>Promotion and protection of human rights</i> - <i>Protection of women's and children's rights</i> 2) Developing the competitiveness and productivity of the Egyptian economy - <i>Enhancing the agricultural sector</i> 3) Support for reform of education	ER - enhanced protection of human rights, in particular of women's rights; - formulation of a human rights strategy; - implementation of a framework for dialogue with civil society; PI - consolidation of the strategy for protection of human rights; - increased capacity of civil society organisations to contribute to the political, social, economic and environmental debate; - enhancement of the position of women on the labour market and of their participation in the decisionmaking process. ER - progress on implementation of the Action Plan priorities; - strengthened capacity of the different Egyptian institutions to create and enforce a legislative environment supporting socio-economic development; - modernisation and approximation of Egypt's legislative and regulatory framework, notably through transfer of EU know-how; - development of Egyptian capacity to draw up and implement strategies and national policies; - further liberalisation of trade in agriculture and liberalisation of trade in services between the EU and Egypt; - modernisation of the sanitary and phytosanitary sectors; - further harmonisation of Egypt's statistical system with international standards.	Promotion and protection of human rights The programme will support the efforts by the Egyptian Government to strengthen the culture of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Egypt. Particular attention will be paid to strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of the competent public institutions and councils, to reviewing the national legislation and to formulating a human rights strategy. Protection of women's and children's rights The programme will support the Government with establishing a gender mainstreaming strategy and enhancing women's participation in political, economic and social life and also increasing their role in the political decision-making process. Specific activities will be planned to fight discrimination and genderbased violence and to contribute to eradicating the practice of female genital mutilation, including appropriate legislation and public awareness-raising. Assistance should concentrate on developing the organisational and production capacity of the agricultural sector with an eye to its export potential. First, assistance should support rural development and quality production, including on a sectoral basis. This will include improvements in administrative capacity at regional and local level and initiatives to stimulate the development and diversification of local authorities in rural areas. Particular attention should be paid to the earnings, skills

		PI - legislation and regulatory framework envisaged in, or related to, the priorities of the Action Plan adopted and applied in a variety of sectors; - administrative bodies and institutions to implement and monitor the legislation and regulations strengthened; - greater reliability of Egypt's statistical system and harmonisation with international standards; - increased trade in agriculture and services between the EU and Egypt; - increased food safety for Egyptian and European consumers. ER & PI - strengthening the administrative capacity of the Ministry of Education to conduct its reform plan; - upgrading the level of primary, secondary and tertiary education; - improving the links between education and the qualifications needed on the labour market; - improving access to education and to the labour market, particularly for women and the most vulnerable sections of the population; - improve the rates of literacy - upgrading the network of universities in Egypt and improving their management.	and assets of the important proportion of women working in the agriculture sector. Support will be given to improve the quality of production (legislative framework and training programmes), to sustain given sectors through participatory involvement of the main stakeholders and to cushion adjustments necessitated by the increased liberalisation of agricultural trade in the Mediterranean region. Second, Egypt's sanitary and phytosanitary system needs upgrading and modernising in line with international practice. Flexible provision of capacity-building and technical assistance could help with upgrading the legislative, infrastructure and inspection set-up for both agriculture and fisheries to meet EU requirements. In addition, more targeted assistance could be directed towards capacity-building on procedures, laboratory accreditation, and regulatory and institutional upgrading, particularly to develop a food safety policy in line with international best practice. The plan is to support the Government of Egypt's reform programme for primary, secondary and tertiary education. Account will be taken of the recommendations of the Public Expenditure Review on education, with the ultimate objective of reinforcing access to and the quality of education.
JORDAN	1) Support to human rights, democracy and good governance <i>– Protecting women's rights</i> 2) Sustainability of the development process <i>– Support to education and employment policy</i>	ER - better protection and promotion of human rights, in particular women's rights - a more independent judiciary; - creation of civil society platforms/networks; - increased dialogue between civil society/non-state actors, government and parliamentary representatives; ER - vocational education and training systems better adapted to the labour market; - active participation of the private sector in the vocational education and training systems; - greater capacity of the Ministry of Labour, the VTC and other potential and existing stakeholders; - progress towards the National Agenda's targets by 2012: 340 000 net new employees (compared with 2006); 70% of employers satisfied with the skills of certified trainees; women accounting for 15 to 20% of the employed population.	- Protecting women's rights The programme will help the government establish a gender mainstreaming strategy, to develop women's civil, social and economic rights and increase their participation in political, social and economic life. The strategy will be put in place across the relevant Ministries. Specific activities will be defined to help eliminate violence against women (training judges, awareness raising, support for communities and NGOs active in this field, etc.). The aim of the programme will be to upgrade the national labour and employment strategy on the basis of the National Agenda's orientations. Special attention will be paid to demand-oriented reform of the technical and vocational education and training system (TVET). In particular, initial and in-service training will be strengthened by increasing the capacity and quality of on-the-job training (alternate and apprenticeship) thus improving the employability of direct beneficiaries.

			The programme will also support special efforts to improve access of women to the labour market and employment of women and good governance on the labour market in general.
LEBANON	1) Support for political reform <i>Promotion of democracy and Human Rights</i> 2) Support for social and economic reform	ER - increased respect for civil, political, social and economic rights; - promotion of the adoption and implementation of the National Action Plan for Human Rights - increased compliance with ratified international conventions; - support of the review of legislation on personal status, nationality and penal code; ER - strengthening of institutional capacity of the different Lebanese institutions to create and enforce a legislative environment supportive of socio-economic development, - modernisation and alignment of the Lebanese legislative and regulatory framework, including through transfer of EU know-how, - improving the delivery of public services, particularly in education, healthcare and other social services with access for all; viable regulation of the social services provided by the private sector, - reduced mortality from communicable and noncommunicable diseases, - strengthening of environmental institutions and improved waste management and water management.	- Support the preparation and/or the implementation process of the National Action Plan on respect for Human Rights, reform the administrative framework to promote freedom of expression, association and assembly and independence of the media, - Support the enhancement of women's participation in political, economic and social life as well as their role in the political decision-making process; reinforce the fight against discrimination and gender-based violence, - Support the development of a child welfare strategy and related national action plans and the formulation of a child protection policy targeting neglected and abused children, as well as child labour. `` - Preparation and implementation of a comprehensive strategy, involving social partners, for social development and poverty reduction, strengthening of social safety nets and reform of the social security and healthcare system (improvement of efficiency, targeting and coverage), development and implementation of marketdriven strategies, to address unemployment and increase the participation of women and young people in the labour force; modernisation of the National Employment Office. - Support to reform and strategic plans aimed at improving the quality of education and vocational training and their relevance to the labour market, with a specific focus on lower income groups and women. - Support to reforms in the environment sector, notably regarding capacity building and waste management and water management

MOROCCO	1) Support for the National Human Development Initiative (NNDI) Strengthen the efforts of the government and local authorities to alleviate poverty, social exclusion, insecurity and to reduce social risk factors, so creating a dynamic propitious for human development and increasing the country's human capital and social cohesion. 2) Programme of support to the national literacy and non-formal education strategy 3) Support programme for education policy	ER - reduction of poverty in rural, urban and peri-urban areas - strengthening of social cohesion - more intensive efforts to insert young people into jobs, the world of work and public activities (sociocultural and sporting) - stronger local governance enabled to tackle poverty reduction, social exclusion and insecurity - vulnerable groups have easier access to social services (orphans, the disabled, women heads of household, etc.) - greater promotion and protection of human rights, in particular by improving the social indicators of education and health - particular attention should be devoted to the regions which, according to the recommendations of the IER report, are inadequately taken into account. ER - the illiteracy rate of the target groups is reduced and their socioeconomic integration is improved - the government department responsible has a structured training setup for improving the skills of those working in the literacy campaign (public and private operators and associations) - the quality of literacy programmes is improved - primary education for the most vulnerable children is widely extended - children deprived of schooling and school drop-outs are given access to second-chance schools so that they can go on to formal schooling or vocational training - educational inequalities between girls and boys are reduced - the school drop-out rate is down - the most vulnerable children enjoy educational support - the quality of educational support programmes is improved PI - illiteracy rate (disaggregated by sex) - number of newly literate people having received support for income generating projects - number of children (disaggregated by sex) having attended second chance schools and moving on to formal schooling or vocational training	The Moroccan government has drawn up a strategy based on institutional liaison with the local authorities and other associated partners. Four priority programmes were identified for 2006-2010: A - Poverty reduction programme in rural areas B - Programme to combat social exclusion in urban areas C - Programme to reduce insecurity D - Crosscutting programme The NNDI offers additional financing capacity for four types of human development activity: - <i>Income-generating activities</i> - <i>Support for access to basic social facilities and services</i> - <i>Support for social, cultural and sporting activities</i> - <i>Support for better governance and local capacity-building</i> The Community programme will focus on supporting the government department responsible for literacy and non-formal education in three main areas: Area 1: Literacy and postliteracy To help improve and extend the literacy programmes, Community aid will be given to two complementary components: (a) support for upgrading and certification of NGOs working in the field of the literacy; (b) teacher training (public and private operators and associations). Area 2: Non-formal education Support for non-formal education programmes, educational support, and "second-chance schools" so as to give teaching support to children at the greatest risk of exclusion or dropping out of the education system. Area 3: Institutional support for the department of state Capacity building for the government department responsible and for the regional education and training academies (Académies Régionales de l'Education et de la Formation - AREF) and provincial delegations, involving improved institutional, technical and management capacity and capacity to develop partnerships, in particular with civil society and industry. On the basis of the strategic framework for the development of the education system and the literacy and non-formal education strategy, the
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	4) Support for the consolidation of basic medical cover	ER - primary education becomes the general rule and secondary/vocational education is widespread. This will mean a significant reduction in the school failure and drop-out rate at all levels. - curricula are revised, in particular those of secondary and vocational schools. - the staff of the education system are trained. - educational establishment projects are implemented. - the use of information and communications technology has advanced. - institutional, technical and management capacity within the education system, in particular the AREFs, has been built up. - partnership with civil society has developed.	Community programme will mainly support some of the most vulnerable AREFs in the three following areas: Area 1: In the interests of generalising and expanding education Community aid will build on the work of the "Support for basic education" programme (Meda) for formal education (primary and secondary/vocational). Area 2: Improvement of the quality of formal education through general support for the continuation of curriculum reform and aid for the AREFs chosen for staff training, the strengthening of educational establishment projects and promotion of the use of information and communications technology. Area 3: Governance and the stepping-up of decentralisation and devolution by improving the institutional, technical and management capacity of the education system, in particular the AREFs, and partnership with civil society. In all these areas a special effort will be made to encourage girls' education. The support programme covers the promotion of decisive measures to adapt the health system to health objectives, the economic environment and users' needs thanks to the consolidation of insurance systems and assistance to provide universal medical cover. The programme also covers institutional and management measures designed to make sound use of public and private financing sources and flows, to attribute responsibilities between central services and the external services of the health ministry, and to bring about an effective and efficient healthcare production system. The whole of the Moroccan population will benefit from the improvement in the quality of care and better access to it. The groups targeted specifically by the programme are: - Poor households, which will have free access to the healthcare package guaranteed by the basic medical cover. - Groups currently not covered by a scheme: they will enjoy gradual affiliation to basic medical cover through an economically appropriate contribution. The specific objectives are:
	5) Support for Agriculture	PI - enrolment and school failure rates (disaggregated by sex) at primary, secondary and vocational schools. - new curricula for secondary/vocational schools. - number of education staff trained. - percentage of schools having an establishment project. - percentage of schools having information and communications technology equipment.	
	6) Extension of the Rocade project	ER - the consolidation of the compulsory health insurance scheme (AMO), which will give the public and private sectors access to a basic care package and gradually cover all solvent persons. - the setting-up of the medical assistance scheme (RAMED), which will give free access to a basic public healthcare package. - an equitable distribution of costs between the state, business and households, and the system's financial viability. - accessibility and quality of services, thanks to contractual arrangements based on specifications and service standards which boost coverage of the most underserved areas. - improvement of the governance of the sector through a redefinition of	

	7) Improving communications to isolated areas: social road infrastructure	responsibilities, notably for the development of health policies, for financing and for management. EC support will contribute to the achievement of the Moroccan government's objectives by supporting the medium-term measures designed to bring in universal medical cover and to ensure its viability. This EC support will be coordinated with other aid donors (Member States, the World Bank, ADB, etc.). ER - building the capacity of the authorities and institutions responsible for modernising Moroccan agriculture, including agricultural research; - building strategic capacity, in particular statistics, support for analytical studies and sectoral policy formulation; - strengthening and creation of producer organisations for the various product chains; - framework measures for the promotion of product quality: development of labelled products and local products; - diversification of production. ER - the construction of a road with good levels of service; - increased East-West traffic in the Rocade; - the creation of new economic activities and jobs likely to encourage people not to emigrate. PI - monitoring of road traffic trends on the main road in the form of regular surveys by the roads authority; - the level of vehicle ownership on the basis of provincial statistics and regular or ad hoc surveys by the roads authority; - the trend in fuel consumption on the basis of data from oil companies; - vehicle and spare part sales on the basis of Chamber of Commerce statistics; - sales of construction materials and technological inputs for irrigated agriculture;	- to identify and adopt the accompanying measures for the necessary structural, institutional, legal and administrative capacity building, thereby facilitating access to export markets; - identify and adopt specific programmes to modernise agriculture, including research programmes; - identify and adopt measures in the rural development sector with a view to developing quality products (local specialties, organic products, geographical indications, and so on, in the Moroccan legal framework) that will help diversify agriculture and create new sources of trade that are remunerative and sustainable. These measures may include the promotion of typically Mediterranean products for export to other regions of the world; - identify and develop measures to create a legal framework to encourage private investment. This programme will give access to the region and make the population less isolated by giving them a link to the rest of the network. The roads provided for under the programme will make it possible to: - Exploit the significant tourist potential of the northern area. - Promote trade within the area and economic integration with the rest of the country. - Establish tighter links and closer integration among the population in areas such as culture, public administration, health and education, thereby eliminating a major cause of rural depopulation. The project's overall objective is to reduce the existing disparities in the socioeconomic development of the regions and between urban and rural areas. Other priorities are to improve the living conditions of poorer sections of the population, reduce poverty, and enhance the use of human resources through regional rebalancing and better interprovincial integration. The specific objectives are: - The socio-economic development of landlocked rural regions. - Improving communications to rural areas. - The strengthening of national cohesion by reducing regional disparities.
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		- the development of the area's socio-economic indicators regarding the status of women on the basis of provincial statistics from the health ministry and ad hoc surveys; - measurement of the level and sources of income and households' consumption, on the basis of provincial economic reports. ER The programme aims to improve communications for the rural population and contribute to socioeconomic development through the construction, upgrading and maintenance of rural roads and tracks. Possible PI -improved "rural access indicator" (proportion of rural population living less than 2 km from a rural track) - increase in traffic	- Improvement of the socioeconomic environment by promoting employment and reducing poverty. - The conservation of the country's natural resources. - An increase in the pace of rural road-building so that the proportion of the rural population that is accessible rises from 54 % in 2005 to 80 % in 2015: this entails building 15 500 km of rural roads between 2005 and 2015 at a pace of approximately 1 500 km a year. - Reduce interprovincial disparities in road accessibility.
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THE INTEGRATION OF GENDER DIMENSIONS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES: REVIEW AND LESSONS LEARNT

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INTRODUCTION

Rural development (RD) may be defined as the processes that promote the livelihoods, and well being of rural people and the environmental, economic, social, cultural, institutional, and political conditions of the countryside. It also includes the maintenance of these conditions, while ensuring that rural areas contribute to the attainment and continued satisfaction of the broader/global human needs of present and future generations (FAO, 2007). Consequently, rural development is an overarching concept (and therefore not a sector) requiring the integration of the multiple factors which affect livelihoods in rural areas.

As the ultimate aim of rural development is to provide better living conditions to people living in rural areas the number of actions that can contribute to this objective are many and cover almost any aspect of development. As result, investment in rural areas² covers investments in all sectors: agriculture, natural resource management, rural transport, water and sanitation, telecommunications, education, health, and other social services).

WHY IS IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT RURAL DEVELOPMENT?

The rural economies and societies of the developing world possess exceptional characteristics which distinguish them both from their counterparts in the developed world and from their own domestic urban sectors. Past neglect of these differences, allied in many cases to exploitation of the rural areas in favour of the towns and cities, has led to stagnation of the rural and agricultural sectors of many developing countries, which has constrained the entire process of social and economic development. The distinctions are such that they demand definite and distinctive policies for agricultural and rural development on the part of international aid donors as well as domestic governments.

The situation in rural areas with regard to both poverty and equity is worse in the urban areas. Low incomes and high vulnerability to markets combine with poor education and health facilities, poor access to services, and political marginalisation in rural areas. Rural areas of the developing world contain only 45 percent of the total world population, but 80 percent of the world's hungry, and 75 percent (or 900 million) of the world's poor (the 1.2 billion people who lived on less than US\$1 a day (IFAD, 2001). Furthermore, rural areas are likely to remain the nucleus of world hunger for some time because 51 percent of the developing world's population are expected to continue to live in rural areas through 2015¹. A recent World Bank review of 33 developing countries indicated that in almost all of them the proportion of the population living below the poverty line was significantly greater in the rural than in urban areas, typically by between 30 and 150%. Paradoxically the position on food security also tends to be worse in the rural areas. The lower a household's income, the higher the proportion spent on food, and the lower the proportion spent on education and health. Rural households in developing countries on average spend three quarters of their income on food, compared with two thirds for urban households, and of their food expenditure just under half is spent on basic staples (food grains) compared with just a quarter for urban households (Sundrum, 1990). The same rural/urban split is found in other poverty indicators: for example among rural men the average illiteracy rate (43%) is more than double the equivalent figure for urban men. (The figures for women are undoubtedly even worse.) Nearly 90% of the urban population has access to safe drinking water, compared to just 60% in rural areas (UNDP 1998). Having said all of this, it is essential not to treat the rural population as a homogeneous mass in this respect. Poverty is increasingly concentrated in low potential areas and among specific groups (the landless, women, the elderly, the war-affected, and communities affected by AIDS). This demands a careful targeting of efforts to promote the reduction of poverty and the promotion of equity.

1- Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions into Water Resources Development and Management In the Mediterranean Region (GEWAMED).

2- The term "rural areas" normally includes small and medium sized towns, according to the national definitions.

Women, particularly rural women in developing countries, are seriously disadvantaged with respect to a wide range of measures, such as the incidence of poverty, wage rates for the same work, participation in waged employment, access to formal credit, unemployment, hours of work, ownership of productive assets, participation in decision-making and so forth. There is even evidence that in some areas, the position of women has actually deteriorated. In many areas women's workloads are growing in response to male migration, while agricultural commercialisation is sometimes associated with a worsening of women's position (Koopman, 1997). The outcome of male migration in this regard seems to be area specific, however, for some areas male migration has actually led to female empowerment, in the sense that the wife becomes de facto household head and primary decision maker.

In spite of the importance of some of the problems outlined above, the investments dedicated to support rural development programmes are not keeping relation with their importance. It is a sad reality that the agriculture sector is losing relative importance in the economy of most countries. This is for instance reflected in the lending of the World Bank where the lending for rural development has been decreasing since the early 80's where it represented 30 % of the total lending to the 7,9% of 2002.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The constraints faced by countries in the rural environment are very many and different from country to country. As result the approaches or policies that each country follows to improve the live of the people living in rural environments are normally very diverse. However one can group the constraints into several categories and broad priority policies can be established. The EC (EC, 2000) identifies the following groups of constraints:

Ethical and political issues. They include among others: Gender inequities; Inequitable rights to access natural resources and other productive assets. Women, ethnic minorities, foreigners, etc. may not be allowed to own land or access rangeland or water, they may not be allowed to borrow money, to run an enterprise, etc; physical insecurity., rural populations are especially victims of insecurity; etc. **Inappropriate institutional settings.** Including Institutional framework that inhibits private investment; Poor standards of administrative accountability and governance; Over-centralised administration and public decision-making process; Public and private sector roles are unclear; Competition is not open; etc.

Lack of enabling economic environment. Inadequate level of domestic savings; Market protection; Uncontrolled budget deficit; Price distortions (often biased against small rural households); Inefficient and inequitable tax collection; taxation of the rural sector; taxation of exports;

Weak individual assets. Low level of education; Poor health; Lack of technical and management skills; Lack of financial assets. Non-sustainable natural resources management. Lack of holistic approach to natural resource use; Poorly developed understanding of environmental issues; Resource tenure regimes not conducive to sustainable management;

Negative consequences of OECD policies: Northern policies are not coherent with Northern requirements for environmental sustainability imposed on the South; - Unfair competition from the agricultural produce of OECD countries dumped on the global market; - Barriers to entry to OECD agricultural markets; Barriers to international labour mobility.

In correspondence with these groups of constraints six policy priority areas can be identified (EC, 2000):

1. Ensuring more equitable access to productive assets (e.i. land), markets and services;
2. Building more effective, accountable, decentralised and participatory institutions
3. Supporting economic policies to enable broad-based growth,
4. Investing in human capital
5. Promote more sustainable management of natural resources
6. Introducing greater coherence between the home policies of the OECD countries and those they urge developing countries to adopt.

In implementing these policies it should be recognised that rural and urban spaces are becoming increasingly linked. As development proceeds, there tends to be a transition in rural areas away from subsistence agriculture towards more diversified and commercial activities linked into urban markets.

This transition is characterised by the growth of non-farm employment, the development of secondary towns and peri-urban farming, rural to urban migration and out-migration from remote and low potential towards high-potential rural areas. This leads to the development of broader, more competitive and better-integrated markets and it increases economic opportunities. Policies and strategies must take due account of these changes in view of strengthening the rural-urban linkages which provide many opportunities for poverty reduction - to the mutual benefit of rural and urban populations.

Some of the international donors make specific references to the policy areas that they will support. For instance the EC's policy and strategy for the agricultural sector concentrates on improving the policy environment for agriculture, enhancing market access, supporting producer associations and strengthening production support services, including research and extension, input supply, irrigation, post-harvest processing, marketing and rural finance. The EC will also support the development of the rural non-farm sector, which is an increasingly important source of income for the rural poor. EC support will focus on developing an enabling business environment, strengthening producer associations and promoting rural enterprise development through the provision of credit, training, and business development advice.

The implementation of these policies follow agreements made at international events and specific procedures have been developed for their implementation. Such procedures are described in greater details in some of the other papers (Tomassini, Navarra, Garrido) that will be presented at the Third Regional GEWAMED Workshop on "Mainstreaming gender dimensions in water management for rural development" that will be held in Tunis (Tunisia) from 19-22 May 2008.

WHAT ARE THE CONSTRAINTS THAT WOMEN FACE IN THE RURAL ENVIRONMENT WITH REGARD TO THE MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES?

Women face many constraints as they play more active roles in achieving household food security, generating incomes and contributing to agricultural production. The constraints faced by women to fully participate in rural development programmes arise from equity discriminations that have their origin in cultural traditions, religious beliefs and often unawareness of their rights. Below some of these constraints are analysed with particular reference to those concerning the sustainable management of the water resources.

Women and land and water ownership and tenure

Land and water rights are intimately associated in most countries of the world although water is often a public good and therefore its use is associated to permits, concessions, and other tenure systems. Irrigated and rainfed land are the main source of livelihood for many rural populations but women have much less access to this essential asset than men. The distribution of this asset (or exclusion from it) is therefore a major determinant of poverty. Even in developed countries it is rare to have figures above 30 % of land ownership belonging to women. This figure tends to be much lower (4-10%) in developing countries. Often this situation has its origin in inheritance laws that for social reasons or traditions discriminate women access. In some North African countries women receive only half of the land or no land at all. This has been widely documented by a survey (COHRE, 2007) carried out by the Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE). In some societies in sub-Saharan Africa, a woman acquires land tenure rights for life; however, this right is transferred to the male members of the family after she dies. In some cases, a woman may lose access to land after the death of her husband or father. Without secure land tenure, women cannot obtain access to credit (IFAD, 2007).

While few women have legal access to land they exercise many other types of tenure (tenant, sharecropper, caretaker, etc.) and this trend has increased much with male migrations. As result there are an increasing number of women that are "de facto" the managers of farms but they do not enjoy the access to rights (water) and services (credit) that owners have. To enable a more effective participation of men and women that have precarious form of tenure it is necessary recognising greater relevance to these types of tenure. Project design should support the actual farm decision makers and not absentees or male kin having marginal interest in farm affairs. Involving the "real users" will bring efficiency gains to the project as they will be the actual implementer of project targets.

Labour contribution to irrigated farms and household

The share of female labour force in total agriculture labour force of the world is estimated by FAO (FAO, 2006) in 48.10 % for the year 2000. In some African countries this figure approaches 90%. It is evident that female work plays a fundamental role in agriculture and in particular in irrigated agriculture. However, there are a number of serious problems associated with it:

1. An important part of the required farm labour work is informal and provided by family members. However access to farm income and other family resources depends on traditions, decision making power distribution in the family and other factors. When the access to family resources is fair this stimulates a greater involvement of all family members in farm and household affairs. However, when women and children are openly discriminated they will be discouraged and will refrain from participation in some farm and household activities. It is therefore important to understand how the allocation of family resources takes place within the household.
2. In general has been estimated by research that rural women work 40% more than men due to the fact that they work in the farm but also in domestic tasks. However, they generally enjoy fewer benefits.
3. The access of women to wage labour is often restricted due to application of discriminatory practices. Furthermore, the salaries of women are often lower than those of men and the working hours longer.
4. Women are generally not able to irrigate at night due to insecurity reasons and even during the day may face other time limitations. Water distribution systems rarely provide the necessary flexibility to satisfy such needs.
5. In some countries and cultural traditions women are not supposed to work in the field without the presence of their husbands or they are not allowed to work at all.
6. When women are owners of the farm and have adequate resources to manage it their productivity tend to be higher than those of men or at least equal.

Decision-making at household level

Managing an irrigation farm means making effective decisions at the right time. Hence making the right decisions in farm activities is fundamental in achieving expected results. The decision making process is related to the several factors but mostly to the distribution of powers and gender responsibilities within the household. Understanding of how such powers and responsibilities work in a specific location at household level will be relevant to provide supporting services (training) and technologies (for instance, drip irrigation) to the relevant persons. Without such understanding some of the targeted beneficiaries may not be able to participate in the planned activity due to social restrictions imposed by family members.

Participation in water user's organizations

Institutional building is an essential element of any rural development project concerned with water. Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) programmes have become an integral part of many irrigation projects because they require strong institutions to implement and enforce new arrangements. The predominant type of organization normally established is a Water User Association (WUA) but there are other organizational forms, such as the cooperatives, that provide for greater flexibility to accept members.

The participation of water users in WUAs is normally linked to the ownership of the land. As indicated earlier, few women are legally owners of land and hence their participation and representation in WUAs is normally low. This is a contradiction to the fact that the percentage of women managing irrigated farms under other tenure arrangements can be considerable and they do not find a way to channel their needs and views. In fact, such women farmers are often excluded from WUA membership and the opportunities for effective participation and leadership reduced. However, there are other types of organizations (Vermillion and Sagardoy, 1999) that provide for greater flexibility in membership and other interesting experiences, like introducing a quota system, that have allowed overcoming this difficulty in different set ups and circumstances.

Domestic and other uses of water

Water development projects tend to centre on the delivery of irrigation water to farms whereas water supply projects plan only for domestic use. However in rural life all uses tend to concentrate around the only resource available no matter if they were planned for irrigation or domestic use. Rural communities have diverse uses for water besides irrigated agriculture like fishing, livestock watering, small businesses, home gardening and domestic tasks. This strongly suggests that water management projects should take into consideration the provision of water for other uses. The associated costs are not high if the quality of water meets the required standards and the benefits may be significant, such as: reduce time to unproductive activities like fetching water from far distances. It is estimated that women in many developing countries walk for an average of about 6 kilometres each day to collect water (UNFPA 2002). Water collection for domestic purposes is generally the responsibility of women and girls in almost all developing countries. The availability of clean water close to home reduces women's workloads, and the time saved in fetching water may be spent on other activities to strengthen livelihood resilience, including productive activities such as crop production (IFAD 2007).

Water quality also requires particular attention in this context. Often drinking wells and irrigation wells are next to each other and use the same aquifer and therefore, the water quality is the same. Also in many irrigation systems water for domestic use is taken from the canals. The situation is even more difficult in areas where non-treated waste water is used for irrigation where the health risks are high. Women who collect water need to be informed about its quality and the precautions that they need to use. Understanding the water quality is important for women but also for the whole family as their health largely depends on its good quality.

Planning project for multipurpose uses requires a thorough investigation of the needs of the non-agriculture uses and in particular of women needs

Lack of institutional coordination among rural development programmes focusing on gender

The fragmented approach to water resources management has many shortcomings but one of the most limiting ones is the difficulty for achieving effective coordination of their action. Women have attracted the attention of many donors and many programmes have been developed to support their empowerment and elimination of inequalities. However often such programmes are uncoordinated at national level resulting in duplication of efforts or missing opportunities where they could have provided more effective assistance.

The replacement of the fragmented approach by the IWRM approach should improved the coordination among concerned stake holders but in the case of gender this may not be sufficient and special gender coordination committees or other similar arrangements may be needed.

Women are called to new roles for which they are not prepared

The migration of male workers from the less developed countries of the Mediterranean basin to the more industrialized ones has become a phenomenon of large proportions that is producing a strong change in the rural areas of the developing countries. Next to this external migration there is also an internal migration from rural areas to urban ones where the labour opportunities appear greater. The results of such migrations are that an increased number of household are headed by women on temporal bases and, in some cases, in nearly permanent bases. Often women become responsible for the management of all house affairs but also of the land (irrigated or not) of the family and they are not prepared for this new roles. Cultural roles and lack of knowledge may limit their capacity to assume this new role of managers of family farms resulting in misuse of available family resources. Also a contributing factor to the feminization of agriculture is that many women become head of households due to major events (death of husband, separation,) that have upset their lives finding themselves with little preparation to deal with this new dramatic situation.

Globalisation is also affecting social roles in rural communities and agricultural management, including irrigation. Many women are changing their attitude towards agricultural work. Younger female generations are becoming very reluctant to accept physical agricultural work without specific payment.

Limited access to information and technology

Illiteracy is more extended among women than in men. The same applies to attendance to primary and secondary schools where women still have lower rates than men. These are basic problems that have to be improved regardless of their implication in water resources. The fact remains that a literate person with some basic school formation will have greater chances to access to information and technical know how that will provide her or him with better opportunities in life.

The other side of the knowledge equation is whether the necessary information arrives at the people requiring it. This is a complex question because first it has to be determined what kind of information or knowledge may be required at local level. Gender Analysis Tools are very appropriate for identifying such needs. In general the present communication systems have great capabilities to address some of the underlying problems but few are addressed to improve the conditions of women in rural areas.

As a case in point the lack of information campaigns illustrating the risk of using/drinking unsafe water has been the cause for many illness and deaths of children. The costs associated to such information campaigns are certainly much less than the cost for the society of human lives and illnesses.

WHAT ARE THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES THAT ARE LIKELY TO HAVE A GREATER IMPACT ON WOMEN?

There are several possible approaches for gender policy in rural development. A detailed diagnostic analysis of the primary economic activities of rural women could suggest which approach would be most appropriate in a specific country or region. The main approaches that could influence a greater integration of women in rural development programmes could be summarized as follows:

1. **To target support for women as independent farmers:** Such a policy would give priority to facilitating women's access to key productive resources such as land and credit, as well as training and technical assistance tailored to the crops and activities undertaken by women. There are several examples of countries that have adopted policies given priority to women in the assignation of land but also other forms of land tenure should not be considered as constraints for credit or receiving the benefits of irrigation development.
2. **Supporting women's participation in the off-farm labour market:** on the supply side by investing in, infrastructure and transportation linking women's residence to their worksites and community- or workplace-based childcare facilities; and on the demand side by promoting rural employment and by legislating and enforcing gender equality in the labour market (FAO, 2003). Some advocates place particular emphasis on enhancing women's non-agricultural wage labour opportunities, since the available evidence suggests that this is where the greatest relative income gains for rural women are found (Berdegue et al., 2001; Reardon, Berdegue and Escobar, 2001).
3. **To improve the access of women to education and Information:** Technologies and Communication (ITC). This will include targeted literacy and education programmes for women but also facilitating the access of women to rural information centres. Children are particularly susceptible to water borne diseases and their mothers are their guardians. Educational and training programmes are instrumental in promoting good health practices to prevent or reduce these diseases. Radio programmes are of easy access in rural areas and they can be the providers of much needed information concerning the integration of women in rural development programmes. Special attention may need the extension services to ensure that they sensitive to women needs and capable of responding to such needs.
4. **Improve the access of women to the institutional set up:** Several actions can be implanted under this policy. One would be the promotion of women associations as channels to provide more information, training opportunities and defend the need for equality. Other would be to guarantee the equal opportunity principles in all public organizations related to rural development. Also relevant would be to take positive actions for a more active participation of women in water user associations.
5. **Supporting the integration of gender socio economic analysis in the formulation and development of rural development projects:** There are many gender socio economic tools (FAO, 2001; GWA, 2006; IFAD 2007; IFAD, 2002) that should be integrated in the project cycle. Supporting such integration will provide for better opportunities for women and projects will be more directly addressed to satisfy the needs of local populations.

6. Supporting integrated approaches in project design and implementation: The need of integrated approaches when preparing and developing water projects is widely recognized but in particular the provision of domestic water is a component that can increase the social and economics benefits of projects In rural areas,. As women will be the main user of domestic water, it is indispensable to understand their water needs and associate them to the management of watering points. When rural development projects are implemented by different agencies national coordination mechanism are needed.

7. Support the gender disaggregated statistical information and national censuses: Considerable progress is made in adopting standard procedures for collecting household and agriculture information disaggregated by sex. However there are still countries in the Mediterranean that need to strengthen their support to these approaches.

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INSTITUTIONAL AND POLITICAL GENDER DIMENSIONS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SYRIA

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Abstract

The paper “Institutional and Political Gender Dimensions in Rural Development in Syria” focuses on the governmental current policies related to gender roles and contribution to the Syrian economy, agriculture in particular, irrigation and water resource management. It also shows the framework of the cooperative actions with the international organizations, United Nation Development Program (UNDP) working in the field of women empowerment and integration into natural resource management. The Syrian government has recognized the necessity of improving the social lives quality and integrating gender issues as fundamental indicators in the governmental projects and development programs. Therefore, the process of involving women in the economic, social and political life has definitely accelerated in the past 5 to 10 years. Syria acceded to the “Convention of Eliminating of All Forms of Discrimination against Women” (CEDAW) on March 23, 2003 (Syrian Commission for Family Affairs, 2006).

The 9th 5 year-plan (2001-2005) shown achievement many rights for Syrian women related to their access to the economic, social and political opportunities. Consequently, Mortality rate decreased from 71 per 100 thousands in 2000 to 58 per 100 thousands in 2005. Mortality rate among children under 5 years (per thousand) declined as well from 29 to 19 and among infants from 24 to 17 per 1000 between 2000 and 2005. Despite the progress shown in the improvement of women development, huge differences still appear in the main development indicators, especially the socio-economic and political chances between males and females. Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) examples follow (CBS, 2006):

- Female unemployment rate shared 18.5% but 7.3% among males in 2005.
- Illiteracy rate among females is 26%, while male illiteracy 12% of the total inhabitants above 15 years old in 2005.
- Women contributed to 17.3% of the workforce in 2005, whereas to 21% in 2002.
- Women participation (above 15 years) in the economic production declined to nearly 9% in 2005, while it was more than 14% in 2002.
- Share of women working in agriculture decreased to about 25.5% against the rise of the share in the service sector to 56.3% in 2005.
- Women employment rate in the governmental ministries and institutions dropped to about 50% percent of the total workers in 2005, and to 25% working in the Ministry of Agriculture and 10% in the Ministry of Irrigation.
- Women working in the public ministries stayed at a low rate (7%) in 2005.
- Women participation in the Parliament stayed at only 12%.

We need to focus more closely on issues related to the production, dissemination and utilization of information on rural women to enhance gender equality and food security, stressing in particular the following points:

- Women ownership and access to productive resources and benefits, and to support women control over the resources.
- Women position in the decision making process through integrating gender concept in all policies, programs, and development plans.
- Main obstacles, especially the social norms that hinder their effective involvement in all spheres of life.

Based on that, further reform, policies and programs, is still needed to be implemented, particularly in the remote rural parts of the country, where women still suffer from illiteracy, limited opportunities, hard work environment, low wages, poor health conditions and insufficient quality and quantity of drinking water and sanitation. Moreover, gender issues still lack the application of systematic research and the access to information technologies.

INTRODUCTION

The millennium development goals have stressed the importance of gender equity and women empowerment. In 2006, the Human Development Report revealed that countries with the lowest gender-related development indices (Sierra Leone, Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali) had high poverty rates and little access to water, health and education. At the same time, countries with high poverty rates (Bolivia, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Paraguay) had also high rates of social, gender and ethnic inequality (Human Development Report, 2006). Poverty is deepening worldwide, and the most vulnerable groups are women and children. Women experience poverty differently than men, as they are generally treated unequally. It is estimated that, of the 1.3 billion people living in poverty around the world, about 70% out of them are women. Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours, produce half of the world's food, and yet earn only 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's property (UN Millennium Campaign, 2005).

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The paper focuses on government current policies related to gender roles and contribution to the Syrian economy, agriculture in particular, irrigation and water resource management. It focuses also on the framework of the cooperative actions with the international organizations, United Nation Development Program (UNDP) working in the field of women empowerment in natural resource management.

GENDER, WATER AND POVERTY

While Millennium Development Goals have been set separately for poverty, gender and the environment (encompassing water and sanitation), yet they are in fact interrelated. Water is vital for life and clean water for domestic purposes is also essential for human health and survival and for other facets of sustainable development. If water resources are located far away from homes, women and girls have to walk further to collect water, thus reducing the time available for productive work. (UN Millennium Task Force on Water and Sanitation, 2005).

Why gender, water and poverty? The expression “Gender” is intended to define the socio-economic, cultural and institutional integrated functions and responsibilities of man and woman. Based on the human rights and on the 5th item of the 14th article of the Fourth World Women Conference (FWCO) held in Beijing in 1995, which calls for adopting gender equity, equality to participate and to enjoy prosperities of the rural development process. This means that the development process target both men and women, but gives more attention to women since in most of the countries they are more vulnerable to bias.

It is already known that poverty is multi-dimensional and location specific. Recent estimations demonstrate that the greatest differences are geographic. In Syria poverty is generally more prevalent in rural than in urban areas and Most Syrian's poor (62% of the poor) live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for survival (UNDP, 2005). It also varies by age, gender (from women to men) and by other socio-economic aspects. Households headed by women are often more exposed to economic shocks due to income irregularity or sustainability. Women are more vulnerable than men to chronic poverty due to gender inequalities in various social, economic and political institutions. Such inequalities can be found in the uneven distribution of income, control over property or income and access to productive inputs (such as credit). So, poverty is not only about material deprivation. It also includes a lack of voice or power, vulnerability to crises and other adverse situations and limited capacity to cope with such vulnerabilities. Moreover, women are always subject to bias in decision-making, resources and water resources, rights and entitlements that often favor men in opposition to women and to socially exclusion in labour markets (FAO, 2005).

Water is essential to human beings and all forms of life. But pollution and lack of access to clean water is proliferating the cycle of poverty, water-borne diseases, and gender inequities (Khosla and Pearl, 2003). Water is an entry point for sustainable development, poverty eradication, reproductive and maternal health, combating diseases. And yet there are still 1.1 billion people without access to safe drinking water and 2.6 billion without access to adequate sanitation. This situation has an enormous negative impact on women and children (Khosla and Pearl, 2003). Availability of clean water combined with improved sanitation and hygiene will reduce morbidity and mortality especially among children. It is also the main element to achieve many fundamental goals, such as environmental protection, food security, empowerment of women, education of girls and reduction in productivity loss due to illnesses. Water is a catalytic entry point for developing countries in the fight against poverty and hunger, and for safeguarding human health, reducing child mortality and promoting gender equality and protection of natural resources. The HIV and AIDS pandemic, which is both a cause and a consequence of the vulnerability that is characteristic of poverty, has driven some countries to adopt home-based care approaches as health institutions fail to cope with the demand for services, especially the provision of sufficient water in quality and quantity (UN Millennium Task Force on Water and Sanitation, 2005). Based on the above argument, the viscous circle of poverty would be completed by the material wellbeing dimensions and linkages among gender, water and poverty follow as a three-way interaction:

- Access to water of sufficient quality and quantity will reduce the incidence of waterwashed and water-borne diseases, improve health and productivity for women and attendance in schools for children.
- When there is competition for water resources, women and the vulnerable often lose their entitlements.
- Women's development priorities for water resources may be for sources nearer homes so that they are able to balance their productive and reproductive roles. If they are not consulted, then these priorities will not be considered.
- Improved livelihoods and food security for women and the disadvantaged are also dependent on access to sufficient water resources.
- Participation in water management can also improve the dignity of women through giving them a

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

The WID (or Women in Development) approach calls for greater attention to women to women in development policy and practice, and emphasizes the need to integrate them into the development process (Hamdy et al., 2005). The WID perspective evolved in the early 1970's. It marked an important corrective, highlighting the fact that women need to be integrated into development processes as active agents if efficient and effective development is to be achieved. Women's significant productive contribution was made visible, although their productive role was downplayed. In contrast, the GAD (or Gender and Development) approaches generally aim to meet both women's practical gender needs and more strategic gender needs, by challenging existing divisions of labor or power relations. GAD emerged from the frustration with the lack of progress of WID policy, in changing women's lives and influencing the broader development agenda. GAD challenged the WID focus on women in isolation, seeing women's "real" problem as imbalance of power between women and men. There are different interpretations of GAD, some of which focus primarily on the gender division of labor and gender roles focus on gender as a relation of power embedded in institutions. GAD approaches generally aim to meet both women's practical gender needs and more strategic gender needs, by challenging existing divisions of labor or power relations. GAD, responses:

- The use of gender statistics: sex-disaggregated data showing the differences between women and men, and data on specific gender issues such as counting and valuing unpaid work;
- Gender training to raise awareness of gender issues and extent to which they affect policies and programs;
- The use of gender analysis to identify differential impacts on women and men and to develop measures to address such differences.

SYRIAN WOMEN IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE

The Syrian governmental 9th fifth plan (2001-2005) has recognized the necessity of integrating gender issues in the socio-economic life through involving women in decision making and work planning processes. Consequently, women involvement has definitely improved women lives quality and created new economic opportunities, developed their education and skills levels by controlling the numbers of girls quitting school. Syria accessed many international agreements related to gender equity and to the "Convention of Eliminating of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW) and established the national committee to follow up Beijing Conference recommendations (Syrian Commission for Family Affairs, 2006). To fulfill such objectives, a number of policies and measures have been adopted to give women the opportunity to manage their own projects.

These include efforts to raise awareness, to promote local enterprises through the creation of rotating women's credit fund, to provide direct monetary and in kind support to single-parents poor families or those with handicapped or elderly members through ministries such as Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture, State Planning Commission and other Non-Governmental and international Organization. Concerning the strategic objective A.1: pertinent to "adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty" development strategies in Syria have given high priority to combating poverty among women and men. These efforts include creating new job opportunities and enhancing access to business opportunities with a special focus on developing different economic sectors and adopting policies that enhance rural human development. The National Report on the MDGs has maintained that the Syrian Government is constantly working to improve the living standards of civil servants through decreeing regular salary increases and revising the basic state employees' law.

In order to absorb the increasing numbers of new entrants into the job market, which has led to a state of imbalance between supply and demand, the Government began to expand its unemployment combating activities, including re-activating the employment bureau and investigating ways to attract inward investment. the establishment of the unemployment combating agency by law No. 71 of 2001. the agency is commissioned to finance and execute a number of income-generating enterprises, with a special emphasis on job-creation and creating projects in rural areas. The Unemployment Combating Agency is authorized to increase the grant amount for handicrafts enterprises in rural areas and female or youth oriented enterprises.

The agency' mandate covers the following:

- Small-scale agricultural and industrial enterprises;
- Manual and mechanical industries, especially traditional ones in rural areas;
- Environment-friendly enterprises, and;
- Training and capacity strengthening, especially in the IT domain.
- This five-year programs s expected to create 440.000 new job opportunities

(50.000 in the first year, 90.000 in the second, 110.000 in the third, 120.000 in the forth and 70.000 in the fifth).

As for Syrian women labor force participation in the economy, the percentage of women participation in labor force has increased gradually during last two decades so that was in 1980 23% to become 28% in 2003 with significant progress in their economic participation rate between 1990 (24%) to reach 27% in 2000. On the other side, unemployment rate among women has increased also gradually during the same previous period, which was 3.8% in 1980, 9.5% in 1990, 23.9% in 2000, and 24.1% in 2003. Table 1 illustrates the big gap between men and women concerning unemployment.

Table-1: Summary of Gender Profile in Syria, Middle East, and in Lower Middle income Countries

Development indicators	Syrian Arab Republic				Middle East & North Africa		Lower middle income	
	1980	1990	2000	2003	1980	2003	1980	2003
GNP per capita (US \$)	1,610	940	950	1,120	..	1,830	600	1,370
Population								
***Total (millions)	8.7	12.1	16.2	17.4	164.3	289.1	1,756.5	2,408.2
Female (% of total)	49.0	49.4	49.5	49.5	49.4	49.4	49.2	49.3
Life expectancy at birth (years)								
Male	61	64	68	68	58	67	64	68
Female	64	69	73	73	60	70	67	72
Adult literacy rate (% of people aged 15+)								
Male	..	..	91	91	..	..	..	93.5
Female	..	..	74.2	74.2	..	..	..	86.1
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION								
Total labor force (millions)	2	3	5	6	51	105	848	1,279
Labor force, female (% of total labor force)	23	24	27	28	25	30	40	42
Unemployment								
Total (% of total labor force)	3.9	5.8	11.2	11.7	..	..	4.7	5.8
Female (% of female labor force)	3.8	9.5	23.9	24.1	..	..	..	..
EDUCATION ACCESS AND ATTAINMENT								
Net primary school enrollment rate								
Male	..	97	98	100	..	91	..	..
Female	..	88	93	96	..	86	..	..
Progression to grade 5 (% of cohort)								
Male	..	97	93	91	..	..	..	94
Female	..	95	92	92	..	..	..	93
Primary completion rates (% of relevant age group)								
Male	..	104	90	90	..	89	..	97
Female	..	93	83	85	..	85	..	94
Youth literacy Rate (% of people aged 15-24)								
Male	..	..	97.1	97.1	..	..	..	97.6
Female	..	..	93	93	..	..	..	97.2
HEALTH								
Total fertility rate (births per woman)	7.4	5.3	3.7	3.4	6	3.0	3.1	2.1
Contraceptive prevalence (% of women aged 15-49)	20	..	45	48	..	..	..	..
Births attended by health staff	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	..	..	160	..	..	..	..	..
Child malnutrition prevalence, weight for age (% of children under 5)	..	..	7	..	..	..	..	..

Note: Data in italics refer to the most recent data available within the two years of the year indicated Regarding Syrian women political situation, the statistical abstract issued by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2004 showed the percentage of females' participants in all decision making position at the government level as in table 2

Table 2: Female's participation in the Governmental Department and Decision Making level

Department	% of Females to Total Department Staff
Vice President	Syria's First Female
People Assembly	14%
Ministry of Economy and Trade	20%
Ministry of Finance	32%
Ministry of Industry	20%
Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources	9%
Ministry of Electricity	11%
Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform	24%
Ministry of Communication and Technology	24%
Ministry of Transport	13%
Ministry of Interior	44%
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	29%
Ministry of Higher Education	46%
Ministry of Education	55%
Ministry of Culture and National Guidance	36%
Ministry of Information	40%
Ministry of Health	59%
Ministry of Tourism	55%
Ministry of Irrigation	12%
Ministry of Housing and Building	14%
Ministry of Construction Companies	7%
Ministry of Local Administration & Environment	16%
Ministry of Justice	28%
Ministry of Social Affairs & Labor	49%
Ministry of Al-Awkaf	11%
Ministry of Expatriates	20%
Total	32%

Source: CBS database, 2004

It is noticeable from table above that woman participation rate is high in ministries that don't require hard work, while they occupy almost equally with men the positions related to education, finance, health, Tourism, social affairs, and information.

With regard to education access and attainment in Syria, starting from primary school enrolment, the percentage of female enrolment in primary school was 96% in 2003, while it was 100% for male because of governmental compulsory education strategy for the elementary school. The progression to grade 5 for female was 92% (as % of the cohort), and was 93% for males, but the primary completion rate for females was 85%, while it was 90% for males. Coming to youth literacy rate (as % of relevant age group), it was 93% for females and 97.1% among males. Whereas, adult literacy rate (as % of people aged 15+) among females was 74.2%, while it was 91% in 2003. That data indicate that gender gap in this component is not too big due to government policy in spreading buckshee education policy.

Furthermore, the plan has dedicated an ad hoc chapter on "population and labor force" which calls for integrating demographic variables into development plans and incorporates strategic goals in the field of population growth and women empowerment, foremost of which being:

- fostering the efficient involvement of women in economic development;
- increasing the percentage of women in the workforce;

- enhancing women's involvement in executive, legislative and judicial bodies;
- focusing on the basic rights of the family;
- empowering women socially and intellectually;
- eradicating illiteracy among women, and;
- boosting gender equality

In addition, since 2000, several pieces of legislations in support of women have been enacted into decrees, including:

- Decree No. 330 of 2002, which endorses the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW);
- Decree No. 78 of 2001 that gives superannuated women the right to bequeath their pension to their husband and children, and;
- Decree No. 53 of 2002, which increases duration of paid maternity leave.

On the other hand, the enhancement of some legislations aiming at eliminating discrimination against women has necessitated allocating extra funding, such as law No. 78, which has incurred an increase of 10% in the budget of the social security establishment (SCE). In fact, gender equity budgeting has witnessed a noticeable increase since 2000 where, for example, the budget allocated to the GWU has increased by 67.32% for the period 1999-2003, and the funds allocated to social development has doubled (21.57% in 2002 and 44.56% in 2003).

Indeed, numerous achievements have been realized in Syria in the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action which is indisputably reflected on the Syrian women themselves. (Syrian Arab republic, 10 years post Beijing, calls for peace) platform for Action.

The Syrian educational and upbringing programs have exceeded the typical picture of gender bias and gender discrimination that rationalize physical and symbolical violence practicing against woman. These practices are related to biological determinants of her role, which abbreviate woman in the role her body; therefore, according to that role, woman is considered either good or bad, especially the standardized and traditional picture that relates woman with cosmos, appealing, chicanery, and seduction, while man is viewed as courageous, brave, knight, and noble. It has been diffused that the picture of femininity or masculinity released to work by pretense that it is the requirement of biological nature of woman gender. However, the other conformation affects that diffuse al mass media means, promotion, and drama still governed by several discrimination and standardization. In the light of that, it can be said that Syrian woman's attitude toward that standardized picture is not satisfied.

In conclusion, the main objectives of women empowerment are poverty eradication and re-framing policies that enable women to participate actively in all domains. Economic empowerment of women is the first step towards the general concept of empowerment. Therefore, several crucial points have to be considered by women organizations and bodies to overcome the obstacles that hinder gender equity and equality, which are summarized as follows:

Poverty eradication

Since women comprise the majority of the population below the poverty line and are very often in situations of extreme poverty, given the harsh realities of intra-household and social discrimination, macro economic policies and poverty eradication programs should be specifically addressing the needs and problems of such women. In addition, there must be improved implementation of programs which are already women oriented with special targets for women, and steps have to be taken for mobilization of poor women and convergence of services, by offering them a range of economic and social options, along with necessary support measures to enhance their capabilities.

Enhance women's access to credit for consumption and production, the establishment of new and strengthening of existing micro-credit mechanisms and micro-finance institution should be undertaken so that the outreach of credit is enhanced. Other supportive measures would be taken to ensure adequate flow of credit through extant financial institutions and banks, so that all women below poverty line have easy access to credit.

Women and Economy

In order to achieve economic women empowerment, women's perspectives should be included in designing and implementing macro-economic and social policies by institutionalizing their participation in such processes. Their contribution to socio-economic development as producers and workers have to be recognized in the formal and informal sectors (including home based workers) and appropriate policies relating to employment and to her working conditions will be drawn up. Such measures could include:

Reinterpretation and redefinition of conventional concepts of work wherever necessary e.g. in the Census records, to reflect women's contribution as producers and workers. Preparation of satellite and national accounts

Women and agriculture

In view of the critical role of women in the agriculture and allied sectors, as producers, concentrated efforts must be made to ensure that benefits of training, extension and various programs will reach them in proportion to their numbers. The programs for training women in soil conservation, social forestry, dairy development and other occupations allied to agriculture like horticulture, livestock including small animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries etc. would be expanded to benefit women workers in the agriculture sector.

Women and Industry

The important role played by women in electronics, information technology and food processing and agro industry and textiles has been crucial to the development of these sectors. They should be given comprehensive support in terms of labor legislation, social security and other support services to participate in various industrial sectors. Women at present cannot work in night shift in factories even if they wish to. Suitable measures should be taken to enable women to work on the night shift in factories, and this has to be accompanied with support services for security, transportation etc.

Support Services

The provision of support services for women, like child care facilities, including crèches at work places and educational institutions, homes for the aged and the disabled should be expanded and improved to create an enabling environment and to ensure their full cooperation in social, political and economic life. Women-friendly personnel policies should also be drawn up to encourage women to participate effectively in the developmental process.

Social Empowerment of Women

Education

Equal access to education for women and girls will be ensured. Special measures will be taken to eliminate discrimination, universalize education, eradicate illiteracy, create a gender-sensitive educational system, increase enrolment and retention rates of girls and improve the quality of education to facilitate life-long learning as well as development of occupation/vocation/technical skills by women. Reducing the gender gap in secondary and higher education would be a focus area. Sectoral time targets in existing policies will be achieved, with a special focus on girls and women, particularly those belonging to weaker sections including the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes/Other Backward Classes/Minorities. Gender sensitive curricula would be developed at all levels of educational system in order to address sex stereotyping as one of the causes of gender discrimination.

Health

The reduction of infant mortality and maternal mortality, which are sensitive indicators of human development, is a priority concern. Women should have access to comprehensive, affordable and quality health care. Measures will be adopted that take into account the reproductive rights of women to enable them to exercise informed choices, their vulnerability to sexual and health problems together

with endemic, infectious and communicable diseases. To effectively meet problems of infant and maternal mortality, and early marriage the availability of good and accurate data at micro level on deaths, birth and marriages is required. Strict implementation of registration of births and deaths would be ensured and registration of marriages would be made compulsory.

Nutrition

In view of the high risk of malnutrition and disease that women face at all the three critical stages viz., infancy and childhood, adolescent and reproductive phase, focused attention would be paid to meeting the nutritional needs of women at all stages of the life cycle. This is also important in view of the critical link between the health of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women with the health of infant and young children. Special efforts will be made to tackle the problem of macro and micro nutrient deficiencies especially amongst pregnant and lactating women as it leads to various diseases and disabilities.

Intra-household discrimination in nutritional matters vis-à-vis girls and women should be sought to be ended through appropriate strategies. Widespread use of nutrition education has to be made to address the issues of intra-household imbalances in nutrition and the special needs of pregnant and lactating women. Women's participation should also be ensured in the planning, superintendence and delivery of the system.

Drinking Water and Sanitation: Special attention should be given to the needs of women in the provision of safe drinking water, sewage disposal, toilet facilities and sanitation within accessible reach of households, especially in rural areas and urban slums.

Housing and Shelter: Women's perspectives should be included in housing policies, planning of housing colonies and provision of shelter both in rural and urban areas. Special attention should be given for providing adequate and safe housing and accommodation for women including single women, heads of households, working women, students, apprentices and trainees.

Environment

Women must be involved and their perspectives reflected in the policies and programs for environment, conservation, and restoration. Considering the impact of environmental factors on their livelihoods, women's participation should be ensured in the conservation of the environment and control of environmental degradation. The vast majority of rural women still depends on the locally available non-commercial sources of energy such as animal dung, crop waste and fuel wood. In order to ensure the efficient use of these energy resources in an environmental friendly manner, the Policy will aim at promoting the programs of non-conventional energy resources. Women will be involved in spreading the use of solar energy, biogas, smokeless and other rural application so as to have a visible impact of these measures in influencing eco system and in changing the life styles of rural women.

Science and Technology

Programs should be strengthened to bring about a greater involvement of women in science and technology. These will include measures to motivate girls to take up science and technology for higher education and also ensure that development projects with scientific and technical inputs involve women fully. Efforts to develop a scientific temper and awareness will also be stepped up. Special measures would be taken for their training in areas where they have special skills like communication and information technology. Efforts to develop appropriate technologies suited to women's needs as well as to reduce their drudgery should be given a special focus too.

Women in Difficult Circumstances

In recognition of the diversity of women's situations and in acknowledgement of the needs of specially disadvantaged groups, measures and programs should be undertaken to provide them with special assistance. These groups include women in extreme poverty, women in less developed regions, the disabled widows, elderly women, single women in difficult circumstances, women heading households, those displaced from employment, migrants, women who are victims of marital violence.

Violence against women

All forms of violence against women, physical and mental, whether at domestic or societal levels, including those arising from customs, traditions or accepted practices should be dealt with effectively with a view to eliminate its incidence. Institutions and mechanisms/schemes for assistance should be created and strengthened for prevention of such violence, including sexual harassment at work place and customs like dowry; for the rehabilitation of the victims of violence and for taking effective action against the perpetrators of such violence. A special emphasis should also be laid on programs and measures to deal with trafficking in women and girls.

Rights of the Girl Child

All forms of discrimination against the girl child and violation of her rights should be eliminated by undertaking strong measures both preventive and punitive within and outside the family. These would relate specifically to strict enforcement of laws against prenatal sex selection and the practices of female feticide, female infanticide, child marriage, child abuse and child prostitution etc. Removal of discrimination in the treatment of the girl child within the family and outside and projection of a positive image of the girl child should be actively fostered. There should be special emphasis on the needs of the girl child and earmarking of substantial investments in the areas relating to food and nutrition, health and education, and in vocational education. In implementing programs for eliminating child labor, there have to be a special focus on girl children.

Mass Media

Media should be used to portray images consistent with human dignity of girls and women. The Policy should specifically strive to remove demeaning, degrading, and negative conventional stereotypical images of women and violence against women. Private sector partners and media networks will be involved at all levels to ensure equal access for women particularly in the area of information and communication technologies. The media should be encouraged to develop codes of conduct, professional guidelines and other self regulatory mechanisms to remove gender stereotypes and promote balanced portrayals of women and men.

Operational Strategies

All Central and State Ministries should draw up time bound Action Plans for translating the Policy into a set of concrete actions, through a participatory process of consultation with concerned women departments. The Plans should specifically include the following:

- i) Measurable goals to be achieved by 2010.
- ii) Identification and commitment of resources.
- iii) Responsibilities for implementation of action points.
- iv) Structures and mechanisms to ensure efficient monitoring, review and gender impact assessment of action points and policies.
- v) Introduction of a gender perspective in the budgeting process.

Institutional Mechanisms

Institutional mechanisms, to promote the advancement of women, which exist at the central and state levels, should be strengthened. These have to be through interventions as may be appropriate and should relate to, among others, provision of adequate resources, training and advocacy skills to effectively influence macro-policies, legislation, programs etc. to achieve the empowerment of women.

Resource Management

Availability of adequate financial, human and market resources to implement the policy should be managed by concerned departments, financial credit institutions, and banks, private sector, civil society and other connected institutions. This process should include:

- (a) Assessment of benefits flowing to women and resource allocation to the programs relating to them through an exercise of gender budgeting. Appropriate changes in policies should be made to optimize benefits to women under these schemes;
- (b) Developing synergy between personnel of Health, Rural Development, Education and Women & Child Development Department at field level and other village level functionaries;

Legislation

The existing legislative structure should be reviewed and additional legislative measures taken by identified departments to implement the Policy. This should also involve a review of all existing laws including personal and customary laws, subordinate legislation, and related rules as well as executive and administrative regulations to eliminate all gender discriminatory references. The specific measures required have to be evolved through a consultation process involving civil society, National Departments for Women. In appropriate cases the consultation process would be widened to include other stakeholders too. Effective legislations have to be promoted by involving civil society and community. Appropriate changes in legislation should be undertaken, if necessary.

Gender Sensitization

Training of personnel of executive, legislative, and judicial wings of the State, with a special focus on policy and program framers, implementation and development agencies, law enforcement machinery and the judiciary, as well as non-governmental organizations should be undertaken. Other measures should include:

- (a) Promoting societal awareness to gender issues and women's human rights.
- (b) Review of curriculum and educational materials to include gender education and human rights issues
- (c) Removal of all references derogatory to the dignity of women from all public documents and legal instruments.
- (d) Use of different forms of mass media to communicate social messages relating to women's equality and empowerment.

Consequently, women participation accelerated in the past 5 to 10 years at all levels of different public ministries and administrations in accordance with qualification and experience. Women contributed to 12% of the jurisdiction, 16% of the attorneys and 7% of the delegation representatives. Table 1 summarizes the legal amendments and privileges that Syrian women have gained since 2000.

Table 1: Indicators of women development between 2000 and 2005

Indicator	2000	2005
Population growth rate.	2.69	2.45
Life expectancy	71.3	72.1
Fertility rate	3.7	3.5
Mortality rate among infants (per 1000).	24	17
Mortality rate among children under 5 years (per thousand).	26.00	19.3
Mortality rate among mothers (per 100000).	71	58
Illiteracy rate.	26.3	22.4
Unemployment rate.	22.00	12.3
Poor (males & females) of total population.	20.56	11.4
Participation in the economic production.	12.7	9.2
Participation in the Parliament.	10.4	12.0
Participation in the ministries (%).	7	7

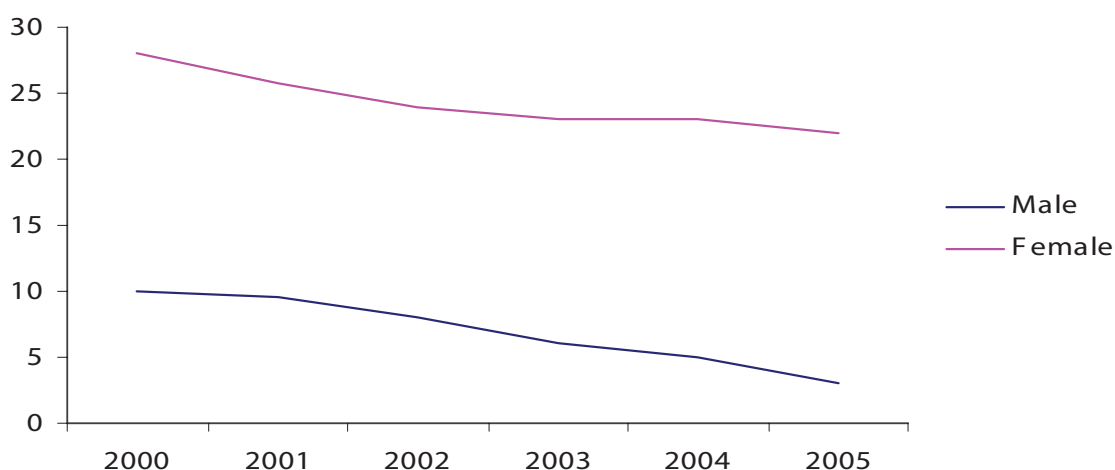
Source: Syrian Commission for Family affairs, 2006.

In the same period, the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs (SCFA) was established besides many other women new organizations NGOs for activating Syrian women in the economic life, such as the Establishment of "FARDOUS" and "Mourid" in 2001 for women development aiming at self dependant and enhancement of development in rural communities. These organizations promote the potential role of women in agricultural and rural development. The Government has sought FAO/TCP assistance in strengthening human resources development for this purpose. Therefore, new projects of "evolving Sandouqs"⁽¹⁾ have launched in 2004 for the purpose of women empowerment in rural areas and eradicating poverty and encouraging the establishment of micro-projects for women (FAO, 2005). Furthermore, many projects and programs were implemented during the 9th fifth plan as a result of the economic committee recommendations No. 26, dated 26, 7, and 2004 to allocate %0,25 of the government investment for the purpose of women empowerment.

¹ "Evolving Sandouqs" are kinds of micro projects provided by government coordinating with the FAO & UNDP to supply rural women with the needed fund just to start their own businesses in their remote rural areas.

Despite the gains and rights that Syrian women have gained so far, women economic activity is often neither accounted in the national income statistics nor in the working hours per day. This happens especially when it takes the form of informal work like housekeeping and the unpaid agricultural work on the family farm, where they produce crops for the family food. Although many micro-projects were implemented during the 9th fifth plan, development hasn't tackled women's livelihoods effectively even though women still share a high percentage of the agriculture labor. And there is still a big gap between male and females in many important development indicators. For instance, the illiteracy rate among males has declined much more than its decrease among females (figure 2).

Figure 2: Illiteracy decline between 2000 and 2005.



Source: Syrian Commission for Family affairs, 2006.

Women occupation of administration positions is still very little when comparing to men and do not hold large plots of land as much as men (table 2).

Table 2: Basic indicators show gender inequality in 2005.

Indicator	Male	Female
Life expectancy	71	72
Illiteracy rate (above 15)	12	26
Participation in the ministries (%)	93	7
Participation in the Parliament	88	12
Participation in administrative professions and public organizations (%)	82	18
Participation in art professions and handcrafts (%)	59	41
Trial lawyers (%)	88	12
Land holding (%)	95	5
Access to micro- credits (%)	84	16

Source: Syrian Commission for Family affairs, 2006.

Then, where is the problem? Many are proposed and addressed by the upcoming 10th fifth plan (2006-2010):

1. Lack of research related to gender analysis and lack of disaggregated data (male/female).
2. Lack of access to information and data resources.
3. Lack of training rural women and access to information technology.
4. Rural women face several constraints of which the most important are: habits, traditions, and the production heavy activities are mostly unpaid and not restricted or reported in the national statistics.
5. Lack of infrastructure that facilitate their involvement in the programmes of extension, technology and credit services.

In brief, women rarely have sufficient access to necessary resources and advantages, and with regard to market access they are still bounded by traditional gender roles that lead to tangible gender gaps that affect the economy, education, health, and accessing other services. These lead to bias in terms of land and water resource ownership and market access, which in turn lead to gender inequality observable elsewhere.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN LAND AND WATER RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

In Syria, rural women contribute to 40% of the agricultural practices though; however, they only own 5% of the agricultural land with an average holding area of 58 donum, according to the agricultural census 1994, while the rest (95%) is owned by men with an average holding of 83 donum. The holding size is linked to the weak access to land property and thus to the weak access to credit, agricultural inputs and to other services. Given that traditions in rural communities suppose that agricultural land must be only distributed among the sons, this hinders improving land productivity as well as gender equality in rural areas. Traditions and social values sometimes conquered the legal rules that certify women rights in land ownership. Moreover, applying technology in natural resource management requires the effective participation of all the partners.

The roles that women do in agriculture vary from region to region and from local community to other. Where large-scale cash cropping has been introduced, the tendency remains for men to become involved in this sector, especially when it is highly mechanized, with women becoming increasingly responsible for household food production and small-scale cash cropping with low levels of technology.

Women major contributions to the agricultural activities in the rural areas in Syria were previously defined. Rural women contribute mainly to harvesting and picking (43-67%), weeding (52-73%), Cow and dairy production is highly gender specific. Whereas, women contribute to only 7% of the irrigation practices, and is decreasing in marketing and financing to only 0.5% of cases (Directorate of Agricultural Research, 2002).

Statistics of the labour force surveys have shown that housewives working formally outside the house were 14% of the workers in 2001 and decreased to 11% in 2002 (CBS, 2004). Some other studies in 2005 reported that 56% of the females working business in the private sector were unpaid (Noun E Nuswa Magazine, March, 2005). They perform the essential chores (paid or unpaid) to ensure the household livelihood and food security such as baking, cooking, fetching water, cleaning and child rearing, etc. Women play an important role in rational water use and in the achievement of household water security as well, especially when ordinarily in rural areas this water is re-used for other purposes the mothers also have an educational role to explain to their children the importance of re-using water in different ways. They are responsible for saving water and energy by effective and rational use.

The Syrian Government has fully recognized water scarcity as the top priority. In terms of sector Agriculture is, by some distance, the largest consumer of water, at national as well as at basin level. Agriculture consumes nearly 90% of all utilized water for irrigation needs. Given that water resources in Syria and worldwide are increasingly limited it is evident that the importance of the efficient and rational use of water resources is strongly emerging as a fundamental issue in the irrigation sector as well as in other sectors such as, domestic sector, hydropower, industry, and environment. Accordingly, many regulations were issued by the Ministry of Agriculture to move to the adoption of modern irrigation technologies (drip& sprinkles) seeking for the achievement of rational water use. Yet, women's involvement in water resource management and the application of the modern irrigation technologies still isn't adequate due to their lack of skills and training on new agricultural techniques. Therefore, raising awareness towards water resource management should always start with women at household and farm levels. Therefore, many short and long training courses have been done by the extension units targeting female farmers at local levels, and trying to enter the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach into the culture of rural communities. The involvement of women in such courses has dramatically increased as they've become more aware about the need of higher level of skills in applying the new agricultural technologies. Many income generating micro projects have also been conducted by the government at local levels.

GOVERNMENT COOPERATION WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Syrian Government has been cooperating with the international organizations United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to enter the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach into all the programs and priorities. The gender fund supports the cooperation through training personnel, financing cooperative projects and workshops in the provinces and Building capacity of the national partners to gain the practical and analytical skills to mainstream gender issues into the economic programs of the governmental and non governmental bodies. The national program for women empowerment, financed by the State Planning Commission has made a head start towards developing the mechanism of women empowerment. A budget of three hundred million lira was

allocated for the clinic village's project to improve the infrastructure, clean water, sanitation, roads and socio-economic sustainable development in the rural communities. In this context, the Syrian government cooperates with the international organizations to develop the mechanism of women economic empowerment through mainstreaming gender dimensions into all aspects of developing the economic life. GEWAMED project is one of the cooperative projects between the Syrian government, General Commission for Agricultural Scientific Research, Natural Resource Department and the European Commission and The Mediterranean Agronomic Institute (Bari CIHEAM – IAMB): (centre International de Hautes Etudes Agronomiques Mediterraneennes - Instituto Agronomico Mediterraneo Di Bari), acting as the regional center.

Partnership with the voluntary sector organizations

The involvement of voluntary organizations, associations, federations, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, women's organizations, as well as institutions dealing with education, training, and research should be ensured in the formulation, implementation, monitoring, and review of all policies and programs affecting women. Towards this end, they must be provided with appropriate support related to resources and capacity building and facilitated to participate actively in the process of the empowerment of women.

International Cooperation

Syria is committed to the conventions of many UN conferences held in the nineties, which seek to bridge the gender gap and attain gender equity, equality, and empowerment of women. Syria staunchly advocates the joint Arab action in support of women issues. This is reflected in accelerating the Arab Women Organization (AWO) by decree No. 257 of 2002 and contributing activity to the AWO related activities. Moreover, Syria has taken active part in all Arab women related forums, including those dealing with women and law, women and policies, women in expatriate countries, women & media, women & economics, women & education, women and armed conflicts.

The Policy should aim at implementation of international obligations/commitments in all sectors on empowerment of women such as the Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD+5) and other such instruments. International, regional and sub-regional cooperation towards the empowerment of women will continue to be encouraged through sharing of experiences, exchange of ideas and technology, networking with institutions and organizations and through bilateral and multi-lateral partnerships.

Recent Activities of GEWAMED Project

The study, Investigating Gender Roles in Water Resources Management is currently being followed up in the southern part (Rural Damascus, Daraa, Sweida, and Quneitra) to collect data required aiming at:

1. Investigate the status of gender equality at household level and then to measure the following areas of inequity:

- Access and management of land and water resources
- Access to paid employment
- Educational attainment and
- Institutional empowerment

2. Test the correlation between rural women status in term of the above mentioned areas and gender roles in water resources management. This can be achieved by applying the questionnaire in the selected villages in the southern area as it was tested by a pilot survey in three villages of rural Damascus (shifoneieh, bahdalia and hazrama). Then the questionnaire was adjusted accordingly.

CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS AS PROPOSED BY FAO

Despite the different roles of gender the economic activities, men and women often have complementary roles to ensure food security at household and local community levels. However, women's roles are more crucial in contributions to food security and food safety. As in most cases, rural women are the mainstay of small-scale agricultural farm, producers and providers through diversifying food sources and reducing the loss in the process of food preparation. When contribute to trade, they spend their returns on improving the household nutritional level. Studies on the social roles of women have shown that women contribution to food security is much more than men in the same households (FAO, 2002).

The International Organization for Food and Agriculture, in its action fifth plan (2002-2007) illustrated that the most important challenges constraining improving women conditions and gender equity in rural areas exist in the policies and procedures targeting men but not women (FAO, 2002). So, women empowerment is crucial to empower women in the process of policy and decision making at community levels. This will require self-empowerment and accessing to all the resources that enable them to manage their own lives and future strategies. These main challenges can be grouped into five: (1) Globalization, (2) The increased pressure on natural resource use and demand, (3) System of subsidizing the agriculture sector, (4) Information and communication technology, (5) Rural development planning policies.

Challenges related to globalization

- Governmental policies have changed towards the structural reform programs which serve the large-scale cash cropping and cash flows.
- Liberalization has transferred to large scale transactions like agriculture trading and cash crops, but not to food production for the household livelihood.
- Structural adjustment programs and the trend towards liberalization of trade have led to the diminishing of many of the services which subsidize agriculture like extension, training, infrastructure, etc. have been reduced as a result of the reduction of the governmental expenditure.
- Large farmers are more likely to be better-off, while small farmers have been affected by these new policies.
- Women in rural areas were terribly affected due to the inequity and bias policies.
- Elimination of agricultural subsidies caused women farmers to lose their access to production inputs.

The increased pressure on natural resource use

- Lack of land ownership restricts women farmer's access to credit as land is often used as collateral to the access of other agricultural inputs.
- Lack of secure land tenure acts as a disincentive to environmentally agricultural practices, while lack of access to credit limits the purchase of less environmentally damaging technologies and inputs. This sets up a cycle of declining productivity and increasing environmental degradation.

Agricultural subsidy Systems

- Access to resources is essential to improving agricultural productivity of both men and women farmers.
- Where large-scale cash cropping has been introduced, the tendency remains for men to become involved in this sector, especially when it is highly mechanized, with women becoming increasingly responsible for household food production and small-scale cash cropping with low levels of technology. This is generally indispensable for access to production inputs.

- Gender blind development programs and lack of attention to the needs of women farmers in research and technology development programs. They're always work loaded and even do not find time to participate in such programs.

Access to the systems of agricultural subsidies including credit, extension, training, education and other rural services and marketing infrastructure is necessary for improving agricultural productivity. Given, any efforts to reduce food insecurity worldwide must take into consideration the factors and constraints affecting women's ability to carry out these roles and make these contributions, with a view to removing the constraints and enhancing women's capacities.

Information and communication technology

The access of women farmers to agricultural inputs and technologies is still constrained by their lack of access to credit and membership in rural organizations, but also by gender blind development programs and lack of attention to the needs of women farmers in research and technology development programs.

Rural development planning policies

Rural development policies and plans do not always reflect the need for equitable consideration about gender differences between men and women due to:

- Lack of the collection and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data leading to ignore their needs in the process of policy making and planning.
- Unequal distribution of wage or paid work among men and women ends with women having to do the unpaid work in the small-scale agriculture, farm labour, and day-to-day family subsistence to produce food (FAO, 2002).

Therefore, since the possibility of improving household food security can only be realized if female farmers, in addition to their male counterparts, have access to agricultural services. The need to incorporate the constraints women face in obtaining such services in household food security policies and programs, should be emphasized.

Many agricultural development policies and programs have yet to adequately address the needs of small farmers, particularly those of women. While initiatives have been made to include rural women in agricultural development activities, either through direct projects, or national women's organizations, a major impediment to incorporating gender issues into such activities has been the lack of comprehensive data on the nature and role of women's contributions to food and agricultural production. Government should continue to facilitate and strengthen the contributions of women to agricultural growth and the alleviation of rural poverty. This in turn will enhance the availability and stability of food supplies while ensuring access to food by all.

Alternative technologies which are also effective and easier to manage, can help ensure that women, whose agricultural production is essential to good security, retain their rights and ability to farm the land. Because women farmers everywhere are engaged in a wide range of laborious tasks related to food security, there is a need for the development and introduction of appropriate labor saving technology in food processing and storage as well in food production, and in related areas such water, sanitation, fuel and food preparation.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Syrian woman has started the first step on the sustainable development road in order to achieve her rights in household, social, and economic life. A critical assessment of the Syrian experience concerning women empowerment has showed that the Syrian government has paid a special attention to pursue women empowerment to enable them in practicing their rights in all domains and at all levels; in addition; all legislations and regulations have guaranteed women rights; in addition, based on the continuous pursuit of the Syrian government, Syrian women role has been raised in general, and she became occupying her position at various political, social, and cultural institutions.

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INTEGRATION OF GENDER IN NATIONAL POLICIES IN ALGERIA

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Abstract

The Algerian rural population has lived the insecurity and difficult life conditions (poverty, unemployment, desertification...), in fact, out of the country's 8 million poor people, half of them have lived in rural areas. Since independence, the agricultural operation policies that aimed at eradicating poverty, or at least at attenuating the most perverse of its effects, were led to eliminate emigration phenomena towards the urban areas. To fix the population and to reduce the rural exodus, a new perspective seems to predominate since 2000, where the participatory aspect was put forward in the definition of the main lines of the initiated projects.

The government has then put in place programs of agricultural and rural development, based on the effective participation of all the local actors. In these programs, the rural woman is considered as an autonomous actor, regarding the effective contribution in social and economical life. Strategies and policies of gender integration in development were traced; their realisation has started through the creation of the delegated ministry in the charge of family and women's conditions, to promote Algerian women's role in the economical and social development. Consequently, with the consent of three ministries and associative movement, efforts for the formation and promotion of the woman were initiated: the ministry of professional formation, the ministry of national solidarity and the ministry of agriculture and rural development.

A program of the proximity projects of the rural development was launched by the delegated ministry for rural development, and has started to show results. It has elaborated from 2002, a strategy of durable rural development, which allows to help disadvantaged rural women socially and economically, and to improve their conditions and put at their disposal some basic productions means. The most recent renewal policy, launched by the same ministry, is conveyed through a durable rural development plan, which covers the period 2007-2013. During this period, proximity programs of the integrated rural development are going to be led, in order to assure diffusion of information and women's promotion among other things.

Rural employment project, realized at the West of the country, is one of the programs where women were directly incorporated in the rural areas, in order to promote employment through different activities. This project has a positive consequence on the household and is considered a good experience for the improvement of the existing household conditions, and particularly those of women.

INTRODUCTION

Backed by the consultation of several ministries and associations, increasingly present on the ground, the promotion of rural women becomes – at least in the speeches of politicians- an important objective in several national projects, particularly those with international funding.

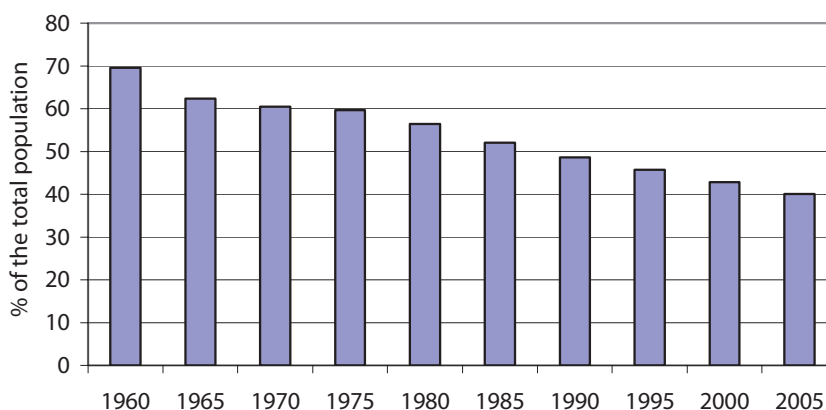
This promotion seems to be facilitated by the new strategy outlined in the framework of rural development, taking into consideration the territorial specificity. Now rural areas are differentiated according to the objectives of development policies and their social, economic and environmental dynamic. The woman is regarded as a leading actor to receive shares for her development.

In the following paper, we will attempt to illustrate the actions made in favor of rural women in Algeria. However, we lack the results of these actions. Only those of the "Full rural employment" made from 1998 to 2001 in the west of the country (Rural Employment Project REP) can be found in our paper. Before returning these actions, it is useful to recall some basic data on the realities of rural Algeria and different reforms experienced by the Algerian economy.

EVOLUTION OF THE RURAL POPULATION IN ALGERIA

While only a relatively small decline occurred from the late 19th century to the beginning of the second half of the 20th century, the rural population has registered a decrease since 1960 in comparison to the urban population but it remains significant compared to that of developed countries. It comprises 86% in 1886 to 70% of the total population in 1960, 56% in 1980, then to 43% in 2000 and 40% in 2005 (see chart below)

Figure 1: Rural population in % of total population



Source: National Office of Statistics

The phase of exceptional growth experienced by the country in the late sixties and in the seventies (creation of a major industrial public sector, strong expansion of the administration staff to the depopulation which is related to the country, and to the concentration of population in urban areas where employment and incomes were more attractive to rural areas and even if they have benefited from the development during these years as well. Indeed, as noted BOUKHOBZA (1989), “if the part of agriculture in the overall income of farmers was 66% in the reference year (1973), five years later, these part decreased to 55%”, reflecting, according to the author, “the importance of the wage earners at the expense of the more coherent policy of income from working the land”. Although, the seventies have witnessed many agricultural reforms (“agrarian revolution”, application of the agriculture statute, restructuring of self-managed fields, etc.), agriculture was not able to retain a large part of its work force, and they were more attracted to cash job.

THE SITUATION OF THE RURAL POPULATION IN ALGERIA

With over 12 million inhabitants, rural Algeria represents nearly 40% of the population. The rural population has experienced living conditions that are becoming increasingly difficult and uncertain with the phenomena of social insecurity, poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, desertification and degradation of natural environments and weakness of economic activities. All these have exacerbated the migration phenomena to urban areas and accelerated rural impoverishment. According to a study carried out in 1997 by IBRD on poverty in Algeria, out of 8 million poor people, half of them live in rural areas, even though 25% of this population has land and rural households derive their income from multiple sources within the rural economy. Yet, since independence, operations of agricultural policies aimed to eradicate poverty, or at least to attenuate the most its effects. Unfortunately, the results were below expectations for reasons that the CENEAP⁽¹⁾ attributed to an error of judgment on the part of decision makers in their approach to rural areas. Accordingly he cites several points to support his arguments:

- The actions undertaken by the government towards rural areas were designed according to a single logic, more urban and rural areas, without any consideration of existing balances neither of the major differences, ecological and socio-economical characteristics of rural areas in Algeria.
- The rural development programs were in their majority designed, financed and directed in a central way without involving the concerned local actors (farmers, artisans ...) neither in the setting targets nor in their realization.

1- Centre National D'études et D'analyses pour la Population et le Développement (National Center of Studies and analysis for population and development)

- Rural development programs have rarely been designed according to a coherent and logical area (space), much less on the basis of development projects targeting specific population groups. They were rather a juxtaposition of guidelines and measures from several sectors (including agriculture), each separately without any coherence with the other.

Since 2005, and following the recommendation of a lot of research work for the reason that “participation in its broadest sense, means increasing public awareness and thereby increase the responsiveness and the capacity of the rural population to respond to the development program by encouraging local initiatives” (OAKLEY and MARSDEN, 1986), a new approach seems to predominate in the strategies that were aimed towards the treatment of rural development in the sense that the participatory aspect is put forward in defining the outline of projects to be initiated. In this sense, the government have moved and put programs in place for agriculture and rural⁽²⁾ development based on the effective participation of all local actors. In these programs, rural women are regarded as a full participant with regard to its effective contribution to socio-economical life.

This consideration appears in several cases, for example in achieving the typology of commons (rural and urban) in 1998 which takes into account women’s participation index (WPI) alongside other signs such as the rural development index (RDI), the human development index (HDI) for the construction of sustainable rural development index (SRDI).

According to this typology, out of 1541 municipalities in Algeria, 948 are rural ones, in which there are 259 disadvantaged. In the latter, there is a real discrimination against women’s participation in development, and incompatibility between the degree of women integration and living conditions, as well as gaps in human economic development and social council (National office of statistics).

A reflection on women and programs were implemented to improve their living conditions, by integrating these policies specific to women in rural development programs. As a result, and from this observation, the care for the rural population by the actions of rural development and revitalization of rural areas has become an urgent necessity⁽³⁾.

In addition, it is important to recall that for better integration into the global market, Algeria has made a drastic adjustment in its economy, translated by reform tools in the first place to a liberalization of all productive sectors. Budget cuts have prompted the removal of direct subvention to production (except for wheat and fresh milk) and consumption (except for bread and milk). The mechanism of substitution allowances previously allocated by the state has soon shown their limits, despite a better supply of the domestic market, in terms of diversity and fairness. Social inequalities have increased, but more strongly in a rural areas which are more sensitive to the vagaries of the market. The rural population fringe is the lowest exposed to greater impoverishment (YAKOUBI, 2004).

POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR THE RURAL POPULATION PROMOTION

After a decline in government in 1990, we can notice at the beginning of 2000, the comeback of the state, which was spurred by the establishment of development programs, mainly the national plan for agricultural development (NPAD then the national strategy for durable rural development (NSDRD), and finally, rural renewal policy). In addition, we are witnessing an attempt to insure consistency subprograms (forest, work lands, agricultural hydraulic). In addition NEPAD (New partnership for Africa’s development) subscribes Algeria creates a new type of partnership south-south and northsouth, promoting sustainable development and good governance territories (BESSAOU, 2006). Starting from 2002, a strategy for sustainable rural development (SSRD) is prepared by the minister of rural development, after a long consultation with rural people, local officials, executives of government departments, consultants and centers of study and research. This strategy was preceded by the general census of agriculture, where the concept of gender is integrated through information on women’s issues.

2- Taking into consideration, the diversity of Algerian rural spaces.

3- 50 municipalities are classified as the most disadvantaged ones. They register the lack in the economical development, human and social, and four fields are discriminated: agriculture, health, education and participation of the woman in the development. The second group contains 209 rural municipalities, which are also disadvantaged like the first group; it represents the incompatibility between woman integration degree and her life conditions. 371 municipalities show a lack in agricultural development with a good life conditions.

This strategy is assisting people in their efforts to improve their living conditions creating a dynamic of self-development and construction of a more favorable environment for sustainable development. The agricultural development component would provide a better adaptation and diversification of cropping systems and an intensification of production. It would also help rural women that are socially and economically disadvantaged to improve their living conditions by providing them with means of production base (fruit, poultry, bees and rabbits).

The policy of rural renewal, recently translated in a plan for sustainable rural development which covered the period 2007-2013⁽¹⁾, during which outreach programs will be contacted for integrated rural development (DPPRI). It is worth noting that this policy is the result of series of actions already undertaken in rural areas: proximity development the period 2003-2004, participatory rural development program of the period 2004-2006.

The specificity of this policy lies in the following points:

- Establishment of a performance computer tracking system⁽²⁾: the access to information is facilitated at all levels.
- Establishment of rural indicators which takes into account women's works with the effective participations of all actors involved in rural development.
- The gender dimension is incorporated.
- Requirement for the economic viability studies to be made before launching the project.
- Financing of projects is facilitated by the participation in the financing of DPPRI of all public institutions that have financial resources for rural areas.
- And finally, the cooperation and coordination of several ministries of the implementation of this program.

Under this program, the ministry for rural development has begun the construction of rural association's network (4000 associations) to disseminate information and, inter alia, the promotion of women. As to capacity building of local populations (project beneficiaries) the ministry requires the presence of women among the trainers, so that they can enter homes and talk directly with rural women. Rural women are better reflected in this program. The ministry delegate in charge of rural development encourages them to make the project that seems relevant to their development.

STRATEGIES AND POLITICAL INTEGRATION OF GENDER IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Creation of the Ministry for Family and Women's condition

In 2002, the ministry has been created to bolster the will of the State to promote the role of Algerian women in economic and social development. The Algerian State has funded several devices to create jobs, in most cases women have benefited more than men. Nearly half of the beneficiaries of salaried jobs for local initiatives are women, and about 7 000 micro-companies financed by micro-company were initiated and carried out by women. It should also be noted that agricultural policies had allowed more than 22 000 Algerian women to obtain a farmer card, which gives them access to state subsidies and credits. (SENDID,2008).

"Whatever the assessment criteria, women in rural areas have always worked in silence, in conditions that are often painful, remaining committed to their land, their loom, their earthen utensils, and working the land hard when the men were leaving in ever greater numbers the country for cities. The implementation program of nearby projects rural development was launched and began to yield results.

1- This program contains three phases: Pilot phase in 2007, and consolidation phase in 2008 and finally the generalization one from 2009 to 2013. To accompany the consolidation phase, trainers panel was chosen, having different profiles (researchers, teachers university, administration frames...), in order to reinforce their capacity in rural development field. Lot of ministries have intervened. In this sense, people have the advantage to submit their projects in other directions others than those of the delegated ministry charged of rural development and financing benefited.

2- www.mddr.gov.dz. The computer system is highly constructed. However, the local population has the advantage to construct their own projects and put them at the communication cell level of mayoralty. This latter transmits the projects by internet, to the Daira (sub prefecture) to validate and send them to the Wali by the same system. In this sense, the communication minister has declared that all the rural municipalities will be connected to the internet and intranet. Since, we have to say that certain between them don't benefit yet.

At the end of 2006, 2,146 projects near integrated rural development were realized and involved 518,000 women "(Speech, President of the Republic, 2008).

Operations of different ministries

The Ministry of training and vocational education has made relatively consistent efforts for training and promotion of women. Thus, more than 58,000 women have received a vocational training programme, launched in 2004. The Minister of Training and Professional Education has said at the national conference about the strategy for training and coaching of women in rural areas, that this program applies even for those who have no education . 1486 settlements have been established in isolated rural areas in order to benefit for rural women. 1486 settlements have been established in isolated rural areas in order to benefit for rural women.

The Ministry of National Solidarity, managing micro-credit policy, said that among the 42,781 projects in the framework of the National Agency of micro credit, more than half were started by women.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, through the National Institute of Agricultural Extension, has established a rural women cell in May 2001 whose missions focus on:

- The development of approaches to reach out in the direction at women and men living in rural areas
- Organisation of workshops and exchanges concerning issues and experiences of rural populations integration in rural and agricultural development;
- Development a of training program and mentoring women on various issues including those relating to gender and participatory development, development of projects supported tools PRA (Method for quick analysis and participatory planning).
- Surveys, socio-economic surveys and studies on rural women.
- Implementation of closer outreach programs and technical support to farmers. (HAKIMI, 2003)

In addition, the Ministry has decided to strengthen the incorporation of women in the development programs and projects in the sector. The integration of women is affirmed in the land program by concession, in the development of the steppe in the reconversion program of agrarian systems and forests programs. (HAKIMI, 2003) At the inter-ministerial level, 2008 saw the installation of four ministries (National Solidarity, Women's Condition, Training and Rural Development) into a national commission to develop a common national plan focusing on the promotion of housewife and rural areas for the 2008-2015 period. The commission is responsible for defining the mechanisms for implementing the recommendations endorsed the national conference on training and support of the housewife and rural areas to promote the fringe society and to involve the national development. (Source: www.webalgerie.com).

Operations of the associations for the development of rural women

Several actions were undertaken by the association movement in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, including regional groupings of rural women for briefings and awareness about topics that interest them (health, education, regulation of home work, financial support from the state to farmers.....) (HAKIMI, 2003).

Some associations have been created at the initiative of women to propose projects that meet the needs expressed by interested parties. These include:

- The association "Women and Development in Algeria (FEDA)," which offers since 1994 the participation of artisans in the economical development of the country. Thanks to the transformation of their informal activities into real jobs, these women are acquiring a new financial autonomy. One of the key concepts of FEDA project is to open up the work of these women from rural and semi-rural organizing meetings and exchanges at both local and inter-regional or regional levels. Women also receive special consideration and make themselves aware to participate in the rehabilitation and preservation of cultural heritage of the country⁽¹⁾.

1- Source : http://www.ccf.asso.fr/ewb_pages/p/partenaire_306.php

- The Migration Association, Solidarity and Exchange for Development (AMSED), based in Strasbourg, in the European side, and the Association for the generation and promotion of local development (ASPDPL) Beni Yenni, alongside Algeria, that work on various development projects in agriculture, with the creation of cheese school, pottery, weaving and of tourism. The AMSED and ASPDPL set out to introduce a traditional way of making cheese in Algeria, producing milk products, and promote weaving among girls who have undergone training at CFPA, and who needed an organizational framework, they took the initiative to accompany these girls in their approach in order to obtain a legal and social status and artisan's cards that would help them to acquire raw materials, looms, and facilities (HAMMOUM, 2005).

5. The example of the Rural Employment Programme 1 (REP 1).

A rural employment project was implemented in some wilayate in the West of the country with the objective of promoting rural employment through activities of work-intensive workforce. It focuses on social problems of poverty and unemployment, gender and rural women in particular and encourages diversification by promoting the establishment of small and medium-sized companies (SMC) in the private sector. Finally, the project also reflects the strategies of Government expressed in the Programme of Support for Economic Recovery (PSER) and the National Plan for Agricultural and Rural Development (NPARD) (World Bank, 2003).

The project is part of a wider effort to support growth in agriculture, a key sector for the economy, and it completes the reform of agriculture, insofar as it seeks to strengthen the support of the population for reform and mitigate the adverse social effects of structural adjustment⁽²⁾. The project aimed the rural communities of 67 municipalities, six are located in mountainous perimeters (Monts de Tlemcen, Monts de Traras, Sbaa Chioukh, Tessala, Cheurfa II and Monts Beni- Chougrane) four wilayate north-west of the country: Tlemcen, Sidi Bel Abbes, Mascara and Ain Temouchent. It provided five components, including one that directly affects women (see table below). In the project design, the approach of disparities between men and women combines:

- **The integration of gender concerns in all project activities** by identifying different needs, priorities and constraints expressed by men and women;
- **Targeting specific income-generating activities** for different groups of women according to their own requests.

Table: 1 The evolution of project activities volumes

Component	Action	Initial target (at evaluation)	Revised target (At mid-term)	Realized (at the end)	% Réalisation	
					Compared to the original target	Compared to the revised target
Promotion of rural women	vegetable garden	1 000	0	0	0%	NA
	Embroidery	120	80	80	67%	100%
	Weaving	120	137	137	114%	100%
	Beekeeping	630	1 810	1 810	293%	102%
	Poultry	1 000	991	991	99%	100%

source: DGF

The project has benefited 3 018 disadvantaged women by providing income-generating activities, more than the target originally planned. However, activities related to the advancement of rural women have not all experienced the same success. The bee activity has been the most appropriate. Secondly, the embroidery initiative has received strong support from women, especially educated ones. Therefore women are not faced with the constraints of raw materials and markets for the product. However, considering the results of surveys of beneficiaries of this activity, generated incomes are irregular and are on average much less than the SNMG.

2- Algeria has put in place a structural adjustment program, proposed by the IFM, where the negative effects have been rapidly felt on the social plan.

Weaving has rarely been continued for three main reasons: the need for know-how that very few young women possess, availability is limited in terms of learning opportunities, and the cost of the expensive raw materials.

Poultry has proven satisfactory only on rare occasions. This activity was facing a double restraint: the inadequacy of topics entrusted to the beneficiaries of the conditions yard and distribution at periods when climatic conditions are not suitable to the physiology of young animals (extreme cold or heat).

The activity related to the exploitation of gardens around the house by women was cancelled and converted into other activities of the component. The pressure over water generated by the drought during the first year of the project has decreased the interest of women for this activity which has become inadequate. (BNEDER, 2005).

Only the activity of bee-keeping has allowed to estimate reasonably the additional incomes. According to the results of the survey conducted among a sample of beneficiaries, the average current apiary is composed of 5 units, the average production per hive is 10 kg per year, the frequency of crops is 1.5, the average price to the sale is from 1800 DA / kg of honey and maintaining of a hive returns in averaged 500 DA / hive. The average income per hive would be 26 250 DA / year. Considering the endowment average of 5 hives per beneficiary, the average global income by apiary would be 126 782 DA / year, representing a monthly income of about 10 000 DA which corresponds to 1.25 times the SNMG. (BNEDER, 2005).

Bee-keeping - the only activity of the project which had a conclusive impact on women beneficiary and her household, in terms of income and the opinion of the woman herself - is traditionally assigned to men. The survey of beneficiaries showed that men are usually dealing with the apiary although it has been received on behalf of women. In fact she can not be involved in the operation of apiary when it was outside the perimeter of the house or hamlet. On the other hand, when a woman is involved in the activity, it increases her charges by additional tasks that increase the hardship of her daily life instead of assuring the desired promotion. They share 47% of the apiary workload and maintenance with male members of the household. Generally speaking however, it is often the men who control the household income of the activity. The survey indicates that only 36% of beneficiaries with an income generated by the activity and less than 20% carry out direct sales of the product even though it takes place at home in 40% of the cases.

Ultimately, the views of women receiving support for the project are favourable because 66% of them stated that the project had a consequent consistent influx on their households. However, the project has been more beneficial to the household than directly to the woman herself: however experience may be regarded positively as the improvement of living conditions of household affects women as well as other household members. (BNEDER, 2005).

CONCLUSION

The awareness of the socio-economic role of women and pressure from donors and the international community have forced policymakers to dedicate actions which are in rural development. However, the situation of rural women is still far below her aspirations / The significance of the traditional mindset - both among rural males than among many makers - prevents the development of policies that would more bold in the sense of greater empowerment of rural women.

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ANNEXE 1

The Rural Renewal, which is projected in a national policy framework, constructing in interactivity with all actors (locals and nationals), aiming at renewing the vision of the rural world and its projection in the future (future synonymous and potentialities to discover) through strong support: politics, economics and social by introducing mainly new approaches and methods of framing, accompaniment and the strengthening of the population capacities and involved institutions in this territorial politics.

The Rural Renewal takes into consideration the fourth dimensions of the territory dynamic politics arrangement:

- The political orientations and choices expressed in master plan and arrangement scenario of the territory.
- Industrialization politics.
- The sector-related politics,
- Territorial politics.

The Rural Renewal policy is executed through integrated Wilayas Rural Development Programs (PPDRIW) constructed by four (04) programs per objective. Each program per objective gathering PPDRIs mounted around 4 federative which are:

- Modernization and / or rehabilitation of a village or a K'sar: improvement of quality and life conditions in rural areas.
- Diversification of economical activities in rural areas: (local economy, marketing, rural tourism, craft industry, development of local products, Small Business, renewable energy, information technology, of communication ...) and improving the attractiveness of rural areas (youth, the coming back of the populations, new installation, ...)
- Protection and development of natural resources: forest, steppe, oasis, mountains, coast, ...
- Protection and development of rural heritage material, immaterial: territory products, building preservation of sites, historical and cultural products, protection of historical and cultural sites and products traditional demonstration, valorization of cultural sites and traditional events...

ANNEXE 2

Tableau 3. Les évolutions des politiques agricoles et rurales au niveau mondial et national

Années	Monde/Europe	ALGERIE
1950/ 1970	1952 : Entrée en vigueur de la politique agricole commune (PAC)	1962 : • Autogestion • Révolution agraire
1990/ 1990	Introduction des quotas de production (exemple: Lait) et émergence dans le cadre des politiques agricoles et régionales du concept de multifonctionnalité de l'agriculture et du développement rural	• Restructuration des exploitations agricoles, • Libéralisation des marchés agricoles, • Privatisation de la gestion des exploitations agricoles, • Restitution des terres nationalisées
1992	• Sommet de Rio de Janeiro - Émergence de la notion de développement durable qui accorde une importance particulière au développement équilibré des ressources naturelles des territoires et en conséquence au développement rural • Réformes de la Politique Agricole Commune de l'UE avec pour principe de base le basculement progressif des soutiens aux prix (système des prix garantis) vers des aides directes aux exploitants	Consultation nationale sur l'agriculture, recommandations sur les missions de l'agriculture, ses perspectives et sur la nécessité de promouvoir de nouveaux instruments d'encadrement. • poursuite de la réorganisation du système coopératif
1994	OMC: Accords de Marrakech • Ouverture de l'agriculture aux marchés mondiaux	• Plan d'ajustement structurel • Début de l'application des recommandations de la Consultation nationale sur l'agriculture • Crédit mutuel agricole • Systèmes de régulation Interprofession, • chambres d'agriculture, • révision des soutiens des prix • Adaptation des systèmes de production agricole • Gestion des risques • Notion d'exploitant agricole • Dissolution des offices d'approvisionnement.
1995	• Déclaration de Barcelone	• Déclaration de Barcelone • Conférence sur le foncier agricole • Programme des grands travaux
1996/ 1999	• Sommet Mondial de l'Alimentation: Lutte contre la faim et sécurité alimentaire des ménages • Déclaration de CORK (UE): Préférence rurale, Approche intégrée, pluridisciplinaire et multi-sectorielle, diversification des activités économiques et sociales en milieu rural, Durabilité	• Conférence nationale sur l'agriculture, • Programme des grands travaux • Mise en valeur des terres par la concession, • Programme national de reboisement • Politique des filières agricoles, • Reconnaissance de l'exploitant agricole, • Programme de l'emploi rural ...
1999/ 2001	Berlin : Nouvelle réforme de la Politique Agricole Commune de l'UE • émergence des règlements de développement rural (RDR)	• Préparation et lancement en 2000 du Plan National de Développement Agricole (PNDA) : Nouvelles procédures de soutien aux activités agricoles et tentative de mise en cohérence des sous programmes (forêts; mise en valeur des terres; hydraulique agricole) NEPAD/ L'impulsion d'un nouveau type de partenariat SUD-SUD et SUD-NORD favorisant le développement durable, la bonne gouvernance des territoires.
2002	• Sommet mondial de Johannesburg: développement durable • Sommet mondial de l'alimentation 5 ans après (lutte contre la faim dans le monde)	• Élargissement du PNDA à la dimension rurale : PNDAR • Signature de l'accord d'Association avec l'UE
2003	• OMC : Doha • Mesures particulières en faveur des développements agricole et rural des pays en voie de développement Nouvelle politique agricole commune de l'UE (entrée en vigueur 2006/2013) : Le pilier: production agricole et organisation de marchés Deuxième pilier: développement rural - environnement	Elaboration de la Stratégie Nationale de Développement Rural Durable (SNDRD) et engagement d'une phase pilote de mise en œuvre (2002/2004)
2005	Agriculture d'entreprise (UE) : objet principal des politiques agricoles, annonce de la fin des subventions agricoles aux exportations (Hong Kong/ OMC) et engagement de politiques distinctes de Développement Rural Durable	• Adaptation des dispositifs de soutien aux activités agricoles • Tentative d'articulation des activités agricoles et non agricoles Lancement de la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie Nationale de Développement Rural Durable 2005
		• Formalisation de la Politique de Renouveau Rural et consolidation de la mise en œuvre de la Stratégie Nationale de Développement Rural Durable (2005-2015)

Source : Omar BESSAOUD : « La stratégie de développement rural en Algérie », Options Méditerranéennes, Sér.A/n°71,2006.

GENDER AND NATIONAL POLICIES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN CYPRUS

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Abstract

Accession to the European Union (EU) in May 1st 2004 is characterized as the most important development in the recent history of Cyprus, following its independence in 1960. In order to prepare the agricultural sector for accession to the EU, Cyprus government had introduced prior accession a bundle of restructuring measures. A few of those restructuring measures have been terminated while others are still running.

The funds spent in agriculture are projected in the Rural Development Plan (RDP) 2007-2013 which includes measures for the restructure and improvement of the competitiveness of agricultural holdings, the maintenance and improvement of environment and enforcement of the socio-economic structure of rural areas, the protection, development and management of forest resources, and the technical support and evaluation of the plan. The funds are divided in various schemes.

Gender equality in rural areas is set to become a major point on rural development agenda. Without the presence and input of woman, agriculture worldwide would not exist. Women have traditionally played an important role in agriculture in Cyprus where farms for the most part are family run. Labor provided by family members accounts for 80% of the total compared with 93% in EU-15 in 1997. Women are involved principally in the growing of field crops and livestock rearing. Women working in agriculture made up 3% of the working population of the country. The female workforce, whether made up of family members or employees, represented over a third of the total population working on farms. Although equality of opportunity for women is fully guaranteed by legislation, in reality here, too, there are factors (patriarchal structure of the family, relatively small and closed society), which prevent full participation of Cypriot women in the economic and social life of the country.

INTRODUCTION

Accession to the European Union (EU) in May 1st 2004 is characterized as the most important development in the recent history of Cyprus, following its independence in 1960. In order to prepare the agricultural sector for accession to the EU, Cyprus government had introduced prior accession a bundle of restructuring measures. A few of those restructuring measures have been terminated while others are still running.

The funds spent in agriculture were projected initially in the Rural Development Plan (RDP) 2004- 2006. Following the RDP 2004-2006, the new RDP 2007-2013 is in place and it includes measures for the restructure and improvement of the competitiveness of agricultural holdings, the maintenance and improvement of environment and enforcement of the socio-economic structure of rural areas, the protection, development and management of forest resources, and the technical support and evaluation of the plan (Markou and Papadavid, 2007). The funds are divided in various schemes. Nevertheless although RDP 2007-2013 is considered as the fundamental plan for enforcement of the socio-economic structure in rural areas, actually little is in place for gender equality.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Without the presence and input of women, agriculture in Europe would not exist. Women make up 37% of the total workforce on European farms and account for 31% of working time. One in five agricultural holdings in the European Union is managed by a woman. Approximately one in two women (48%) engaged in agricultural production and rural life falls into the category 'spouse or partner' of an agricultural producer. Alongside the 'spouse-partner' category, part of the female rural population is turning more and more to other areas and activities within the rural economy in the form of paid employment. In this paid employment category, which makes up 7.1% of the total agricultural labour force, women account for 23%.

The main sectors of employment for women in the rural economy and agricultural production are considered to be (a) mixed grazing livestock, (b) horticulture, (c) olive growing and (d) mixed crops. In these four sectors, women provide 31% of total labor and their contribution ranges from 36% to 39%.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE IN CYPRUS

In all political systems there is a complex matrix of political power composed of many social hierarchies, of which gender is only one component. The role of women in promoting social and political change, though active, has not always been visible. Due to prevailing formal and informal structures and processes, due to inconsistencies and poor methods in data collection and reporting and due to narrow definitions of a wide range of concepts in national statistics, data often fail to capture the real contributions of women's work in particular (Kalliope Agapiou-Josephides, 2004). Women have traditionally played an important role in agriculture in Cyprus where farms for the most part are family run. Labor provided by family members accounts for 80% of the total compared with 93% in EU-15 in 1997. Women are involved principally in the growing of field crops and livestock rearing. Women working in agriculture made up 3% of the working population of the country. The female workforce, whether made up of family members or employees, represented over a third of the total population working on farms.

Table 1: Employment in Cyprus in the Broad Agricultural Sector, 2000-2001

Sub-Sector	Number of persons					
	2000			2001		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
CROP PRODUCTION	10.679	6.498	17.177	10.390	6.320	16.710
Holders and family members	9.240	5.071	14.311	8.990	4.932	13.922
Employees	1.439	1.427	2.866	1.400	1.388	2.788
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION	4.024	2.332	6.356	3.967	2.300	6.267
Holders and family members	2.756	1.900	4.656	2.717	1.873	4.590
Employees	1.268	432	1.700	1.250	427	1.677
FORESTRY	342	91	433	333	90	423
Holders and family members	54	30	84	53	30	83
Employees	288	61	349	280	60	340
TOTAL	15.045	8.921	23.966	14.690	8.710	23.400
Holders and family members	12.050	7.001	19.051	11.760	6.835	18.595
Employees	2.995	1.920	4.915	2.930	1.875	4.805

Family farm is the typical production unit in Cypriot agriculture, with the farm family being the main labor source. Rural women account for 16.5% of the total population and constitute substantial and integral part of the country's labor force. They account for 15% of the total female or 6% of national labor force and are employed in all types of agricultural jobs, and some of them have important competencies and responsibilities (Aristotelous, 1994). It is important to note that the agricultural sector accounts for 3.6 % of GDP, and constitutes a significant part of the Cypriot economy. Women, have a significant role to play and the need to support and raise women's profile in the decisionmaking process is clear.

Although equality of opportunity for women is fully guaranteed by legislation, in reality here, too, there are factors (patriarchal structure of the family, relatively small and closed society), which prevent full participation of Cypriot women in the economic and social life of the country.

ANALYSIS OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN CYPRUS

The status of women in Cyprus, according to the CEDAW Report of 4.5.1995, is comparable to their status in other Mediterranean countries (Spain, Portugal, and Italy). During the last 30 years, the role and structure of Cypriot women in socio-economic life has improved significantly. Apart from the gradually changing social perceptions, this has been achieved mainly through their increased participation in economic activity as a result of high rates of economic growth and low unemployment rate, the expansion and updating of family and labour law, the increased public awareness of women's specific problems and the government's policy for the promotion of equality in all aspects of life, declared explicitly in all national development plans since 1979. Also, due to these changes, women have become more active in education and work.

Although steps are made towards gender equality, women's participation in decision-making and fiscal policy-making appears to be lower than men's. According to 1991 data, out of a total of 262 government positions, only 22 were held by women. The same low rate of senior positions held by women can also be seen in other sectors of the economy and in women's participation in public life. As elsewhere, this phenomenon can be traced to the preconception that a woman's role as wife and mother is more important, as well as to women's lack of free time due to their family commitments. Although there is no discrimination as regards women's participation in associations, cooperatives or access to financing, their working conditions are problematic. For example, they work long hours, have no leave, and, most important, receive no social insurance benefits, since there is no insurance coverage for the majority of agricultural jobs. Women that do not work, but are actively looking for work, are often not considered 'unemployed' but, rather, women looking to make a financial contribution to the family rather than embark on a career. Also, women in rural areas are less likely to claim benefits because they would need to travel to the main towns to sign for unemployment benefit often which is practically difficult, especially those with young children.

In other sectors of activity, there are many regulations against discrimination, but again full equality is not ensured. Thus, in the private sector especially, there are indirect or hidden discrimination and gender stereotypes with regard to recruitment, promotion, wages, etc. In the public and broader public sector, such discrimination is negligible. In addition, the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is not applied in certain sectors of activity, a fact that can be seen in many branch agreements.

As concerns the level of education in Cyprus, it is generally high among both men and women, who participate on an equal footing at all levels. The illiteracy rate is now almost zero, because basic education has been compulsory and free since 1960. Some problems still exist among female agricultural workers and elderly women.

Careers education in Cyprus is of very high quality, but again there are many instances where girls choose occupations traditionally considered appropriate for women (e.g. teacher, nurse, secretary, etc.). The number of women pursuing a technical education is also very low compared to the number of men (Chimonidou et al., 2004).

PRESENT SITUATION AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Gender equality constitutes a prerequisite for social development and social justice. Cyprus remains fully committed to fighting any kind of gender discrimination by pursuing policies that are designed to lead to a gender-sensitive and educated society □ a society, which will secure dignity and respect for all its members in compliance with the principles of equality and justice.

Cyprus, since the ratification of the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1985, launched a promising and dynamic national program of action aiming at the pursuit of gender equality and equal participation of women in all walks of life. The program consists of the formulation of a gender-comprehensive legal framework based both on international legal instruments and on gender-supportive domestic legislation, as well as of the adoption of consolidating mechanisms for the implementation of all commitments emanating from this legal framework. The National Machinery plays a key role in all attempts to integrate gender perspective into all aspects of social and political life.

At the international level Cyprus in 2002:

1. Ratified the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW.
2. Accepted the amendment of article 20, paragraph 1 of the Convention.
3. Acceded to the convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages.

At the national level, domestic Law reform has been carried out especially in the field of Family and Labor legislation. In the field of Family Law a series of amendment Laws have been enacted, improving the legal framework concerning Property Rights among Spouses, Parents and Children Relations, Family Courts etc. In the field of Labor Law a series of legal measures, aiming at the improvement and expansion of the legal rights and protection of women at work, were adopted this year covering the areas of Maternity Protection, Social Pension, Social Security and Part-time work.

Furthermore, within the framework of the process of harmonization with the *acquis communautaire* of the European Union in the social sector, the preparation of other important equality Laws has begun, including the drafting of the Law on Equal Opportunities and Treatment in Employment.

In terms of implementation of its objectives towards gender equality, Cyprus proceeded recently to an innovative Scheme for strengthening women's entrepreneurial activities. In addition, the recently established Women's Cooperative Bank Initiative also seeks to tackle, precisely, the problem of access to financial resources. Three hundred and fifty women with the vision to improve women's living standard founded the Women's Cooperative Bank, which started functioning in 2001 under the auspices of the Ministry of Commerce.

The Republic of Cyprus acknowledges that an important component of the new strategy of Gender Mainstreaming is putting in place such mechanisms as will allow gender issues to be integrated into key sectors of government, as well as of the private sector and civil society. To this purpose, close collaboration has been developed between government departments and the National machinery for Women's Rights on the one hand and with NGO's, academic institutions and other agencies on the other (Chimonidou et al., 2004).

CONCLUSION

The role of women on the social, economic, political and cultural bedrock of any society is of fundamental importance. Women, as bearers of the future generations and as active members of the labour force, are poles of stability, social structure and development.

The achievement of gender equality has a long way to go, despite considerable efforts exerted and the progress registered, and remains a serious challenge in all societies (<http://www.un.int/cyprus/salina.htm>).

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TOPIC 4

GENDER AND CAPACITY BUILDING/DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S ROLE IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT (CASE STUDY: FAYOUM GOVERNORATE)

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Abstract

Nations' development can not be reached without full participation from all society members efficiently. Egypt is not an exception from this fact. Therefore, Egyptian government is wasting no time or efforts in encouraging all society members (men and women) to participate in different life aspects efficiently towards better development for the whole country.

Egypt is still considered an agricultural country where rural community composes large portion of the Egyptian population. Therefore rural development is a key component within the development cycle of the entire country. This rural development can not be reached without full participation of men and women in all life aspects and especially agricultural practices.

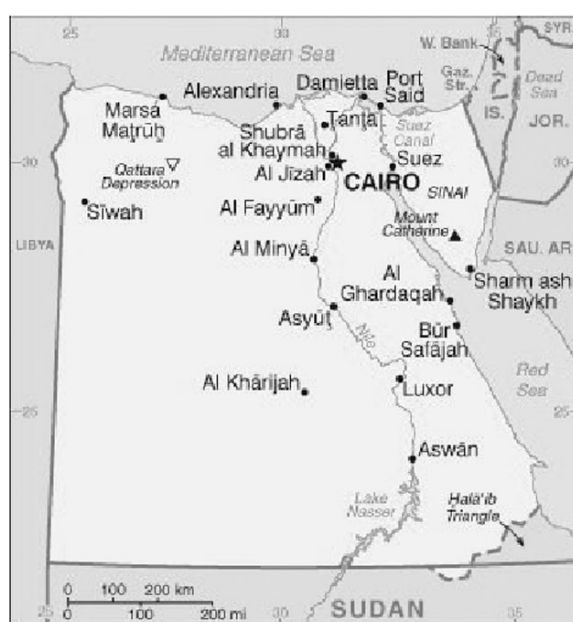
The current research paper investigates the socio-economic impacts of women's role in rural development within Fayoum governorate as a case study. Within this investigation several data and information are collected through secondary sources and comprehensive field surveys. Thereafter these data and information are analyzed to support achieving the goal of the current paper. In addition certain socio-economic indicators are designed and evaluated to further support the current investigation. Based on the various performed data analyses and investigations, several recommendations are presented to help decision makers in drawing certain plans and policies for empowering women's activities in rural communities towards better rural development.

INTRODUCTION

Gender dimension and its mainstreaming in various life aspects is an important key of development issues that Egypt faces today. Since 1980's, government's economic reform policy and other progressive policies focused on the role of women in various development aspects. Egypt is still currently considered an agricultural country where agricultural practices are the main focus for the rural community. Within this agricultural sector and rural communities, it is known that male outmigration motivated women to participate more extensively in the agricultural workforce. This led to the increase in numbers of female-headed households. Most of governmental, national, private, international agencies and non governmental organization designed and formalized specific projects to support women activities development. They mainly focused on the quality of the women's rural life in some areas such as agriculture development, environment, nutrition status, education and eradication of illiteracy. These supporting projects have resulted in several documents and publications. Among them, Salah, (1995), discussed the economic analysis of some aspects related to agricultural credit provided through agricultural development project (IFAD) in Fayoum governorate. The study concluded that most of loans were directed to short term credits. It revealed that women, mainly, dealt with fattening animals and preferred credit from the agricultural rural development bank because of its shortage of auto finance. Value added of women's animals fattening projects represented about 46% of total cost at the sample results level. The credit had significant positive impact on production and higher returns. The repayment ratio was very high and recorded a value of about 90%. S. Baden, (1998), dealt with gender issues in agricultural liberalization and aimed to highlight ways in which gender analysis can illuminate constraints to processes of agricultural market liberalization and to contribute to the design of more equitable and effective policies in future interventions. V. Groverman, (2002), carried out a study for Gender Mainstreaming in the Policies, Strategies and Programs of the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation (MWRI). The study showed important results. First, policies, programs and project which dealt directly with people (water users) might miss specific target groups. They may develop partly inadequate strategies or approaches to reach their target groups or to address certain needs.

They even might not achieve their expected outputs or effects, if they do not take into account the different roles, relations, needs, problems, opportunities, or barriers of men and women. Second, there was a number of policies, programs and projects, which did not deal directly with men or women, but through their intervention had an impact on their lives (for instance, construction of irrigation infrastructure might have an impact on the accessibility of certain areas). Issues related to the driver roles, relation, opportunities and barriers of men and women concerns were increasingly recognized to be part of the 'mainstream' thinking and acting. This gender mainstreaming meant that all policy, programs, administrative and financial activities considered gender concerns. It implied that these concerns were considered in core policy decisions of the institution as well as the small every day decisions of implementation. Hassan, (2003), investigated the role of rural woman in agricultural development in Sohag governorate according to economic activities. The study was carried out in 4 villages within Sohag governorate and it was found that rural women in agricultural activities participated by 1453 hours per year. In addition, the study revealed certain benefits differences for women's work in plant production among the 4 investigated villages. N. Aziz, (2005), conducted a study about gender analysis for El Salam Canal ARP in Egypt. This study presented findings on key gender issues in Egypt, in general, and particularly in the area of El Salam Canal project. The study was based on statistics obtained from the data that produced frequency distributions of all the parameters measured by the questionnaires. The collected data was from 95 questionnaires, 52 for the 10th of Ramadan area and 43 for El Mataria area. Women are encouraged to be formed into groups called women club to help themselves and restore self-confidence, feeling of unity, freedom to express their ideas and feelings, democratic decision-making, sense of equality with other group members and sense of security. Still it is a long way to go to achieve these goals; they should overcome traditions, culture, and misunderstanding of religion in the right way and others. It is quite obvious from the literature review presented previously that supporting women participation with men in various life activities is considered one of the development key elements. Rural community in Egypt represents fairly large portion of Egyptian population. Therefore, the current paper investigates the socio-economic aspects of women within the rural community towards better development. Specifically, Fayoum governorate is selected to represent the case study for the current investigation for several reasons. Among them, Human Development Indicators, Egypt Description Information Book (2007), illustrated that women's illiteracy was 66.2% at the governorate level. The ratio of entry children in the preparatory school was 70%. The number of families that has access to fresh water in their houses was not greater than 73.8%. Healthy drawing off water was not greater than 63.7% and this situation has a direct relation to the pollution of running water. The participated ratio in work force was not greater than 11.9%. The unemployment among women youth represented 26.3% at the governorate level. Picture 1 shows where Fayoum (Al Fyyum) governorate is located within Egypt.

Picture 1: Location of Fayoum (Al Fyyum) governorate within Egypt



STUDY'S GOAL AND OBJECTIVE

The main goal of the current practical study is to assist decision makers in drawing future sustainable development policies for Egyptian women, based on the efficient utilization of the various resources such as water, land, labour and other environmental variables.

Towards achieving the pre-mentioned goal, the objective of the current study is to investigate the socio-economic impacts of women's role in rural development. Thereafter and according to the results of this investigation, various recommendations are presented to support full participation of women with men towards better rural development.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Towards achieving the above mentioned objective and goal, various data need to be collected as follows:

Required Data to be collected

Data required to be collected within the scope of the current research can be outlined as follows:

Secondary data

1. Female family persons according to marital status in Fayoum's agricultural sector.
2. Female family persons in Fayoum's agricultural sector according to educational status.
3. Family persons (male and female) who permanently and seasonally work in agriculture as a main job in Fayoum governorate.
4. Family persons (male and female) who work in agriculture as a secondary job in Fayoum governorate.
5. Housewife distribution according to marital status in Fayoum's agricultural sector.
6. Housewife distribution according to educational status in Fayoum's agricultural sector.
7. Students who participated in agricultural work as a main job in Fayoum governorate.

Field survey data and information

Within this item, a comprehensive questionnaire is designed to collect different types and categories of information as follows:

1. Identification information about the location of farmers, their jobs, holding size, management and educational status.
2. Cropping pattern; winter, summer and nili.
3. Decisions responsibility about women's sharing in agricultural operations and the main reasons behind women's shares.
4. Water problems and women's role in the solution of these problems.
5. Women's role in crop sales and expenditure of agricultural income.
6. Women's role in marketing functions and contracts implementation.
7. Environmental variables, source of pollution and the ways of dealing with these pollutions.
8. Members in different associations such as local associations, agricultural cooperatives, and water users associations.
9. Dominant habits and traditions in the pilot rural area.

Data Analyses

Several types of analyses for the collected secondary and field data are performed as follows:

- Descriptive analysis: This analysis mainly focuses on the relative importance of some variables from the aggregate level.
- Comparative Analysis: Within this category of analysis, the comparison is performed for men and women through the data collected from the field survey.
- Statistical Analysis: The research utilized the descriptive statistical tools such as arithmetic, geometric means and other descriptive measurements.

Women Rural Development Indicators Identification

Within this section, the current research develops certain socio-economic indicators to measure and identify the women rural development status in the investigated case study. These indicators are computed from both secondary and field survey data and can be listed as follow:

- 1- Employment.
- 2- Family income.
- 3- Family expenditure.
- 4- Educational status.
- 5- Medical services.
- 6- Cultural services.
- 7- Environmental status.
- 8- Participation

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is mainly devoted to describe, the present situation, and discuss the various analyses performed in the current research.

Analyses Results and Discussion

Fayoum's governorate covers a total area of 6068 km², representing 0.6% of the Republic's total area. The governorate includes 6 districts, 6 cities, 61 rural local units annexed by 162 villages, as well as 1428 hamlets. According to the preliminary results of the 2006 census, the population is 2.5 million; 22.5% of them live in urban areas and 77.5% live in rural areas. The average number of family members is 4.5 at the governorate level; 4.6 in rural areas against 4.1 in urban areas. Females as a percentage from total population recorded about 48.2% in rural areas versus 48.7 in urban areas. The Governorate's total cultivated areas covers 428 thousand feddans and is famous for cultivating fruits including grapes, mangoes, figs, as well as other traditional crops such as wheat, cotton, rice, maize and sugar beets.

Characteristics of Fayoum agricultural sector's women based on secondary sources data

Women in all Egypt have a main role in different agricultural activities participation. They are responsible for all house activities and share men in different works in their fields. To clarify the role of women in agricultural sector, the current research describes the status of women and their family persons according to the marital status, educational, and employment either seasonally or permanently work in agriculture.

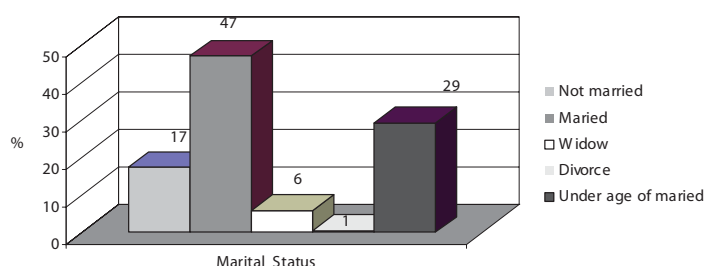
Women's marital status in Fayoum's agricultural sector

To describe the status of women in Fayoum's agricultural sector, the current research deals with the family persons and housewife categories as follow:

• Marital status of women family persons in Fayoum's agricultural sector:

As could be seen from figure (1), the geometric means of persons who are married have the highest percentage (47%) from total number of females within agricultural sector. Females who are under age of marriage represented about 29%. The not married, widow and divorce categories represented only 17%, 6% and 1%; respectively.

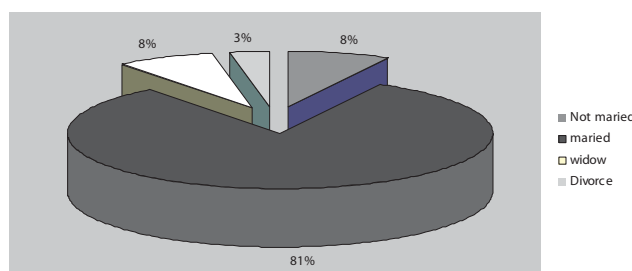
Figure 1: Distribution of female family persons according to marital status in Fayoum's Agricultural Sector



• Marital status of housewife in Fayoum's agricultural sector

Figure (2) illustrated that 81% of housewives were married while widow and not married categories were 8% for both of them respectively.

Figure 2: Distribution of housewives according to marital status in agricultural sector in Fayoum governorate



Women's participation in the Labour Market

Total labour force in Fayoum governorate represented about 744 thousand person; 567 in rural areas versus 177 in urban areas, Egypt Description Information Book (2007). Labor force, as a percentage of population, is totally estimated by 29.6%; 29.1% from total rural population against 31.3% from total urban population. However, the growth rate of work force is totally recorded to be 9.9%; (10.2% for rural and 9% for urban). The female's share is very small at the governorate level. Female as a percentage of work forces totally recorded 15.3%; (12.9% in rural and 22.6% in urban areas). The small women's share is due to the traditional habits in rural areas. Of course, this result depends on the type of data collected (secondary data in this case and at the governorate level including all work sectors. This situation may be different if the analysis were established at the sector level.

Women's education and scientific research

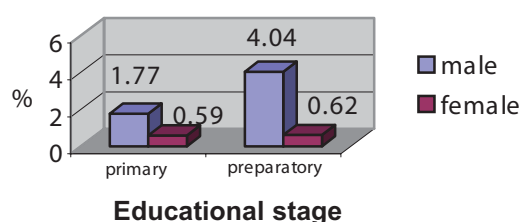
The research illustrates the situation at pre-university education general, pre-university education in Al Azhar, higher education and vocational training.

• Women's education at pre-university in general within Fayoum governorate

Hundred years ago, the traditions within the society did not allow females to go to school. Throughout the years, the efforts of different governments have been encouraging people to change their opinion toward females. The current indicator published in Egypt's Description Information Book (2007) showed that the percentage of women participated in education as a student represented about 47.53% in rural against 47.33% in urban areas. On the other hand, the female ratio among school teachers recorded 38.79% in rural against 51.83% in urban areas.

As an indication for educational commitment, figure (3) shows the percentage of student's drop-out for both male and female among primary and preparatory educational stages. The information presented in this figure shows that female students acquire higher degree of educational commitment compared with male student. This result should encourage the entire society to give full chance to females to participate as much as they can in the education towards better nations' development.

Figure 3: Percentages of male and female drop-out at the primary and preparatory stages



• Women's education at pre-university education (Al-Azhar Institutes)

In Egypt, there is another institute that deals with pupils; the number of Al-Azhar institutes recorded 30 in urban versus 146 in rural areas. The total number of students entered Al-Azhar estimated by 41.8 thousand students; 31.13 thousands in rural and 10.69 thousands in urban. The percentage of female students totally recorded 39.16% from total students; 40.09% in rural and 36.45% in urban. On the other hand, the female teachers in Al-Azhar totally recorded 31.43% from the total number of teachers; 30.46% in rural & 34.02% in urban.

• Women's university education

Currently Fayoum governorate has 13 faculties. Twenty Two thousand students are enrolled in these faculties. Females' enrollment recorded 57.7% from total number of students. Regarding faculties' staff working members, the percentage of females was 72.3% from the total number of the staff members. These two high figures (57.7 and 72.3 %) indicate that females are keen for education and for working within educational organization. These results should encourage society, government, and legislators to free females from all constraints that might retard them from development.

• Women's vocational training

People who are not educated usually get enrolled into vocational training centers. The number of vocational centers in Fayoum governorate was 21 and served 1102 trainees. The total capacity of these centers was 1456 trainees and the percentage of female recorded 33.6% from total number of trainees.

Indicators Results and Discussion

To evaluate the pre-mentioned socio-economic development indicators, the current research utilized the secondary sources data in identifying the employment and educational status indicators. However, Family income, family expenditure, medical services, cultural services and environmental indicators are measured through the field survey data.

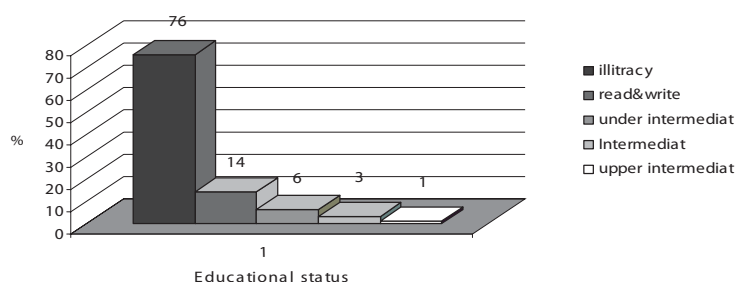
Educational Indicators

Educational indicator, at the district's level, is computed as the percentage of persons' numbers from each educational category level compared with total population in each district. On the other hand, to calculate the educational indicator at the governorate level, the percentage of every educational category is computed as a geometric mean from the different percentages computed in the districts associated to this category in agricultural sector. The results of this computational analysis can be illustrated for women family persons and housewives in agricultural sector as follows:

• Educational status of female family persons in Fayoum's agricultural sector

Generally education has a remarkable impact on rural development. Educational persons are expected to accelerate the development operations through quickly understanding and applying technical packages in agricultural practices. However, illiteracy has a negative impact on agricultural practices and represented a noticeable problem in Fayoum's agricultural sector. Figure (4) shows that illiteracy among female family persons recorded about 76% while read and write (literacy), under intermediate, intermediate and upper intermediate represented about 14, 6, 3 and 1%; respectively.

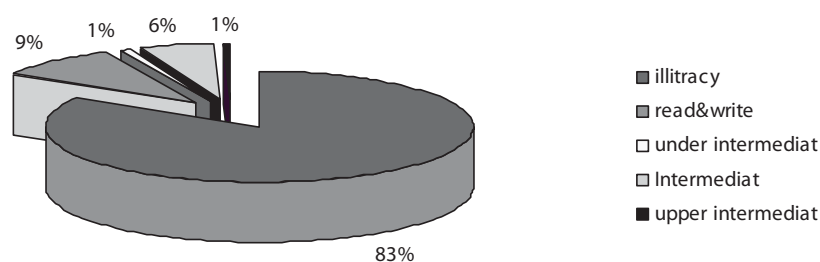
Figure 4: Distribution of Female Family persons in Fayoum Agricultural sector according to educational status



• Educational status of housewives in Fayoum's agricultural sector

The illiteracy ratio recorded higher value in the case of housewives than female family persons. Figure (5) shows that illiteracy ratio represented 83% while literacy (read and write) and under intermediate categories were 9% and 6%; respectively. Both intermediate and upper intermediate categories were 1%.

Figure 5: Distribution of housewives according to educational status of Fayoum governorate



It is worth mentioning here that the high percentage of illiteracy ratio among women (female family persons or housewives) needs to be decreased remarkably if the development leaders wish to accelerate the rural development growth.

Employment indicator

To investigate the employment status, the current research deals with three categories; women family persons who work permanently or secondary in agriculture as a main job, women family persons who work in agriculture as a secondary job and students who work in agriculture as a main job. The same approach used in calculating the educational indicator is followed also for the employment indicator's computation. The results of this analysis are illustrated in the following:

• Family persons who work permanently or seasonally in agriculture

In rural areas, women always participate permanently or seasonally in different field operations. Figures (6) illustrates that the ratio of women who permanently work in their areas is 15% compared with 65% for men. The ratio of women who permanently work out of their areas is only 2%. In the case of seasonal work, the ratio of women is 75% compared with 15% for men as it is shown in figure (7). Therefore, it can be concluded that the main source of seasonal work is women.

Figure 6: Distribution of family persons who work permanently in agriculture as a main job in Fayoum governorate

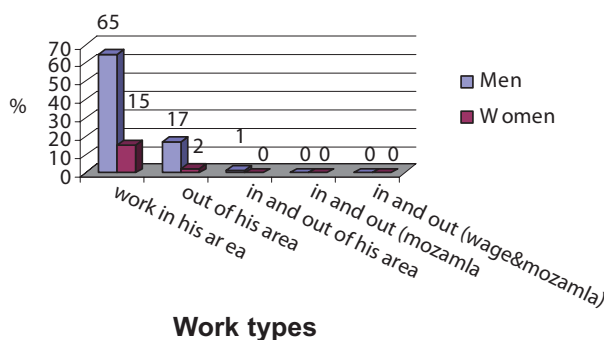
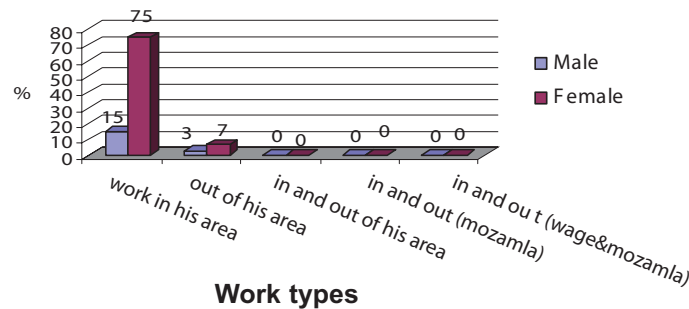


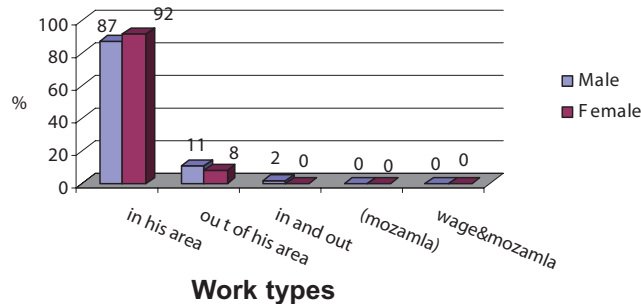
Figure 7: Distribution of family persons who work seasonally in agriculture as a main job in Fayoum governorate



Family persons who work in agriculture as a secondary job

This is the second category of employment status investigated in the current study. Figure (8) displays that the ratio of women who work in agriculture as a secondary job is 92% compared with 87% for men. These figures ensured that all agricultural operations depended on women, particularly those operations that do not need the harsh efforts.

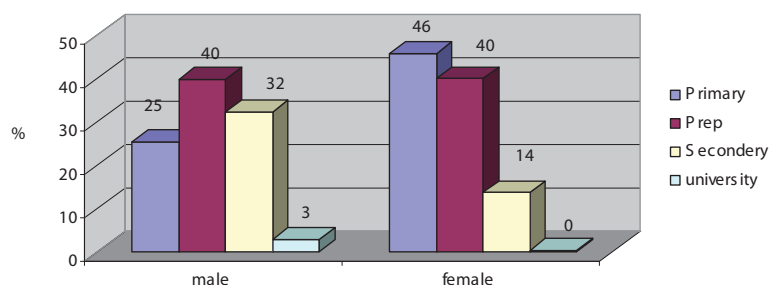
Figure 8: Distribution of family persons who work in agriculture as a secondary job in Fayoum governorate



Students who work in agriculture as a main job

Commonly in rural community, students participate in agricultural operations. Figure (9) shows that students (male and female) participate in the work while they are at different phases educational phases; primary, preparatory, secondary and university. It can be easily shown from this figure that ratio of male students who participate in agricultural work is relatively small compared with female students at primary and preparatory phases because male students have the opportunity to work out of their areas while it is not commonly allowed for females to do the same. On the other hand and in the secondary and university stages, female students participate by 14% and do not participate at university. The non-university students work participation in agriculture is reasoned to the common habits and cultures inherited in the rural society.

Figure 9: Distribution of student who work in agriculture as a main job in Fayoum governorate



Results of field survey data

As mentioned in the methodology section, several field survey data are collected within the current study through a questionnaire interview efforts. These data are analyzed and utilized to measure three indicators; the family income, family expenditure, medical and cultural services and environmental indicators. However, it is from the sake of research presentation completeness to describe the investigated sample as well as the questionnaire design.

Description of the study sample

The current research selected a two-stage cluster sample from the farmers of Fayoum's villages. The village represented the first sample unit and the farmer was the second sample unit. From each selected village, stratified sample was selected and classified to three categories according to farm land locations along the canal; beginning, middle and end in order to make sure of the target farmers are homogenous in the sample and to capture all characteristics from different perspectives.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed and prepared for the farmers to collect certain types of data and information to support achieving the current research goal and objectives. The collection of data and information was carried out through direct interviews with farmers (men and women). Specifically, the questionnaire includes the following data and information items:

- Land tenure and distribution.
- Current cropping patterns.
- Total variable costs of farm inputs.
- Total production and net returns.
- Labor requirements for different operations and women's participation.
- Different Marketing channels of production and the role of women at different stages.
- Quality of products and marketing losses.
- Women's member of associations; agricultural coops, local development and water union associations.
- Habits and traditions in rural society about the women participant in rural life.
- Major problems and constraints from different partner perspectives.
- Suggestions from different partners for improving women's role.

Sample Size and Selection

The first target population consisted of all farmers who are at the beginning, middle, and end of canals. The sample spatial structure included 5 districts (markaz) and 10 villages where most of the Ministry of Water Resource and Irrigation (MWRI) development activities were located. The primary and secondary units were the society development associations and farmers' groups; respectively. The research team visited 10 farmers and tested the questionnaire with them. From the pre test of surveyed data collected, the research team computed the variations of certain indicational variables. Based on these variations, the sample size was determined to be 40 from men and 50 from women. One of the reviewed women collected data was canceled because of her unreliable questionnaire results.

The main purpose behind the men selection, within the sample, was to compare and clarify the role of women not only on the headed family level but also for those who were housewives. Table (1) lists the farmers' numbers according to their sexual status, average land holding sizes, and their location on canals. The sampled farmers showed that the average land holding sizes at the location level ranged between 2 – 2.31 feddans among males and females. It represented 2.55 feddan for male versus 2.41 feddan for female.

Table 1: Distribution of sampled farmers according to sexual and holding size in Fayoum governorate, 2008

Location	Male		Female		Total
	No	Average Holding Size	No	Average Holding Size	Average Holding Size
Beginning	6	3.37	11	1.26	2.00
Middle	13	2.50	22	3.10	2.88
End	21	2.35	16	2.26	2.31
Total	40	2.55	49	2.41	

Source: Collected and calculated from the field survey, 2008.

Indicators from Field survey data

As mentioned above, there are four indicators that would be evaluated from the field surveyed data as follows:

Family income

Rural family income consists of two main components; the first is the on farm income and the second is the out farm income. Interviewed farmers were asked about their on and off farm income. To estimate the rural family income, the research focuses on estimating the different components of the agricultural income (on farm) as the main source of rural income in addition to off farm income. Agricultural income or on farm income has mainly three components; the net value of planting production, net value of livestock and the net value of fish production. However, rural farmers divide their income sources through many agricultural practices.

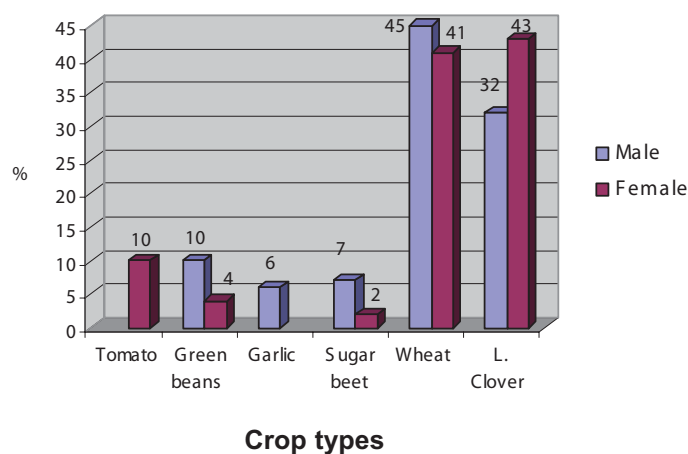
The research tried to collect the data about these practices but in all cases, the data of livestock sector were not reliable because of farmers' fear. Therefore, the agricultural income here is estimated from agricultural production plants only and the livestock value could be added as estimation at the national level. It is worthy notable here that no one of the sampled farmers practiced fish production. Data presented in table (2) shows the cropping pattern of sampled farmers in winter, summer and nili crops for both men and women categories at different locations across the canals. It could be seen from this table that there is a difference among sampled farmers in the two categories according to the needs of auto consumption satisfying and farmer's location at the canal.

For winter season, women concentrated their production in long clover and wheat because of using these crops in feeding animals that produce milk as presented in figure (10).

Table 2: Cropping Pattern for male and female sampled Categories, 2008

Male Category	Winter						
	L. Clover	Wheat	Sugar beet	Garlic	Green beans	Tomato	Total
Beginning	23	37	22	18	0	0	100
Middle	34	36	0	0	30	0	100
End	39	61	0	0	0	0	100
	Summer						
	Maize	Sorghum	Cotton	Rice	Tomato	Onion	Total
Beginning	27	17	34	11	9	2	100
Middle	77	0	0	6	16	0	100
End	67	33	0	0	0	0	100
	Nili						
	Maize	Potato	Green beans	Rice	Tomato	Onion	Total
Beginning	21	69	11	0	0	0	100
Middle	100	0	0	0	0	0	100
End	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Female Category	Winter						
	L. Clover	Wheat	Sugar beet	Garlic	Beans	Tomato	Total
Beginning	46	48	7	0	0	0	100
Middle	42	36	0	0	2	19	100
End	40	40	0	0	10	10	100
	Summer						
	Maize	Sorghum	Cotton	Rice	Tomato	Onion	Total
Beginning	22	6	22	6	39	6	100
Middle	43	0	0	57	0	0	100
End	33	11	0	33	11	11	100
	Nili						
	Maize	Potato	Green beans	Rice	Tomato	Onion	Total
Beginning	67	0	33	0	0	0	100
Middle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
End	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

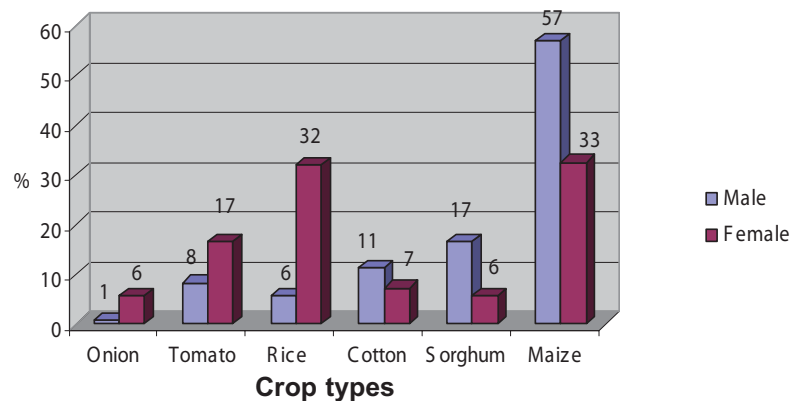
Source: Collected and calculated from the field survey, 2008.

Figure 10: Winter cropping pattern for both male and female in Fayoum, 2008

In summer season, women diversified their production and allocated more than their half lands in producing maize, rice, tomato and onion as shown from figure (11). However, most of this production used in auto consumption and creating income for satisfying the daily needs. It is worthy noting that nili season crops were relatively small in the male and female categories.

To estimate the agricultural income, the current research computed the net profit from each crop using the crop budget method for each farmers' crop and adding them up to finally compute the gross net profit for all the sampled farmers. Thereafter, the average net income for the sampled farmers was performed using the arithmetic mean. The results of these computations showed that the average yearly rural family income estimated by L.E 6000 and 7500 per feddan for both men and women headed family; respectively.

Figure 11: Summer cropping pattern for both male and female in Fayoum, 2008



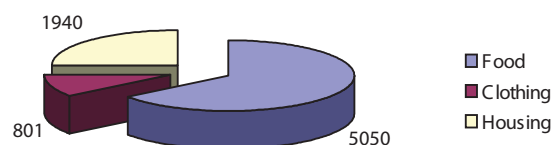
Family expenditure

Family expenditure is considered one of the development indicators that reflected the social level status of rural life. However, family expenditure includes consumption and investment expenditures. Sampled farmers were asked about their investments in the future. Most of them (70% male and 90% female) reported that they saved the money from animal births sales or fattening activities and using the average total money of sales (2000 L.E/year) in expanding or rebuilding some of their houses and buying water pumps. To estimate the consumption expenditure, the interviewed women farmers reported that they spent L.E 3600 versus 3000 for men in buying their needs from all the goods' consumption in addition to a percentage of auto consumption from their crops production that is specifically estimated by L.E 2500 as an average for both men and women. Therefore, the average of yearly family expenditure is totally estimated by L.E 6100 and 5500 for both female and male headed family; respectively.

Data collected from CAPMAS (2004/2005) reported that the average of household yearly expenditure on food and nonalcoholic beverages was L.E 5050 while it was L.E 801 and 1940 for both clothing and housing a shown in figure (12).

Medical Services

Medical services indicators depend on the accessibility degree for hospitals. Through many years in the past, the government of Egypt supported the rural women through the availability of health programs and supported the equality access for both men and women to hospitals. All the women reported that they were able to go to the hospital at anytime. However, there is no ways to estimate the medical indicators from the sampled survey. Therefore, the research utilized the estimated indicators from the "Description of Egypt by Information book" as a good estimation for diagnosing the health and cultural cases at the governorate level. Public expenditure on health (% of GDP) estimated by 2.2 against 3.7% for private. The number of family planning and care units recorded 180 units and the percentage of the prevalence of contraceptives recorded 57.4%. Therefore, it is still low and needs many efforts to increase and maximize the benefits from all these family planning and care units.

Figure 12: The Standard of living 2004/2005

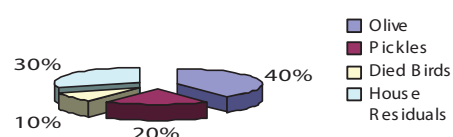
Cultural Services

As mentioned above, the percentage of rural people recorded about 77.5% from the total population of the governorate. Regarding cultural services, there are no culture palaces and houses in these rural areas. There were only 5 culture palaces and houses and distributed only in the urban areas and only one of them is provided with computers. The number of inhabitants per culture palace and house was 112.9 thousand inhabitants. However, the governorate has a potential chance for accelerating the development, especially it has one museum and it could attract tourists and create a good source of additional income.

Environmental Indicators

Fayoum governorate witnesses an urban development seen in the establishment of residential cities. They are credited to the industrial activity as there are two industrial zones. Many industrial projects were established in these zones producing sunflower oil, ceramics, refrigerators, nails and paints. In addition, other industries on the outskirts of the industrial zones exist such as spinning and weaving, fodders, porcelain, pottery, sugar beets and carpets. Of course, all these industries have left behind a huge source of pollution. However, the interviewed farmers were asked about the environmental pollution sources. They reported that the main source of this pollution is olive laboratories, pickles laboratories (MOKHALELAT), died birds and housing residuals as shown in figure (13).

Through the interviews, the farmers were asked if this pollution affects the quality of water used in agriculture. Their answers explained that some of these laboratories discharged their residuals in the drain. During the time of water shortage, particularly in summer season, farmers may use the drainage water in irrigation and consequently they are affected by this pollution. However, the water quality and its effect on the quality of agricultural goods need a detailed study about the agricultural in urban and pre-urban regions.

Figure 13: Percentage of pollution sources in Fayoum governorate.

Source: Data from field survey, 2008).

Towards reducing the pollution, interviewed farmers explained their point of view by saying that this pollution can be decreased by covering the drains and canals close to the laboratories. In the case of throwing the died birds and house residuals in the different waterways, interviewed farmers reported that rural women need specific awareness programs explaining the environmentally safe methods and tools for how to get rid of these residuals and explaining to them the health implications of their bad behaviours.

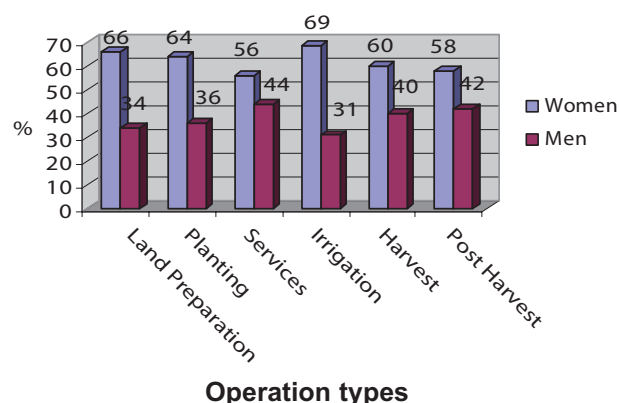
Participation indicator

Women participation in various rural activities in Fayoum governorate is a fact and it was clearly noticed from the field survey. This indicator is of vital importance towards drawing sustainable policy for rural development. Therefore, the current study investigated this participation within the different activities as follows:

- Women's participation with men in different agricultural operation.

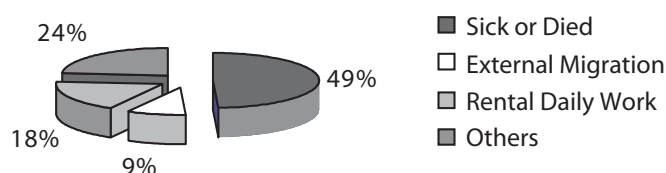
Generally in rural communities, women participate with men in various life aspects. Therefore, the current research considers the participation indicator for women's participation with men not only in labour force but also in saving money and its allocation decision in the different family expenditure items. Figure (14) shows the women's participation percentage compared with men in different agricultural operations. It is shown from this figure that the percentage of women that participated in different agricultural operations ranged between 56% and 69% from agricultural working time needs.

Figure 1: Percentage of women's participation in different agricultural operations



Socio-economic conditions are challenging all over the world. Egypt is not an exception from this fact. Therefore, every one in the society tries his/her best to improve the families' economic conditions. This improvement can be obtained through work participation among family members (men and women). Within the current study's investigation, the main reasons for women participation were men's sick or death, external migration (to look for better opportunity), rental daily work (to support more his family financially), and other factors. Figure (15) shows the relative importance of each factor according to the answers of interviewed women within Fayoum governorate.

Figure 15: Percentages of different reasons for women's participation



• Women participation in crops' marketing

Within rural communities, women are normally responsible for most of the marketing operations. These responsibilities are stemmed from the vital role of women in house management and facing all types of living costs such as food purchasing and preparation, buying cloths for their children, school costs, etc. Specifically, women usually go to the village or district markets and sell their agricultural or rural products to get the money to satisfy their family needs. Figure (16) shows the classifications of the different market's dealers that women usually deal with.

• Women's participation in post harvest operations

As could be seen from the cropping pattern mentioned previously in table 2, both men and women planted traditional and nontraditional crops. However in the two cases, women played a main role in the field of post harvest operations; transportation, sorting, grading and packing. As could be seen from figure (17), transportation is the main operation where women participate with men (61%) while the other operations were 17%, 13% and 9% for grading, sorting and storage; respectively from total number of post harvest working days.

In case of women who directly manage their own lands, they have additional operation; packing, that represented about 35% from total number of post harvest working days while transportation, storage, sorting and grading represented 29%, 4%, 16% and 16%; respectively. Therefore, it could be concluded that women who directly manage their lands had freedom for their decisions and tried to diversify their income sources through marketing their crops by themselves in different markets.

Figure 16: Marketing dealers' frequency for females in Fayoum, 2008

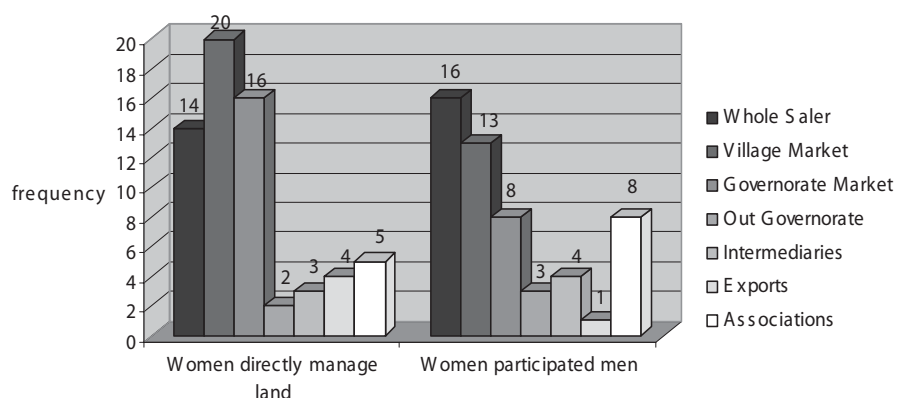
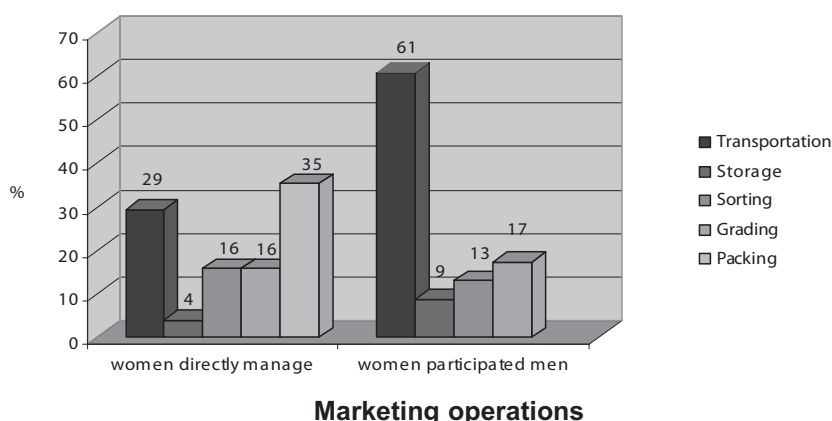


Figure 17: Women participated in marketing operations in Fayoum, 2008



• Women participation in local development associations

Working through associations is considered one of the important dimensions that accelerate the rural development. All governments adopt different policies and plans to organize social work and facilitate these plans' implementation. In rural societies, there are different kinds of associations but the most popular are local development association and agricultural cooperatives. By the law, all land owner farmers have to be members in the agricultural cooperatives. On the other hand, membership in local development association is optional for all people in local society but members have to elect the board of their associations and help the local government in planning and implementing the long and short plans within their local societies.

Recently, Water Users Association (WUA) has established by MWRI as a result of many efforts to improve water management. The membership of the WUA is also optional and it has an essential role in the water management aspects. Membership in these associations is not limited to men. Women have the same rights to be members in all associations sharing men. All the women members have the same accessibility or opportunity in the election or board nomination. Results of field survey illustrated that membership of women seems nearly to be equal (16% and 15%) for both women who directly manage their own lands and women who participate with men in the local development association membership. In the case of WUA, membership of women who directly manage their own lands represented about 10% against 2% for women who participate with men.

Interviewed women were asked about their satisfaction degree toward these associations. Figure (19) illustrated that most of women in the two categories are satisfied towards the association performance. The percentages of satisfied women were 61% and 68% of both the women who directly manage their own lands and those who participate with men; respectively from total sample. The reasons behind the dissatisfactions of association performance in general were the absence of their roles particularly in crises times, weakness of their reform or improvement abilities in development issues, weakness of their possibilities and hopelessness towards a positive role in the rural societies. Concerning WUA, women in the two categories reported that the absence of legislation frame is the important factor in working determination. In addition, the interviewed women reported about the un-efficiency of WUA in water management decision making and technical services.

Figure 18: Women participated in member's associations in Fayoum, 2008

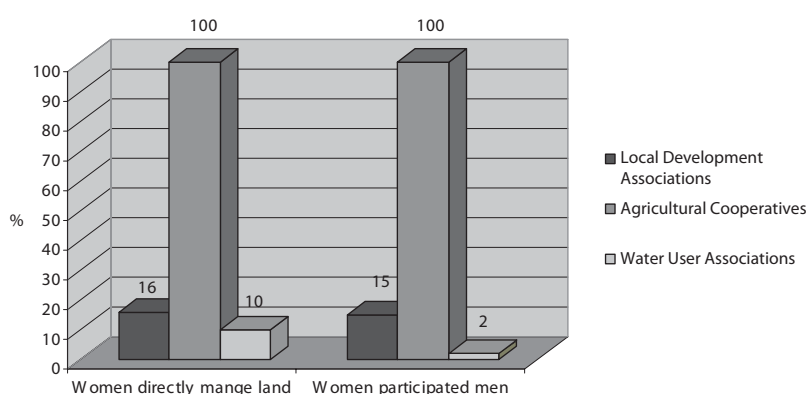
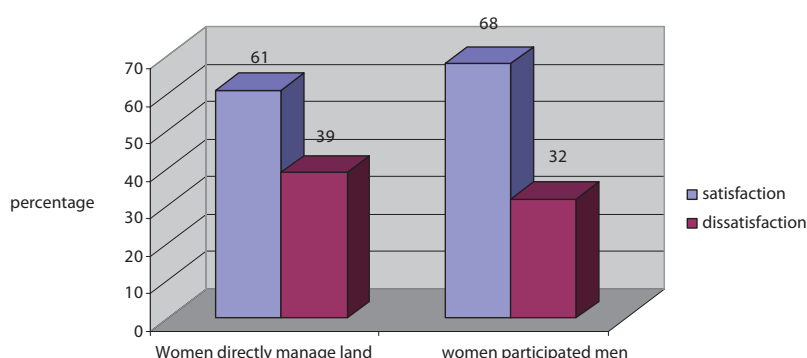


Figure 19: Women satisfaction toward associations' performance

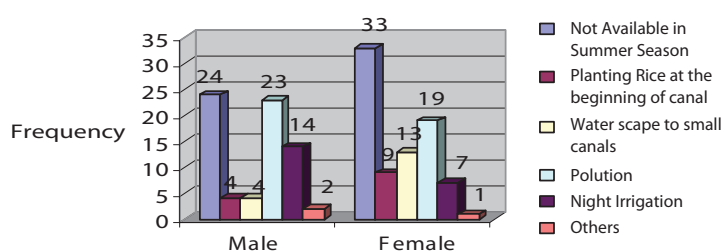


PROBLEMS RAISED BY THE INTERVIEWED FARMERS

Towards supporting the women's role in agricultural practices as a key element for rural development, the current research had to diagnose the main problems that face interviewed farmers in water and habits and traditions dimensions.

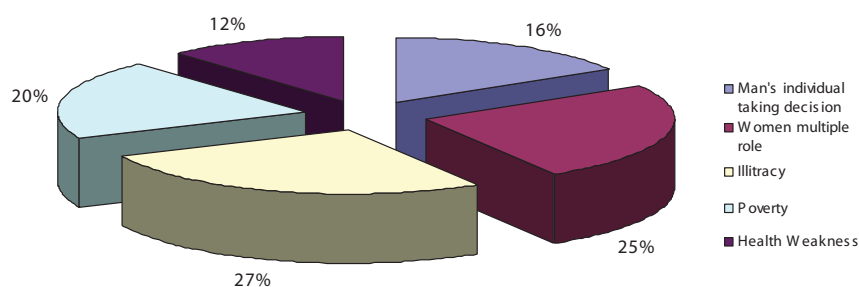
Water problems

Interviewed farmers were asked about the main water problems they are facing during their agricultural activities. Their answers were the un-availability of water, particularly in summer season, planting rice crop at the beginning of canals, un-official and un-planned water withdrawals from main canals to small canals, and night irrigation. Figure (20) summarize these answers as well as their frequency for both women who participate with men and those who directly manage their own lands and water; respectively.

Figure 20: Raised water problems from the interviewed farmers

Rural habits and tradition problems

Rural society has specific habits and traditions for women that limit their constructive participation in various life aspects towards rural development. Recently, most of these habits and traditions have been changed and women have become a main participant with men. However, the interviewed women clarified that there were still some habits that represented threats towards women's role maximization. First of them was the individuality of men in taking decisions for certain specific issues without women's sharing. The second and the third were the weakness of women and their multiple roles in the house work as well as in the farm, especially in the case of men's death or their external migration. The fourth and fifth were illiteracy and poverty. Figure (21) shows the opinions of interviewed women towards these threats and these opinions and answers' frequency.

Figure 21: Traditions and habits problems from interviewers' opinion

CONCLUSION

Women have an essential role in rural development. The current research focused on the socioeconomic assessment for this role within two categories; women who participated with men in agricultural practices and women who directly managed their own lands. Various types of data were collected within the current research from secondary sources. In additions, specific questionnaire was designed and tested very carefully to achieve the main objectives of the current research. Thereafter, several types of analyses were performed to the collected data and field survey performed through the designed questionnaire. Within these analyses, the current research developed certain socioeconomic indicators to measure and to identify the women's rural development status in the investigated case study (Fayoum governorate). These indicators are computed from both secondary and field survey data that were collected by the research team. Results of all these analyses were presented in a detailed fashion in the previous section. Several conclusions can be drawn from these analyses results as follows:

- Illiteracy ratio is very high in different females' categories in the rural areas with the maximum for housewives.
- Employment indicators showed that percentage of men who work permanently in the agriculture is much higher than women. However percentage of women who work seasonally in the agriculture was five times this percentage for men. In additions, women work in agriculture as secondary job more than men. It can be concluded that women plays a vital role in the agriculture work force. Since this is the case and from the rural development point of view, their capacity needs lots of improvement and they need lots of support.

- Family income indicator was computed through estimating the net profit from each crop and adding them up to finally compute the gross net profit for all the sampled farmers. The results of these computations showed that the average yearly rural family income estimated by L.E 6000 and 7500 per feddan for men and women headed family; respectively. While the average yearly family expenditure is totally estimated by L.E 6100 and 5500 for female and male headed family; respectively. It can be easily concluded from these indicators that poverty situation is remarkable within rural areas in the investigated case study and consequently this affect dramatically the rural development.
- Medical services indicators illustrated that it is still low and needs many efforts to increase and maximize the benefits from family planning and care units.
- Cultural services were not available in rural areas. There were only 5 culture palaces and houses distributed only in the urban areas and only one of them is provided with computers.
- Environmental situation is not good as well since lots of pollution is occurred from different sources in the various waterways within the investigated case study.
- Women participated extensively and more than men in most of agricultural practices in the case study. Therefore, if any rural development is planning to be performed, it should be directed towards women and men together for all perspectives.
- Women participate extensively in agriculture cooperative associations while they are constrained from other local development and water users associations. From rural development point of view, their participation in local development and water associations has to be seriously encouraged.
- Problems raised by farmers showed lots of social and life aspects areas require lots of coordinated efforts towards real development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Motivated by the current research results and conclusions, several recommendations are considered necessary to improve the women's role in rural communities and consequently enhance the rural development as follows:

- Decreasing illiteracy ratio among women (female family persons or housewives) remarkably if the development leaders wish to accelerate the rural development growth.
- Establish specific training package for women in view of the fact that women were the main source of seasonal work and all agricultural operations depend on women, particularly those operations that do not need the harsh efforts.
- Open communication links and dialogue with women, particularly those who directly manage their own lands, to express women views in laws practices for land and water.
- Encourage women towards planting exportable crops to maximize their agricultural income.
- Encourage women to participate in water and local development associations effectively through voting or nominating themselves in the management decision making boards.
- Strengthen WUA and giving it an essential role in different development activities not only in water management.
- Establish information system units that have detailed data about the water beneficiaries in rural society, their needs and problems as well as organize these beneficiaries to participate in water planning activities.

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CASE STUDIES FOR GENDER AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN RURAL AND SLUM AREAS IN EGYPT

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Abstract

Slum areas, mainly because they are largely informally occupied, are plagued with poor infrastructure, and the Egyptian case is hardly an exception. Therefore, a need arises to address issues of access to potable water, sanitation, sewage, electricity, healthcare, and so on. In addition, women compose half of the estimated 16 million slum inhabitants. On the other hand, rural areas also suffer from limited infrastructure which directs attention to issues revolving around sanitation and solid waste management. As an extension to women's traditional duty to maintain the home, they have taken charge of garbage disposal. Environmental awareness is critical in this milieu since the current methods of waste disposal are harmful both to the environment and to the health of rural dwellers. Initiatives have been established at the national level in order to address these issues. The National Council for Women (NCW) focused on women's social, political, and economic empowerment and created the Rural Women Program which provided training sessions and small project loans in the hopes of economic empowerment translating into socio-political empowerment. Furthermore, the EEAA established a gender unit which focused on building environmental awareness, solid waste management, and water quality and quantity management for women in slums and rural areas.

INTRODUCTION

Slum areas could be defined as the housing that is built on unowned land and without obtaining a license or building permits. These areas could be found between two residential communities, or at the deserted peripheries of a city, or on rural agricultural lands. Generally, slum settlements are densely populated and occupy refused urban or rural areas. They lack all necessary facilities, in addition to poor environmental and social conditions. The estimates of the number of people living in these areas are not accurate due to an absence of concrete data upon which to base such numbers as well as a lack of detailed guidelines for this operation. However, according to 1996 statistics the estimated number of slum-dwellers in Egypt was approximately sixteen million inhabitants and about 50% of them are women. Between 1992 and 2000, Egypt had invested about 2.5 billion Egyptian Pounds to raise the efficiency of slum areas. The scope of work for raising the efficiency was concerned about establishing infrastructure such as: readily available potable water, a sewage system, electricity, as well as completing and constructing necessary services such as schools, health services and administrative units.

Women living in slums are overloaded with extra chores in order to maintain the simple life needs thereby putting an extra burden on women who are responsible for transferring water for long distance. Women usually suffer from back pain and problems in the vertebral column as a result of transferring water in large amounts to fulfill their needs. It should also be noted that the transferred water is subject to pollution during transfer and storage, leading to the possibility of other diseases resulting from drinking polluted water. No proper sanitation of infrastructure is available in slum areas. Thereby, residents take their needs from municipal networks from neighbors causing extra loads on existing networks.

RURAL AREA

Egypt has about 4600 villages along with 27000 satellites of total present population of about 40 million capita. The lack of environmental awareness aggravates the problem of the natural resources degradation and generates sanitation, hygiene and environmental problems at the community level. Solid waste, sanitation considers their most important environmental problems. Rural women who are in charge of home cleanliness, in the absence of a regular system for garbage collection act to solve her problem by burning solid waste outdoor or in her own cooking oven not realizing that plastic bags that could be available within the garbage release dioxins during the burning process, causing the spread of dangerous diseases like cancer.

Moreover women dry animal remains and use as a fuel which is another source of pollution and cause of disease spread. Women also get rid of plant remains by burning them and here she is subject to be effected by emitted polluting gases.

Raising environmental awareness for women is a necessity to maintain her health and necessary to reduce risk factor of household hazards. Mothers who are aware of environmental can build the capacity of her children to be brought up to respect natural resources, try to preserve them and take good care of the environment.

Developing and rebuilding the Egyptian village became on top of development priorities which the state gives great importance. This is due to what the rural society represents of great population and economic weight.

Women as more environmentally-aware (contribution of women in environment protection) : Women are responsible for rising up future generations, therefore it is imperative to educate her and raise her awareness on important issues related to environmental sustainability to ensure her a better standard of living. This will be reflected on her productivity, reducing loss of resources for maintaining development. Also Egypt tried to encourage women for fruitful contribution in development.

At the national level

The Objective of the National Council for Women is to empower Egyptian women socially, economically and politically. The NCW strategy embodies the fundamental vision to promote sustainable equitable human development by fostering a cohesive society where each member contributes to, and benefits from development. The NCW implement many programs to achieve these goals such as:

• Rural Women Program

This program provides training sessions for female rural leaders in the various governorates of Egypt with the purpose of developing their skills. It also studies the problems faced by rural women and proposes solutions to solve them.

This program was preceded by an experimental project, implemented through NGOs. Some 600 women benefited from small loans to carry out small income generating projects, mostly agricultural (sheep and goat breeding, poultry, etc.), groceries, dress making. The results of the project were assessed, and modifications were introduced, based on the lessons learned from this phase. Guidelines were prepared to enhance the capacity of the NGOs involved in the initiative and to streamline the criteria for selection of the NGOs and the grant recipients, as well as the work procedures.

The revolving fund of the larger scale project is now in its second phase. During the experimental period and the first phase, the loans were repaid in full (with only one exception). 40 villages, geographically spread over 20 governorates covering the whole of Egypt were included in the project. The grant provided an opportunity for the Council to create awareness among the grant recipients of the importance of having an identification document, of being able to read and write, of having some basics of accounting, of having health and environmental awareness. It is hoped that once economically empowered, these small project owners will be able to make their voices heard for the well-being of their communities.

• At the Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs

A Gender Unit has been established in EEAA in line with the General policy of the NCW. Gender Unit headed by the Chief Executive Officer and the Head of the Environmental committee in National Council of Women.

The gender Unit develop its action plan for each region according to sociological studies in selected rural governorates to measure the level of awareness of environmental issues among women. As a consequence of the studies, the unit targeted women in rural and slum areas with a particular focus on the following topics:

- Environmental awareness
- Solid waste management
- Water quantity and quality management

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Establishment of environmental awareness centers in rural and slum areas.

The case study started by collecting data through questioning the inhabitants. Analyzing the data revealed the following :

- A high percentage of educated women was aware of the environmental issues and Ministry of Environment whereas illiterate women had poor knowledge about these. A low percentage of both educated and illiterate women have an idea about NGOs working in environmental aspects.
- Most of the women have no idea about how garbage pollutes the environment. People believed that direct interaction to clarify environmental issues was more effective than receiving a brochure.
- The objective of the project is to raise environmental awareness and provide women with the necessary tools to learn and adopt mechanisms that positively impact the environment to achieve a better standard of living, enable women to perform their productive functions while protecting and conserving environment, and empower women to assume responsibility of community development to sustain the environment.

AWARENESS AND TRAINING PROGRAMS

- Young women's role in environmental protection and environmental deterioration and the impact human health.
- Women's role in water resources protection.
- Women's role in waste management.
- Women's role in canal and drain water use prevention.
- Women role in food pollution protection and loss minimization.
- Young women's role in environmental human health awareness and addressing environmental health issues.
- Women's role in increasing indoor green areas in the countryside.
- Women's role in the use of Palm trees wastes for environmental pollution prevention.
- Women's role in the prevention of environmental risks in agricultural activities
- Application of the integrated control system and idea use of pesticides for water pollution prevention and water use rationalization.
- Women's role in the household pollution prevention by agricultural chemicals.
- Women's role in recycling agricultural wastes for the production of compost. In addition, the unit designs training courses to teach women how they can have products from waste.

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Pilot project for gender equality and community waste management through Community Environment Action Project (CENACT).

Initiated in 2004, the aim of CENACT is to work with community organizations to identify and resolve waste management problems. The focus is on building the capacity of NGOs and local community development associations to be effective environmental partners: to raise community awareness, mobilize resources, and design and implement waste management projects that are environmentally sound, economically viable, and gender equitable.

The focus on gender equality in CENACT gives attention to:

- Women's access to and control over resources, benefits and productive assets of employment.
- More equal participation of women and men, boys and girls as decision-makers in all aspects of programming.

CENACT aims to achieve gender-equality results in four areas:

- Gender responsive CDAs /NGOs implementing gender sensitive waste management initiatives;
- An enhanced role for women in community environmental initiatives;
- Improved capacity of the NGO unit of EEAA to promote gender responsive initiatives;
- Enhanced capacity of regional environmental structures to support gender responsive initiatives.

CENACT is adopting a peer-based enabling approach to realize these achievements. This involves the following methodologies:

- Gender analysis: to open the gender dialogue within the community and raise the awareness about gender gaps and opportunities;
- Orientation; to build a platform of information, knowledge and awareness about gender, human rights and the environment by using group orientation on gender in the local context as methodology to increase CDA awareness and dialogue so that it becomes a more familiar and talked about issue that is less threatening and misunderstood;
- Women and men at the 36 CDAs received gender orientations through 5 gender workshops in both governorates;
- 17 CDAs received orientation on gender strategies and approaches through the start-up orientation workshop in each governorate,
- Development of Gender Action plans: to encourage CDA commitment to a small number of achievable, appropriate actions;
- Provision of Training: as a tool to empower and build capacities on relevant skills such as leadership and communication, through holding workshops on leadership, communication, management and governance for women in decision-making positions.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Community level

CDAs became gender responsive through the following:

- 67% of CDAs are showing active roles for women
- CDA Governance: giving voice for women in the different channels of decision-making through:
 - Gender balanced general assembly,
 - Women are joining the CDA board for the first time,
 - CDAs are establishing women's committees.
- Employment in Waste Management Project : most of motivators started as volunteers in waste management projects and now CDAs are approaching women to be employees (either through fixed salaries, or incentives or percentage of fees collected).
- 96 women are employed with percentage of 38% to men

CDAs see value in hiring women and the development of their enterprises. There is an enhanced role for women in waste management projects thus breaking with the stereotypical roles for women.

- Motivators become community mobilizers.
- Motivators are collecting fees, monitoring the service, and in some cases supervising the project.

Women play a more prominent role at the household level: the numbers of subscribers reached 6124 and the number of sewage service trips reached 9303 trips reflect the level of awareness that women have now and their ability to participate in the decision-making process with men.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE CASE STUDIES

- Traditional attitudes of men and women can change with simple interventions.
- Women are eager to participate if they feel they have adequate knowledge and capacity.
- The most successful projects are those in which women play active roles.
- Gender analysis should inform design of sub-projects and approach to supporting gender responsiveness.
- Women need specific support to build their capacity in new, non-traditional areas of activity.
- Women need and deserve the incentive of fair payment.
- Once they are given a chance, women will take up their own community initiatives.
- Most men are not resistant to?, but need to see that women are willing and can function effectively in new role.

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GENDER AND CAPACITY BUILDING IN TURKEY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND WATER MANAGEMENT

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INTRODUCTION

Studies show that women in Turkey, who are more numerous in the agricultural sector than the other sectors, are the least beneficiaries of development. Due to social-cultural reasons Turkish women in agriculture are in disparity with men. Measures for the advancement of women, therefore, are of utmost importance in advancing the society. Women's role in Turkey in water management issues such as irrigation and drainage, compared to other traditional agricultural activities is very small or limited due to cultural reasons. Irrigation is considered to be a heavy duty work therefore women are thought to be unfit for such a work. There are many women agricultural engineers, irrigation specialists and social workers in governmental and non-governmental organizations that are involved in irrigation and drainage. With the recent transfer of irrigation schemes to Water Users Associations educated women see a new opportunity for managerial and technical positions. However, most women labor force in agriculture face many constraints such as limited access to land, insufficiency of extension services, limited information transfer between sexes, limited access to financial services, loans and credits, lack of mobility and time off from family work, lack of education, limited role in decision making process and etc. Since the role of women in irrigation is small compared with other agricultural activities, any improvement must go along with advancement of their role in agriculture and in society as a whole (Özekici et al., 2004).

There are many excellent and successful examples on women and water management throughout the world, therefore one wonders why this should not be the case in Turkey. There is a definite need for research on grassroots level for determining the problems and priorities, and also finding solutions for water and gender issues such as home water use, water saving, agricultural water use, and rural drinking water management. Policies are required to increase awareness on water use and why water and contribution of women is one important mean for development (Özekici et al., 2004). In rural development projects capacity and sensitivity building in grassroots level is required in order to establish the desired gender equality. The main goals should be the questioning and explanation of the importance of water as a valuable resource and a important mean for development, establishing the woman farmer identity, and education of the educators. The objective of gender analysis is to integrate gender issue in large development schemes especially in those that are based on water resources development such as the Southeastern Anatolian Project. The foremost objectives are determining the gender problems in water resources development projects and offer solutions, analysis of potential and actual changes in these development schemes, analysis of gender roles and integration of gender issues in these projects. The target group consists of planners, researchers, policy makers, technocrats (central, local, vocational organizations, NGO's and private sector). Policy makers in the water management agencies should be encouraged to develop policies based on sound understanding of gender issues. They also should include women in every step of the irrigation and drainage schemes, right from planning and implementation of the project to the management.

WHAT IS "CAPACITY BUILDING"?

Capacity building often refers to assistance which is provided to entities, usually developing country societies, which have a need to develop a certain skill or competence, or for general upgrading of performance ability. Most capacity is built by societies themselves, sometimes in the public, sometimes in the non-governmental and sometimes in the private sector. Many international organizations, often of the UN-family, have provided capacity building as a part of their programs of technical cooperation with their member countries. Bilaterally funded entities and private sector consulting firms or non-governmental organizations, called (NGOs) have also offered capacity building services. Sometimes NGOs, in developing countries are themselves recipients of capacity building. Capacity building is, however, not limited to international aid work. More recently, capacity building is being used by government to transform community and industry approaches to social and environmental problems (www.en.wikipedia.org).

The WCO (World Customs Organizations) defines capacity building as "activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behavior of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way (www.en.wikipedia.org). Shortly, capacity building is defined as the "process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations and communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in the fast-changing world" (www.en.wikipedia.org).

BENEFICIARIES OF CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS IN TURKEY

Rural population is the main beneficiary of Capacity Building Programs in terms of rural development; however, the theme of these programs basically determines the beneficiaries. In other words, the focus of the capacity building programs is to find out who the recipient is. According to this definition, in the important subjects of gender and water management where public is mostly unaware and insensitive, the primary beneficiaries are not just rural population, but also all those involved, such as public sector managers, private sector, non-governmental organizations and international institutions. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the institutions responsible for transferring knowhow and information to the rural people need capacity building programs themselves to insure correct and permanent information transfer.

IMPORTANCE OF CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS IN TURKEY

Capacity Building Programs is very important in developing countries such as Turkey where education level is less than desired and where everyone does not equally accesses formal education, and where gender discrimination is common in rural education and employment. It is a vital tool for advancement of the disadvantaged groups, namely women and children. Any capacity building program run by any institution creates sustainable advancement for the beneficiaries as long as it is prepared seriously and rationally.

Water management and gender are two topics that have gained interest in Turkey in recent years as well as rest of the world. These issues and concerns are not born from our own dynamics. In other words, Turkey was not aware or fully prepared at this subject matter; therefore Turkish bodies responsible for capacity building must themselves build their capacities in par with developments in the world.

SPECIFICATIONS OF CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building is much more than training and includes the following (www.en.wikipedia.org):

- a. **Human resource development**, the process of equipping individuals with the understanding, skills and access to information, knowledge and training that enables them to perform effectively.
- b. **Organizational development**, the elaboration of management structures, processes and procedures, not only within organizations but also the management of relationships between the different organizations and sectors (public, private and community).
- c. **Institutional and legal framework development**, making legal and regulatory changes to enable organizations, institutions and agencies at all levels and in all sectors to enhance their capacities.
- d. **For organizations**, capacity building may relate to almost any aspect of its work: improved governance, leadership, mission and strategy, administration (including human resources, financial management, and legal matters), program development and implementation, fundraising and income generation, diversity, partnerships and collaboration, evaluation, advocacy and policy change, marketing, positioning, planning, etc. For individuals, capacity building may relate to leadership development, advocacy skills, training/speaking abilities, technical skills, organizing skills, and other areas of personal and professional development.
- e. **Capacity building is the elements** that give fluidity, flexibility and functionality of a program/organization to adapt to changing needs of the population that is served.

All the properties listed above could generally be true for developing countries as well as Turkey. However, every country have conditions that are unique, therefore above mentioned capacity building measures could and should be shaped according to the society's individual needs, problems and character, or some measures could be more emphasized than the others. For example, in the matters of water management and gender awareness all measures are important, however, in the case of Turkey measures "a", "b", and "c" should be more stressed since organizational and individual awareness are of utmost importance.

OBSTACLES AND ADVANTAGES OF CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMS IN TURKEY

Capacity building programs are tools used for the advancement of rural development schemes in the areas of water management and gender awareness. The difficulties, weaknesses and strengths should be clearly defined in order for these programs to be successful. The obstacles and advantages that will be faced by the beneficiaries and institutions and individuals who will execute the capacity building programs are listed in Table 1 and Table 2 below. The institutions are listed as public and private sector, universities and non governmental organizations whereas the beneficiaries are mostly women and children although all rural population is involved.

Table 1: Obstacles and Advantages of Capacity Building Programs' for the Educators

INSTITUTIONS/ EDUCATORS	OBSTACLES	ADVANTAGES
Public Sector	- Central governance - Intense bureaucracy - Too much emphasis on technical issues - Traditional (male dominated) management structure - Organizational mishap - Lack of emphasis - Budget allocation - Abundance of topics	- EU adaptation programs - Existence of ministries related to the subject (Environment, Agriculture, DSI) - "Hot topic" in the media and World
Universities	- Strong bureaucracy in execution and organization - Too much emphasis on irrigation - Disinterested faculties and schools - Budget problems - Lack of interest in gender - Units that work on gender and women are not focused on agriculture	- International relations/projects - Presence of faculties, schools and centers directly related to the topic - Tendency for interdisciplinary studies by the institutions - Highly educated sector
Private Sector	- Bureaucratic obstacles - Primary interest in economics - Importance of the subject is unknown - Inexistence of a unit directly related to the Topic	- EU adaptation programs - Dynamic and efficient - Less budget constraints compared to public - Tendency for interdisciplinary studies by the institutions
NGO's	- Lack of support from the public - Lack of organization and too many NGOs - Disarray among NGOs - Importance of the subject is unknown - Most women NGOs are concentrated on violence - Lack of NGOs on water management - Budget constraints	- EU adaptation programs - Dynamic and efficient - Tendency for interdisciplinary studies by the institutions

Table 2: Obstacles and Advantages of Capacity Building Programs' for the Beneficiaries

BENEFICIARIES	OBSTACLES	ADVANTAGES
Rural population	- Low education level - Disinterest and lack of information on the subject - Incorrect agricultural practices - Ineffective agricultural extension services - Misconception that water is only a source for irrigation - Misapprehension that irrigation is "man work"	- Existence of non-farming population in rural areas - Acceptance of suitable and well meaning programs by the public - Responsible for irrigation
Rural women	- Lack of women and water management topics in extension services - Women generally have lower education level than men - Gender discrimination in water management - Approval of women education programs by men (husband, father, brother) - Only "hygiene" focused education on water issues - Mostly theoretical education, nothing practical - Lack of support for girls' education	- More willing than men for education - Motherhood senses: Protection of future generation and nature - More cooperative than men - Main use and manager of household Water
Rural children	- Lack of subjects on water and gender - Children are not seriously considered as the "future generation" - Fathers and especially mothers do not have sufficient information on the topic - Low continuance fraction to secondary and higher (university) schools	- Fast learner: Importance of the issue - As the future farmer, more conscious in irrigation

The above mentioned institutions and educators in Table 1 should also be considered as the beneficiary. The staff and personnel who will be in charge of education should be thoroughly educated in the issue of water management and gender through education of educators programs so they can be fully aware on this vital subject. The obstacles and advantages that these institutions might face or have as the beneficiaries are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Obstacles and Advantages of Capacity Building Programs' Application for Educators as Beneficiaries in Turkey from the point of view Water Management and Gender

EDUCATORS as BENEFICIARIES	OBSTACLES	ADVANTAGES
Public Sector	- Public sector managers' male chauvinistic mentality - Insensitivity and reluctance to the issue - Lack of staff on the subject - Strict adherence to planned work program designed by the central management - Mostly agricultural technique oriented subjects	- EU adaptation programs - "Hot topic" in the media and world, numerous meetings and symposiums on the subject
Private Sector	- The subject is not considered as important - Economically it is not a priority - Insensitivity to the subject and reluctance to cooperation	- Existence of sensitive people on the subject, although in limited numbers - Decentralized management
Universities	- Insensitivity and lack of enthusiasm to the issue - Lack of human resources directly related to the matter	- "Hot topic" in the media and world, numerous meetings and symposiums on the subject
NGOs	- Abundance of NGOs and lack of organization - Not all NGOs consider the subject as important - Lack of staff directly related to the subject	- Existence of sensitive NGOs on the subject, although in limited numbers - Decentralized management

WHAT METHODS SHOULD BE CHOSEN TO INCREASE CAPACITY BUILDING IN WATER MANAGEMENT AND GENDER SENSITIVITY AND WHO SHOULD BE THE TARGET GROUP?

Programs to increase awareness in water management and gender related issues should first raise public consciousness and focus on public attention through education, and secondly public must be trained in techniques which save water such as drip irrigation. It is well known that when public consciousness is increased, careful water use will go along with this development. The target groups to increase awareness in these issues should be agricultural institutions, agricultural faculties and universities, farmers, rural women and children. These groups are chosen for a reason; agricultural institutions are the policy makers, agricultural faculties and universities are public centers for teaching and research, farmers are the largest water users, women have leading roles in water use and management, and finally children are chosen for their tendency to be "fast learner" in these issues in the early stages of their lives.

Since agricultural institutions are in charge of policy making and applying these rules they have precedence. When these bodies improve their technical and educational level, this will have positive effects on the rural population and advancement since agricultural institutions are the basic entities

responsible for extension services. Universities that have agricultural schools have a basic advantage that they are in charge of educating the future generation and most have irrigation and drainage departments. One must also keep in mind that they have the inherent advantage of having numerous students that are female. Rural population, be it in agricultural sector or some other sector, are one of the main users of water, therefore, they must be involved in capacity building programs. In order to eliminate gender prejudice, young children are one of the prime candidates for understanding the issues of water conservation, hygiene, and gender.

The above mentioned groups are groups that affect each other and also are affected by each other. This implies that all these target groups must simultaneously be included in capacity building programs in order to be successful. There should be direct means of communication and cooperation between the groups.

RESULTS AND RECOMENDATIONS

Although Turkey does not have sufficient information and infrastructure in gender related water management, it definitely has potential to be successful when effective programs are undertaken. The following recommendations are to be put in place for gender sensitive water management:

1. Planners and managers of national and regional water resources policies and programs must be more gender sensitive. Water policy makers should be trained to work in a gender inclusive manner.
2. Gender data must be collected on sound basis for determining needs and priorities in water management with joint studies by universities, governmental agencies and NGOs.
3. All water development projects must include gender impact assessments.
4. Laws and policies that ensure women's rights in both water and land must be put in place.
5. Affirmative action must be forced for balanced representation of women and men in all water management organizations.
6. All water management organizations and government agencies should target capacity building and training to build capacity of women to manage water and related financial resources to improve efficient water use; and increase education of women. Governments and water management organizations must provide training and credit for women to improve efficiency of land and water use for food production.
7. Water management policies should not discriminate anyone on the basis of sex and it should be based on a participatory approach. Men and women should be equally involved in managing the sustainable use of water resources and sharing the benefits.
8. For fairness, Turkish women needs to be made stronger by having them more say in water management policies and their participation broadened.
9. Ministry of Women should be established to solve all of the problems related to women.

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Capacity_building

Programme

Day 1: Monday, 19 May	
Registration & Opening	
08:30 – 09:30	Registration
09:30 – 09:45	Dr. Soukeina Bouraoui – Executive Director (CAWTAR)
09:45 – 10:00	Prof. Juan Sagardoy – GEWAMED Project Coordinator (MAI-Bari)
10:00 – 10:15	Mr. Mekki Hamza – General Director (MAHR)
10:15 – 10:30	Ms. Giulana Trisorio – Vice President (CIHEAM-MAIB)
10:30 – 10:45	Mr. Mohammed Mehdi Mlika – President (ARMEDD)
10:45 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 12:30	Visit to Primary school in Gammarth: Raising Awareness and Environmental Education (Optional)
Topic # 1 Law and Practice related to Women's Inheritance Land and Water Rights in the MENA Region (Middle East and North Africa)	
Chairperson: Mohammed Shatanawi	Rapporteur : Vittoria Pinca
11:30 – 12:00	Women's Inheritance Rights in Arab region Sana Ben Achour – ATFD – Tunisia
12:00 – 12:30	Gender Equality, Land Access and Rural Employment Ilaria Sisto – FAO - Italy
12:30 – 13:00	Inheritance Rights and Women's Situation in the Agricultural sector in Tunisia Jamila Tarhouni – INAT – Tunisia
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
Chairperson : Alia Gana	Reporter: Barbara Tomassini
14:30 – 15:00	Gender and Access to Water Resource Management in Morocco: Case study of Ouarzazate and Taroudante region Haji Abdelmalek – AMSED – Morocco
15:00 – 15:30	Gender mainstreaming in rural Mauritania: Drinking water project in the semi-urban in Gorgol et Guidimakha Sophie Bialais Fernagu – pS-Eau – France
15:30 – 16:00	Gender and Sustainable Rural Development: The need for an integrated strategy Atef Hamdy – MAIB - Italy
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
16:30 – 17:30	General discussion on conclusions and recommendations on Topic #1
Day 2: Tuesday, 20 May 2008	
Topic # 2 Gender and institutions for rural development	
Chairperson : Atef Hamdy	Rapporteur : Alaa El-Din Abdin
08:30 – 09:00	Water and Gender in the Maghreb Countries: Farm households' practices and institutional dynamics and sustainable development Alia Gana – CNRS/Ladyss – France
09:00 – 09:30	The Participation of Private and "Public Institutions Toward Sustainable Rural Development and Water Management in Jordan Mohammed Shatanawi – UJ-FA – Jordan
09:30 – 10:00	Gender and Institutions for Rural Development Maria Elisa Scarascia – ITAL-ICID – Italy
10:00 – 10:30	Gender and Institutions for Rural Development

10:30 – 11:00	Katreena Khalaf – PARC – Palestine
	Coffee Break
Chairperson : Veronica Navarra	Rapporteur : Katreena Khalaf
11:00 – 11:30	Institutional Promotion of a Gender Unit for Rural Development in Lebanon Rosanna Quagliariello – CIHEAM – Italy
11:30 – 12:00	Extension Services for Rural Women: Tunisian case study Narjess Hamrouni – AVFA-MAHR-Tunisia
12:00 – 13:00	General discussion on conclusions and recommendations on Topic #2
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
Topic # 3	
Gender and national policies for rural development	
Chairperson : Ilaria Sisto	Rapporteur : Samira al-Zoughbi
14:00 – 14:30	Rural Development Policies and Programmes in Support of Rural Women: The Italian Experience Veronica Navarra – ONILFA – Italy
14:30 – 15:00	The Streaming of Women and Gender Equality Concerns for Rural Development in the Mediterranean Barbara Tomassini – MIO-ECSDE
15:00 – 15:30	The Integration of Gender Dimensions in Rural Development Policies: Review and lesson learned Juan Antonio Sagardoy – MAIB – Italy
15:30 – 16:00	Intégration du genre dans les politiques nationales en Algérie Slimanr Bedrani and Yasmine Yakoubi – CREAD – Algeria
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
Chairperson : Jamila Tarhouni	Rapporteur : Yusef Hatira
16:00 – 16:30	Institutional and Political Gender Dimensions in Rural Development in Syria Ali Kaysi – GCSAR – Syria
16:30 – 17:00	Gender and National Policies for Rural Development in Cyprus George Adamides – ARI – Cyprus
17:00 – 18:00	General discussion on conclusions and recommendations on Topic #3
Day 3: Wednesday, 21 May 2008	
07:15	Meet in the Hotel Lobby
07:30	Departure for Zaghuan
08:30 – 09:15	Welcoming by Mr. Lamine Ben Toumiya (CRDA Zaghuan)
09:15 – 10:00	Visit to Nejib Derouich's "Nisrine" Garden
10:00 – 11:30	Visit "Groupement de développement Agricole" of Jradou
11:30 – 12:00	Break
12:00 – 13:00	Visit "Groupement de développement Agricole" of Oued Sbayhiya
13:00 – 14:30	Visit Water Temple and Eco-Museum
14:30 – 16:00	Lunch
16:00	Departure for Tunis
Day 4: Thursday, 22 May 2008	
Topic # 4	
Gender and capacity building/development for rural development	
Chairperson : Rosanna Quagliariello	Rapporteur : Katreena Khalaf
08:30 – 09:00	Gender and Capacity Building Ilaria Sisto – FAO - Rome

09:00 – 09:30	Socio-Economic Impacts Assessment of Women's Role in Rural Development (Case Study: Fayoum Governorate) Alaa El-Din Abdin – SRU/NWRC – Egypt
09:30 – 10:00	Case Studies About Capacity Building for Women in Rural and Slum Areas in Egypt Samah Saleh Abd el Shafi – EEAA – Egypt
10:00 – 10:30	Rural Women and Sustainable Development in Lebanon Hasna Moawad – RMF – Lebanon
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break
Chairperson : Khadouja Mellouli Rapporteur : Hasna Moawad	
11:00 – 11:30	Impact of the Development Programs on Rural Women in Tunisia Jamila Tarhouni – INAT – Tunisia
11:30 – 12:00	Gender and Capacity Building in Turkey for Rural Development and Water Management Bülent Ozekici – CUKUR – Turkey
12:00 – 12:30	ODYCEPANO Programmes for Rural Women in Tunisia Houcine Dellai - ODYCEPANO - Tunisia
12:30 – 13:00	General discussion on conclusions and recommendations on Topic #4
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
ROUNDUP	
Chairperson : Juan Sagardoy Rapporteur : Yusef Hatira	
14:30 – 16:00	Review of work progress
16:00 – 16:30	Coffee Break
16:30 – 17:00	Review of future activities
17:00 – 17:30	Closing of the workshop

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS						
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19-22 May 2008 – TUNISIA						
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**MAINSTREAMING GENDER DIMENSIONS IN WATER
MANAGEMENT FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT
19-22 May 2008 - Tunis, Tunisia**

**Third Regional Coordination Workshop
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