

# Women's Leadership

in Disaster Risk Reduction

## Examples from the Arab States

UNDRR – Regional Office  
for Arab States



 **UNDRR**  
UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

  
**SENDAI FRAMEWORK**  
FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION 2015-2030



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# Foreword

Disaster does not discriminate, but people do. Prevailing socio-economic conditions mean that the impact of a disaster can vary widely across communities, but some groups, such as women, typically suffering disproportionately due to pre-existing gender inequalities. Indeed, the onset of a disaster tends to reinforce, perpetuate and increase gender inequality, making bad situations worse for those women affected. Meanwhile, the potential contributions that women can bring to the disaster risk reduction imperative around the world are often overlooked, and women's leadership in building community resilience is disregarded.

Challenging the status quo, UNDRR works jointly with the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Voluntary Stakeholder Group to integrate gender issues into disaster risk reduction across the Arab States. For this region, the growing impact of climate change-related disasters, and biological hazards such as COVID-19, on women is of immense concern. A joint publication, the present **Women's Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction: Examples from the Arab States** Region best practices document stems from a targeted process led by UNDRR – Regional Office for Arab States in support of the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.

The Sendai Framework outlines commitments on gender equality, citing the participation of women as critical to effectively managing risk – as well as to designing, resourcing and implementing gender-responsive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes. Adequate capacity-building measures are thus needed to empower women for preparedness, and build the capacity of this group to create alternative sources of livelihood post-disaster.

To this end, the publication before you constitutes an initial step in documenting, collecting and sharing gender-responsive disaster risk reduction and lessons learned from across the Arab States region, and covers disaster risk reduction initiatives aimed at reducing the impact of disasters on women. This compilation of best practices is the first of its kind in the Arab States region and draws from documented experiences of mainstreaming gender in disaster risk reduction, collected through desk review and consultation with the respective experts.

These experiences and lessons learned are presented through twenty-five case studies and classified into five Themes Areas: Theme I: Integrating Gender into Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction; Theme II: Women on the Front Line in the Fight against COVID-19; Theme III: Gender Mainstreaming for Sustainable Development; Theme IV: Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence through Disaster Risk Reduction; and Theme V: Gender-Responsive Disaster Risk Reduction in the Agriculture and Water Sector. Each of the case studies presented is in turn broken down into five sections: an introduction to the initiative, impact and results, the good practice emerging from the initiative, the lessons learned, and the potential for replication. The document also includes three short briefings relating further pertinent experience from the region.

This best practices document is the result of a collaborative effort, containing input from experts from the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Group; UN agencies, including UN-Habitat, UNFPA, WFP, UN Women, FAO, and IOM; the Arab Water Council, and Oxfam. The case studies shared herein also include a range of contributions from respective national governments in the Arab States region, namely, those of Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, State of Palestine, Somalia, Tunisia, UAE and Yemen.

We sincerely hope that this document contributes to concrete change and genuine mainstreaming of gender in disaster risk reduction in the Arab States. The women of the region represent huge potential for addressing the risks we will face in the future, and it is our expressed wish that this publication will enable practitioners, policy and decision makers to effectively address gender-related challenges in disaster risk reduction and building resilience. May this work also stir more women and men into joining the advancement in this area.

*Women's Leadership in Disaster Risk Reduction: Examples from the Arab States Region* stands as testimony to the many women and girls who are already stepping up as leaders in disaster risk reduction efforts across the Arab States. As with other challenges faced, there is contained therein an opportunity for the women of the region to show strength and resilience – and we have no doubt that their achievement will inspire us all.



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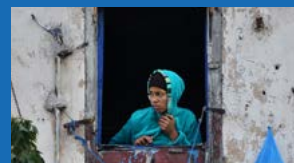
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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>ADR</b>	Alternative Dispute Resolution
<b>AWC</b>	Arab Water Council
<b>BMZ</b>	German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>CBDRR</b>	Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organization
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-Based Violence
<b>HLP</b>	Housing, Land and Property
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communications Technology
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>ISIL</b>	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
<b>NAWW</b>	Network for Arab Women in Water
<b>NCW</b>	National Council of Women
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>PHL</b>	Post-Harvest Loss
<b>RAED</b>	Arab Network for Environment and Development
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
<b>SHSPPP</b>	Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People
<b>UAE</b>	United Arab Emirates
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNDRR</b>	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UN-Habitat</b>	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>VAW</b>	Violence Against Women
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>WUA</b>	Water User Association

# Theme 1

Integrating Gender into  
Community-Based  
Disaster Risk Reduction







## Abstract

Communities are the first responders in case of disaster. It is thus logical that community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR) form the core of any risk reduction approach. This opening Thematic Area of the report focuses on Integrating Gender into CBDRR, outlining activities and accomplishments in this area across the reporting countries. The first case studies highlight **the role of women in Algerian urbanization** and **Boosting opportunities for women's engagement** in coping with disaster risks, as reflected in the experience of livelihood generation in three villages in Luxor Governate, Egypt.

There then follow four further case studies on **Sensitizing women on their role in managing disasters** through a project implemented in four governates of Iraq; **Supporting the return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)** in Northern Iraq through peaceful resolution of conflict; **Training of community mediators** to create a more community-driven and gender-responsive disaster risk management and reduction system in the State of Palestine; and **Encouraging women's engagement in developing local crafts and products** in Yemen.

The theme is closed by the first targeted briefing, on **gender mainstreaming in the context of flooding in Somalia**. • .....



# ● Case Study 1: The Role of Women in Algerian Urbanization

The project centred on a government initiative to urbanize Algerian cities and reduce vulnerability to disaster risk through the adoption of approaches based on sound political, economic, and environmental policy. Disaster risk reduction (DRR) represents a long-term investment that requires general input and effective participation from all parties concerned, and the approaches employed in this initiative consist of small local projects, activities, and events that heighten the resilience of the selected cities. Implementation is carried out while ensuring sustainable development, mainly through engaging various gender-sensitive strategies for improving local infrastructure. In this way, the role and incorporation of women in decision-making on DRR is reinforced, with participating women encouraged to widen the project scope.



**Starting date:** January 2020

**Status:** Ongoing, with an expanding territorial scope

**Location:** 25 provinces of Algeria

**Participants:** Algerian Ministry of Interior; Direction on Disaster Risk Reduction; Local collectives; Social actors: Public associations; Public institutions

**Target audience:** Governmental and local authorities

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- A wide range of roles, from governing and directing the project to direct participation in several events and urbanization campaigns.
- Participation of women from governmental authorities as vital actors in promoting the project and highlighting its legal aspects to respective local authorities.
- Women from the general public are also involved in the project, through their efforts and sensitization on the dangerous risks caused by a disaster.

## 1.1 THE ALGERIAN INITIATIVE

The overall aim of the project is to achieve more dynamic urbanization of Algerian cities, while rendering women as active actors throughout all phases of project planning and implementation. Pursuit of this end goal is underpinned by a number of smaller objectives:

- Develop sustainable infrastructure in Algerian cities and upgrade local architecture with disaster resilience features.
- Enhance the perception of safety and security among residents and work to create new strategies for public and social security.
- Leverage technological innovation to create local platforms and websites to provide tools and guidance for developing climate change adaptation strategies and city planning.
- Contribute to ending, or at least decreasing, growing socio-economic disparity.
- Combine temporary water storage facilities and improve the quality of urban public spaces.
- Promote women's empowerment and reshape the perception of women in Algeria at city level.

## 1.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

Developing a spirit of participation with the local authorities to coordinate and consult on raising the level of awareness on disaster risk has been central to this initiative. In this regard, the Madinaty project in Egypt provided constructive guidance on achieving DRR-responsive urbanization, taking all preventive measures that enhance city resilience.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Women have increased awareness of the impact of risk on the lives of individuals, their property and their livelihoods, through conducting extensive reports and investigations aimed at boosting the knowledge and activities of various local authorities.
- Women successfully assess the ability of cities to respond, which is considered a central part of being well prepared for disaster.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- The initiative focused on ensuring equal opportunity and thus engaging both genders in replicating the Madinaty campaign, without any form of discrimination. Disaster does not discriminate according to gender; moreover, Algeria is a country that supports gender equality.

## 1.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM ALGERIA

Generally, the initiative was notable for its expansion of the role of women, thereby facilitating subsequent enhanced engagement by women in the field of DRR and resilience-building.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Many women have participated in the implementation of the project, across all target locations. These women successfully applied the project steps and brought a momentum of proven ideas that can be used in the field of disaster reduction.

*What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The initiative is the first of its kind in Algeria and has forged an environment of wide support.
- The government has provided and created all the necessary conditions for the successful implementation of the project.
- The adoption of the Madinaty campaign guidance has had a very positive impact, as it motivates cities to build and improve their future capabilities, especially in the area of resilience.

## 1.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What lesson has been learned from this practice?*

- A novel initiative in the Algerian context, its success illustrates the viability of the stated approaches and their successful application in Algeria.

*What have been the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Algerian cities are notable for their low standards of representation, and these aspects made it quite difficult to implement the project. These obstacles have been overcome effectively through developing daily reports with local authorities that oversee project tracking to reduce the likelihood of unforeseen obstacles or difficulties.

*How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- E-implementation could strengthen the initiative, listing those cities most qualified in terms of resilience and suitability for project implementation.

## 1.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- By leveraging those infrastructural resources (physical, institutional, human) available in the given context. A particularly high level of success could be achieved by expanding the project to include the entire national territory, engaging new specialists, and benefiting from prior successful experiences in the DRR field.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Lack of public awareness concerning disaster risks.
- Lack of qualified specialists to adopt the implementation of the project.
- Lack of prior experience that could be beneficial for guiding others.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Include women in all sub-areas of disaster reduction.
- Profit from the expertise of women who hold scientific qualifications in pertinent fields and open up new opportunities for these women to showcase their management abilities.
- Give women many more opportunities in the disaster reduction field by providing training. ●

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## ● Case Study 2: Women's Empowerment in Upper Egypt through Enhancing Community Resilience

*The initiative encompassed multiple undertakings aimed at empowering women to cope with the loss of livelihood due to disaster. Implementation aimed to do this by providing opportunities and practical alternatives that enable affected women to counter the risk they face, producing sustainable and enduring sources of livelihood.*



**Starting date:** January 2017

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Villages in Esna, Armant and Luxor centres in Luxor Governorate, Egypt

**Participants:** European Union (EU); Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED); Action Against Hunger Organization – 'Social and Economic Development of Local Communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Luxor Governorate' project; Local community organizations in target villages; National Council for Women; Social Solidarity Directorate, Luxor Governorate

**Target audience:** At least 250 women, from those most vulnerable to loss of livelihood

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Women were engaged in awareness programmes to enhance their understanding of the concept of disaster, types of risks, and ways to build their resilience.
- Women made up the participants in the risk priority identification programme focusing on the loss of livelihood that leads directly to increased internal migration.
- Women's capacities to find practical solutions to counter risks to livelihood were boosted.

- Training programmes in crafts and handicrafts enhanced the resilience capacity of the women targeted, teaching them to counter the risk of loss of livelihood.
- Women were linked with local community organizations and grassroots women's associations to implement solutions.
- Targeted women were provided with the means and techniques to implement proposed solutions, such as sewing and knitting machines, carpet and kilim looms, and livestock.

### 2.1 THE UPPER EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE

The stated objectives of the project are to:

- Boost the number of opportunities for women's engagement in proposing solutions to cope with disaster risks, mainly in relation to livelihood.
- Provide sustainable solution models to be replicated elsewhere.
- Enhance the resilience capacity of the women targeted.

## 2.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

This initiative has contributed to the economic empowerment of women, especially those vulnerable to loss of livelihood. It has achieved this by providing opportunities and practical alternatives that allow this risk to be countered. This success was reflected in the revenue growth achieved by the targeted women and households, and in the development of practical models for new job opportunities that can be reproduced in other villages. The contribution of local community organizations in the villages targeted played a major part in the success achieved, providing moral support and opportunities to find market outlets and exhibitions that boosted marketing prospects.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Empowering women who had abandoned their land due to soil degradation lowered the level of abandonment, increased maintenance of tracts, and helped reduce shrinkage in the available agricultural area.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- From the outset, the contribution of women to all training programmes delivered was central to achieving the DRR and broader climate goals, increasing resilience in the local area.
- Women's implementation of guidance tools to protect the climate produced tangible results, such as raising awareness on the importance of not burning (but instead benefiting from) agricultural waste and using palm and newspaper waste in the wicker industry. Notably lower levels of air pollution have been the result.
- Participants also began using waste cloth in the manufacture of textiles and on increasing the stock of livestock through the provision of various strains of sheep and goats.



**The project relied on the ability of the targeted women to reach out to local communities, with some exceptional women assigned awareness-raising tasks.”**

## 2.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM EGYPT

The practice seen in this initiative has been deemed beneficial in improving women's engagement in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity, building because it focused mainly on women's integration – from the outset. It did this by opening communication channels between the targeted women and local units, and providing women with the opportunity to give expression to the risk impacts they face. Moreover, the targeted women were able to contribute to solutions for countering these risks, which led to the integration of straightforward, practical solutions into DRR and climate-related strategies at the local level.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- The project relied on the ability of the targeted women to reach out to local communities, with some exceptional women assigned awareness-raising tasks.
- The project used the skillsets of the targeted women in various handicrafts, in line with local culture, such as wicker and carpet weaving, and sewing – in addition to the wealth of livestock knowledge and know-how held.

*What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Targeted women were engaged from the very outset of the project – and continue to engage with the activities underway, allowing successful identification and countering of the major threats they face.
- A heightened understanding of risk and disaster concepts has emerged.
- Practical, sustainable change has been brought into the lives of participating women.

## 2.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Women are an essential and indispensable partner in development projects undertaken, on all levels.
- The path can be cleared for women to play the role of active partners in DRR planning.
- Integrating women from different cultural and social backgrounds into strategy development on disaster and climate is vital to last success.
- Constant awareness-raising on the importance of the role of women in family education and empowering women is key to producing mindful change and increased levels of resilience.

### *What are the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Fear of participating in project activities due to prevailing societal norms. This has been overcome through employing a community-based approach and solid networking with local community organizations and grassroots women's associations.
- A reluctance to relate the most pressing problems women face, especially in poorer areas, has been overcome by intensifying meetings and awareness work.

### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- Continue to integrate women into all development activities implemented.
- Showcase and disseminate lessons learned and success stories in an appropriate manner.
- Identify specific project roles and duties to be undertaken by women.



**Women are an essential and indispensable partner in development projects undertaken, on all levels.”**

## 2.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Seek out, in cooperation with development partners, opportunities to reproduce such practices in other areas. As disaster and climate threats disproportionately impact women, we need to continue to focus on building the resilience capacities of this group and hone their understanding of disaster risks.

### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Plan to engage women during the early stages of the development of strategies and implementation mechanisms.
- Focus on developing education policies for sustainable development.
- Encourage an in-depth understanding of the concept of risk and disaster, to aid identification and monitoring of the most urgent risks faced. ●

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## ● Case Study 3: Women in a safe and green Iraq

*The initiative is aimed at raising awareness among women and girls on disaster risks and community preparedness mechanisms.*



**Starting date:** 2016

**Status:** Ongoing (request for project extension outstanding)

**Location:** Baghdad, Nineveh, Salah al-Din, and Diyala, Iraq

**Participants:** United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); Iraqi ministries and governmental agencies, gender divisions, environment departments; Ministry of Health and Environment, DRR Division; CSOs

**Target audience:** Over 1,000 women and girls from the target areas

### 3.1 THE IRAQI INITIATIVE

The specific goals of this endeavour are to:

- Sensitize women on their role in managing a disaster.
- Reach a diverse group of women and girls in the targeted areas.
- Deliver awareness-raising on how to manage and recover from disaster.

### 3.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The initiative is successfully raising awareness, and the level of practical knowledge, among local women and girls on all phases of disaster risk reduction and management. Women represent half of the population and are the cornerstone of the household, thus the know-how gained by participants in the target areas is being immediately applied at the core of local society.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Women and girls now take various precautions related to DRR and the mitigation of climate risk, alongside safety and preparation measures to curb the effects of disaster and aid recovery.
- While those directly engaged through project activities now take proactive measures, the spillover into the wider community is equally as great, and the seed of knowledge in this field has been planted in the communities targeted.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- As women in Iraq tend to rear children in the home, providing this group with training contributes to training all segments of society, fostering deeper and broader reach and engagement on disaster and climate risk reduction.
- Timely impact of awareness-raising among participants on the threats presented by the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and how to prevent and contain their impact.



**By strengthening the spirit of sharing among team members and participants, solidarity and knowledge exchange has been fostered.”**

### 3.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM IRAQ

By knowing and preventing potential risks, and being able to cope and protect their children and families should such risks transpire, women and girls become stronger. This holds especially true when this group can become familiar with similar experiences in other countries.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- By tapping into the cumulative experiences of UNDP, useful know-how has been brought into the daily lives of local women and girls, leveraging their role in the community and their practical skills to enact change.
- By strengthening the spirit of sharing among team members and participants, solidarity and knowledge exchange has been fostered and the existing know-how of local women and girls engaged.

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Synergy and participatory approaches among governmental institutions, the private sector, trade unions, and CSOs.
- An electronic platform, created to launch a dedicated website administered by the Ministry of Health and Environment, is set to produce a longer-term impact.



### 3.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What lesson has been learned from this practice?*

- Participatory work among members of the initiative has led to the deeper development of applicable ideas.

*What are the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- A lack of sufficient financing has been overcome through fostering cooperation among all stakeholders, resulting in the sharing of financial allocations.
- A distinct lack of information on the experiences of other countries has been navigated through all stakeholders contributing available input on capacity-building measures and learning on the experiences of other countries.



**Participatory work among members of the initiative has led to the deeper development of applicable ideas.”**

### 3.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- The success of this initiative supports its implementation in other areas, by making use of gender divisions.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- The prevailing strength of the tribal system.
- Narrow mindsets in relation to women's freedom of movement.
- Inequity in (attribution of and access to) leadership and education.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Provide safe livelihoods and other alternatives, such as through the enactment of legislation and rulings targeting this area. ●

*Organization: Government of Iraq*



## ● Case Study 4: Building Peace and Collaboration in the Community through Mediation – Iraq

*This initiative centred on supporting the return of IDPs through peaceful resolution of conflicts, training a group of 'Community Mediators' in line with international standards to address housing, land and property (HLP) disputes and promote peacebuilding in the respective localities. Many areas of Iraq affected by violent conflict are inhabited by a diverse cross-section of cultural, ethnic and religious groups. In the post-conflict process, tensions between groups have heightened, damaging the social fabric and negatively impacting the capacity to peacefully engage on mutually harmful issues of disaster and climate risk reduction.*



**Dates:** July 2019 to May 2020

**Status:** Completed

**Location:** Northern Iraq

**Participants:** United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat); Caritas Czech Republic

**Target audience:** Multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-faith groups across Northern Iraq

### **What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Young women from different ethnic and confessional groups underwent the selection and training processes to become certified community mediators. In their new role, they provided impartial support to parties in dispute, facilitating amicable agreements based on mediation international principles and respect for human rights.

### **4.1 THE NORTHERN IRAQI INITIATIVE**

The specific goals of the initiative were to:

- Address conflicts and collaborate to empower the community and prepare it for disasters caused by natural or "man-made" hazards.
- Train a group of community mediators that reflects both gender balance and the diversity of the beneficiary population.
- Integrate the view of women into peacebuilding and encourage women from the community to participate in peacebuilding initiatives with full awareness of the positive roles they play.
- Conduct community awareness-raising activities on alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution, with participants playing the role of lead mediator in cases concerning their own community.

## 4.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

UN-Habitat upholds the crucial role of women as agents of change in the post-conflict context, and this initiative has led to positive developments on the ground, producing several very visible changes in the communities targeted.

### *How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Engaging women in the local peacebuilding process has led to increased resilience and heightened awareness of disaster and climate risk, providing a visible example of women as agents of change.
- The increased participation of women in addressing disputes has bolstered community strength and increased participation in community activities overall. A broader net for combating future risks has also been cast, following initial hesitation to involve young women in dispute resolution – a role traditionally reserved for older men of high standing in the community.

### *How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- The participation of women has contributed directly to identifying and addressing issues that render the community vulnerable to disasters.
- The voice and role of women as leaders are key to building resilience and reducing disaster and climate risk, and this has proven especially important in achieving these aims in the targeted localities, which are still rebuilding in the aftermath of violent conflict.

## 4.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM NORTHERN IRAQ

Within its limited scope, the project has made not insubstantial inroads into addressing much broader issues impeding the building of a safe, prepared and resilient societal structure in the target region. This has been the case not least in terms of helping to weave a social fabric that is conducive to the well-being of women and enhancing their role in society. Proof of this success can be seen in the results of a satisfaction survey implemented among beneficiaries who used the resultant mediation service to resolve disputes. The vast majority of those surveyed now support Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as a primary means of solving conflicts.

### *How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Training guidelines and monitoring that included specific provisions for gender mainstreaming facilitated successful engagement of women mediators, in a role that is equal to that of their male counterparts.



Photo: UN-Habitat

- By supporting women in front-line intervention, a powerful message on gender equality has been sent to local stakeholders.
- By sharing the excellent results of this approach with key local figures, greater support was garnered, paving the way for further participation by women in such activities.
- Making women's contribution highly visible, equal to that of their male counterparts, and the high rate of success in dispute resolution achieved, showcased that peacebuilding and enduring social reconstruction can only occur if women take an active role in proceedings.

### *What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Early identification of prevailing factors discouraging women from participating allowed the trainee group to formulate solutions applicable to the local context, making decisions – as a unit – on how to most effectively implement these solutions in the field.
- Pre-emptive reasoning was also applied to relations with local authorities, perceiving the challenges these stakeholders may have presented to project implementation. Conducive engagement with these authorities was achieved by approaching them at the very outset of the project to present the value of the endeavour and obtain the necessary endorsement.
- The project set in place the foundation for a close-knit collaboration to promptly respond to and overcome future events, which represents a long-term opportunity and precedent for further projects and spillover benefits.
- Showcasing the approach employed, which demonstrated the positive impact of women engagement but also of collaboration among individuals from diverse backgrounds. The initiative now stands as a seminal local example of the considerable potential for the community to together address their common issues in preparation for disaster.

#### 4.4 LESSONS LEARNED

##### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Quickly addressing the skepticism over female mediators visibly taking the lead in awareness-raising and mediation sessions was key to success, with special care being taken to involve these stakeholders from the very outset, accurately communicating the objectives, addressing concerns raised, and highlighting the value of the endeavour for all stakeholders.
- As the initiative continued, local engagement was consolidated by the sharing of project results with community leaders to showcase the benefits of engaging women mediators.

##### *What are the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Women mediators initially registered concern concerning (lack of) community acceptance, potential rejection of their role as mediators, and the consequences of objection within their own community and social circle. This hesitancy was overcome by dedicating training time specifically to identifying the underlying causes of concern and potential solutions, developing action plans to mitigate risks.
- Building a sense of group solidarity among the diverse collection of individuals presented a challenge and addressing this element tied in with assuaging the initial concerns expressed by women trainees. Effective engagement allowed both these challenges to be overcome, achieved mainly through fostering close-knit support among the group of mediators, composed of both men and women, and ultimately leading to outstanding results.



**Local engagement can be consolidated by the sharing of project results with community leaders to showcase the benefits of engaging women mediators.”**

#### 4.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

##### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- There is a clear potential for this practice to be replicated nationally, on a large scale, with other regions of Iraq representing particularly fertile ground for replication. There is a clear need for alternative conflict resolution mechanisms to be made more widely available, and there are capacities on the ground that could be leveraged for success in this regard.
- If adapted to local conditions, replication of the success achieved during this initiative has the potential to greatly impact gender equality and women's participation in peacebuilding, improving local capacities for disaster prevention and positively impacting overall resilience in a multitude of contexts.

##### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Any future expansion must take to heart the lessons learned from this initiative in each of these three spheres of human life. Conditions permitting, gender mainstreaming can be embedded during the design phase – especially in designing training sessions, ensuring a gender lens and a diversity inclusive approach, and involvement of local authorities from the very beginning. For this to occur, local conditions must be either already favourable or swift action be taken by the project team to address and offset potential constraints.
- Close monitoring of the implementation and results is also key, allowing space for beneficiaries to continuously bring forward any concerns that may arise within the local community.

##### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- In addition to sensitizing local authorities to the benefits of meaningful involvement by women mediators and keeping them updated on results achieved, experienced community mediators could take part in local discussions on how this approach can help address a range of community concerns. In this way, the role of women is strengthened and the scope of the initiative moves forward, from dispute resolution into community preparedness and risk reduction. ●

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*Organization: UN-Habitat Iraq*



## ● Case Study 5: Enhancing the Role of Gender in Building Community Capacity for Disaster Reduction – State of Palestine

*This women's empowerment project centred on enabling local women to fulfill their role in developing a disaster risk management system.*



**Location:** Ramallah, State of Palestine

**Participants:** National Center for Disaster Risk Management, with the support of the World Bank; Palestine Red Crescent Society

**Target audience:** Ministry of Women (Gender Unit); National Center for Disaster Risk Management; Emergency Rooms (governorate level); Communication Committees (governorate level); Gender Units (security sector); Gender Units (civil sector)

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- As women participants, building on their experience to prepare presentations and lectures aimed at raising awareness on disaster risk management.
- As ambassadors, relating success stories on disaster risk management institutions by women participants (at the workshops conducted).

### 5.1 THE PALESTINIAN INITIATIVE

The stated objectives of the project were to:

- Enhance the role of gender in building community capacities for disaster risk reduction.
- Create a system at the national level that organizes disaster risk management and reduction operations.
- Build community capacity to cope with disaster.
- Undertake measures to integrate gender elements laid down in policy and legislation into DRR programmes.
- Ensure compliance and coherence with universally accepted principles, priorities and rules in relation to risk reduction.

## 5.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The project has looked to create a common language among partners, major stakeholders and decision-makers to improve the institutional and legal framework for the disaster risk management system in the State of Palestine. This was achieved through networking and coordinating work across gender units in all sectors and at the National Center for Disaster Risk Management, as well as among other relevant actors.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Increased capacity achieved through delivering lectures on the concept of disaster risk management.
- Presentation of materials by local experts on local and global experiences in disaster risk management.
- Allocation of specific periods for discussion and exchange of experiences among workshop attendees.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- By involving women in building the risk management system in the State of Palestine, and in sessions discussing draft legislation in this field and the development of the support system.
- By helping observations made by women participants to be taken into account in the final version of the institutional and legal structure for the nascent disaster risk management system.
- As women form the heart of the local community, making a long-term community awareness plan naturally engages their roles and skills, boding well for the plan's lasting success.
- Creation of a system at the national level that organizes disaster risk management and reduction operations and increases community capacities to cope with disasters; and which is aligned with universally accepted principles, priorities and rules.



**As women form the heart of the local community, making a long-term community awareness plan naturally engages their roles and skills."**

## 5.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE STATE OF PALESTINE

The project drew its premise from the crucial need to involve women in all phases of engaging with disaster and building and maintaining resilience, considering the important role that women play both during and after a disaster. Implementation successfully leveraged the power of women in this regard, to enhance their capacities in the area and ensure their full participation in consultations for building a disaster risk management system in the State of Palestine.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Female participants from state institutions were given the opportunity to attend seminars, exchange information and benefit from the experiences of others, enhancing their skillsets and work performance.

*What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The diversity of project participants reached, which included the civil and security sector, emergency rooms, social media committees, and a government ministry (Ministry of Women).
- A questionnaire enabled assessment of participant knowledge on the concept of disaster risk management. Through specialist analysis of the questionnaire, the extent of knowledge was accurately gauged, allowing targeted work that turns participants' weaknesses into strengths.

## 5.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- The importance of gender-responsive participation by women in creating a legislative environment for DRR.
- The benefits of emphasizing the role of women in community awareness campaigns.
- Increased women's participation in leadership frameworks for DRR can be achieved to the benefit of all parties.

### *What have been the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Sufficient financial allocations were not available to involve the largest possible segment of the gender units operating within various sectors in the State of Palestine. This challenge was overcome by involving those sectors which are most active in disaster risk management, and by striving to include other sectors should suitable funding become available.

### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- By engaging more sectors concerned with gender in Palestinian society.



**Note the importance of holding training workshops for gender units in ministries and non-ministerial government entities in the field of disaster risk reduction and management.”**

## 5.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- The initiative is suitable for replication in the wider Palestinian context and could be enhanced by forming communication committees for gender units operating in the various sectors, and by periodically holding workshops and meetings.

### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- The difficult economic conditions that the State of Palestine is experiencing could impose restrictions on expansion, and its dependence on donor support to undertake activities in disaster risk management and other areas.

### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Note the importance of holding training workshops for gender units in ministries and non-ministerial government entities in the field of disaster risk reduction and management.
- Ensure networking and work coordination across gender units and members of the national technical team and propose membership of the national technical team by a representative of an advisory committee of gender units.
- Understand the necessity of establishing a joint committee for gender units in the civil and security sectors.
- Include gender departments in the communication centres of emergency rooms, granting them a permanent role.
- Note the necessity of establishing administrative units to manage disaster risks within both ministerial and non-ministerial governmental entities.
- Take into consideration the concept of gender and the needs of marginalized groups in the draft disaster risk management law. ●

*Organization: National Centre for Disaster Risk Management, Government of the State of Palestine*



## ● Case Study 6: Table Salt Production Development Project – Yemen

The project aimed at improving the income-generating activities of local women in the Socotra Archipelago. It was one of several projects implemented by local community organizations in the Archipelago, through institutional support and the biodiversity project funded by UNDP between 2016 and 2017.

The central objective of the project was to build the resilience capacity of local communities and raise awareness on disaster risk management and response among these communities.



**Dates:** 2016–2019

**Status:** Discontinued

**Location:** Nujd, Socotra Archipelago, Yemen

**Participants:** UNDP; Global Environment Facility (GEF); Dexim Association for Livestock and Plantation; Environmental Protection Authority; Local authorities

**Target audience:** (approx.) 100 households and women trainees

### **What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Women worked to organize new wetlands along the shores of the Indian Ocean, manually working these salt flats to produce high-quality local products.
- Approximately 100 women were trained by a national expert specialized in techniques for extracting, filtering, purifying, refining, packing, and marketing salt.
- Women as commercial actors were placed to the fore, and it was agreed with the local implementer that the women would produce the raw product, to be packed and made available for purchase on the local market.

### **6.1 THE SOCOTRAN INITIATIVE**

A number of sub-objectives were pursued in support of the central goal:

- Protect the natural resources of the Socotra Archipelago through the sustainable production and good governance of natural resources.
- Contribute to food security in the Archipelago by enhancing and developing local production.
- Encourage women's engagement in developing local crafts and products.
- Improve household livelihood and alleviate poverty.
- Boost the general health of the local population.







## Women's knowledge on the health and economic disparities between the local product and the ersatz product was leveraged to create opportunities."

### 6.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

This project changed the lives of women beneficiaries in the realms of economics, society and health. The most important of these effects was the creation of job opportunities and alleviation of poverty within households. Within a short period, the producer managed to corner the salt market on Socotra, to the extent that salt produced by competitors no longer even came to market.

#### *How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Wet flats (salt flats) restored and retrofitted for the project absorbed wave forces, reducing their impact on the island.
- The sustainable, commercially profitable use of natural resources served as good practice for future endeavours in the Socotra Archipelago and has led to increased awareness in this area.

#### *How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- Women played the main role in implementing the project, starting with their participation in planning, preparing and fitting for the project stages.
- Women had the largest role in overseeing the setting up of the production site and preparing the product for consumption, thus contributing to improved livelihood, in addition to protecting Socotran communities from hurricane and flood damage.
- Women participants were selected from households that needed to increase their standard of living and which were interested in improving local products, thereby providing for future resilience and know-how.

### 6.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE SOCOTRA ARCHIPELAGO

The project proved successful in contributing to the fight against pressing social and economic crises facing the local population. It did this in a thoroughly hands-on manner, providing job opportunities, boosting livelihood generation, and building community resilience. Implementation took place on multiple levels, from raising awareness among women and the wider public to modelling pilot projects aimed at freeing up local resources for income generation while curbing the effects of climate change.

#### *How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Local women played a pivotal role in managing the various stages of the project, thereby empowering this group and harnessing (and expanding) their skillsets.
- The interaction of women and their insistence on meeting their needs and improving their family's standard of living resulted in increased empowerment, security and well-being.
- Women's experience in dealing with the product was leveraged to create opportunities, as was their knowledge on the health and economic disparities between the local product and the ersatz product imported to the island.
- Enhanced local resilience was achieved through harnessing the commercial skills of local women to help market the new product, encouraging the local market to select and consume the Socotran product, as it better meets prevailing needs.

#### *What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Provision of support and good governance.
- Direct financial return produced by the project, improving the lives of local women.
- Increased community commercial interaction with local products.
- Stirring of community interest in revitalizing and developing local crafts and products: the financial benefit brought increased economic stability to the lives of local women in the short term, while motivating them to continue to engage in such ventures.

## 6.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- There are opportunities for women to play a role in disaster risk reduction in a geographical region that finds itself on the front line of the fight against climate change.
- The role of women is central to reviving time-proven ways and environmentally friendly products.
- An equally pivotal role is played by women in facing disasters. Women are aware of and understand the risks they face, and can thus be empowered with means and skills to prepare for and confront the effects of a disaster.
- If provided with adequate opportunity to play the required roles, engaging women in the local community can lead to gains that are disproportional to the level of funding allocated.

### *What were the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Increased competition in the local market represented a key challenge. This was due to the introduction of competing products at a lower price point than that of the local product.
- The landfall of multiple hurricanes in the Socotra Archipelago gradually brought project activities to a standstill, followed by a quasi-final cessation of the project. Work aimed at restoring project activities, at least in part, is currently ongoing.

### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- This and similar projects would benefit from a strengthened contingency underpinning should major disaster events occur during project implementation. In the aftermath of recent hurricanes on Socotra, efforts are underway to once again harness the island's abundant salt supply to meet local demand, and indeed export to neighbouring governorates – especially as many local women now possess the skill, experience and equipment necessary for production.

## 6.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Regions with similar environmental and societal conditions would be well suited to the successful replication of the aforementioned project activities.
- Similar projects aimed at reducing disaster risks and enhancing community resilience could secure success by adapting project delivery to local conditions. Continuous consultation with the local community would likely prove key to such success.

### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Business continuity may be adversely affected by a lack of a broader, comprehensive understanding of the risks to the project site and the surrounding areas, and on factors endangering implementation. Such considerations should also be borne in mind in relation to expanding the geographical area of implementation, within the region or beyond.

### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Ensure the political will of local authorities to highlight the roles and needs of women and enhance their participation in decision-making, planning, and implementation phases of DRR processes and resilience-building measures.
- Encourage women's organizations and associations working in DRR and strengthen resilience within local communities, investing in pioneering projects.
- Allocate greater resources to facilitate the expansion of the role played by women in DRR, providing more expansive opportunities that harness their energy and leadership ability, and encourage further engagement.
- Provide training opportunities to a greater number of women, from geographically diverse regions.
- Facilitate women's access to information and knowledge.
- Ensure increased media coverage of the role of women in risk reduction and resilience-building projects. ●

*Organization: Government of Yemen*



Photo: FAO Yemen

## ● Case Study 7: Strengthening the Role of Women in Peace Building through Community-Level Natural Resources Management – Yemen

Yemen stands as one of the most water-stressed countries in the world. Even prior to the ongoing conflict, mass migration to urban centres and rapid population growth were placing increased pressure on water reserves; with the impacts of climate change further worsening the situation. Groundwater levels have substantially declined in both rural and urban locations across the country, with extended conflict exacerbating the impact. This has resulted in the widespread destruction of Yemen's (already neglected) water infrastructure, reduced access to fuel for pumping, and increased resource competition and water scarcity. Set against this backdrop, an initiative was launched to mitigate the impact of water conflict on population well-being and create a pathway to future resilience and sustainable water use by empowering those locked in disputes over access to this precious resource.



**Dates:** January 2018 – May 2019

**Status:** Completed

**Location:** Sana'a, Lahj (Governorate); Tuban, Yemen Bani Matar, Shihab Alasfal, Haraz, Sanhan, Sawaan, Bani Al Hareth, Al Malekah (Districts)

**Participants:** Water User Associations (WUAs)

**Target audience:** 7 WUAs; 558 (182 women, 376 men) beneficiaries in Lahj; 525 (112 women, 413 men) beneficiaries in Sana'a

### **What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Project activities were pursued in partnership with seven local Water User Associations. For the first time, women took part in WUA Board of Directors elections, with many women candidates ultimately appointed.
- Women played an integral role in conflict resolution, and the conflict resolution committees in each WUA now comprise an equal number of women and men.
- Women also took part in the rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure and beneficiary selection.

## 7.1 THE YEMENI INITIATIVE

This project aimed to:

- Reduce conflict over land and water.
- Increase social cohesion through improving livelihood creation.
- Enhance the role of women and youth in natural resource management and conflict resolution mechanisms.

## 7.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

By building conflict resolution capacity and rehabilitating communal water sources, the project successfully increased access to irrigation water for local farmers in the two targeted governorates. The project also successfully provided immediate access to low-income, vulnerable households through providing work opportunities – thereby empowering these beneficiaries and curbing the imperative to engage in conflict over water resources.

### *How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Through rehabilitating community irrigation water infrastructure, increasing protection against recurrent floods that damage property and contribute to conflict over access to floodwater (for irrigation purposes).
- Improved community water resource management led to equitable access to much-needed water resources, increasing access and contributing to drought-resilient livelihood for 27,165 farmers in the two governorates targeted. This is a significant contribution, given that Yemen is currently facing a humanitarian crisis of the severest proportions and high levels of food insecurity leaving the majority of the population in need of humanitarian assistance.

### *How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity building?*

- Women took the lead in conflict resolution processes, and in negotiating agreements among local stakeholders on the rehabilitation of irrigation channels.
- A gender assessment conducted at the inception phase of the project found that women were largely excluded from WUAs, with all resource management decisions made by men. At completion, the project had established 14 women-headed Conflict Resolution Committees within each WUA, where women and men were equally represented. Additionally, 12 of the 14 WUAs had elected women to their Board of Directors.

## 7.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM YEMEN

The initiative represents a good example of the peaceful, equitable sharing of water resources that can be achieved through engaging a targeted, responsive approach to resource conflicts that have been the source of much hardship. Several of the water conflicts solved in the Yemeni capital had lasted multiple generations, spanning hundreds of years. Importantly, the project also empowered women as leaders in conflict resolution and natural resources management, with women acting as lead mediators in at least 15 of the conflict dispute resolution cases undertaken.

### *How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Women are often excluded from the processes outlined above, with their specific interests and needs remaining unaddressed. The skillsets of local women were thus leveraged to not only ensure that their voice was heard at the negotiating table, but also to produce fairer, more equitable outcomes for all.
- In the Yemeni context, the inclusion and leadership of women played a significant role in the overall success of mediation processes, as women are seen as non-partisan and unbiased. They thus possessed an advantage in approaching longstanding disputes and negotiating solutions involving a diverse set of stakeholders.

### *What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The gender empowerment component and the success in leveraging the unique role of women in conflict resolution and resource management. The project empowered women to be active decision-makers and peacebuilders in their communities, employing culturally-sensitive approaches.
- Project success came in a context where women face significant constraints on public participation, and as such has laid a foundation for inclusive, locally-based, gender-responsive peacebuilding.
- The participation and leadership of women contributed to the success of the conflict resolution mechanisms jointly negotiated, and agreements reached to design irrigation channels and undertake their rehabilitation to improve water access for all stakeholders, protect neighbouring dwellings and help prevent future conflict.
- Through increasing the availability of irrigation water, peaceful resource management and income generation, increased food production and greater prospects for vulnerable families have been achieved – at a time of severe food insecurity and loss of livelihood.



**Project success came in a context where women face significant constraints on public participation, and as such has laid a foundation for inclusive peacebuilding.”**

#### 7.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- The reaffirmed significance of women's participation and leadership in all stages of the project (design, implementation and management).
- The project demonstrated the importance of leveraging local human resources and expertise.
- WUAs disbanded following the outbreak of war were re-established, and these existing community water management structures leveraged for project success. This approach helped ensure that the project remained context-relevant throughout.

*What were the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- The project team faced initial opposition to engaging women in the project, from male members of the WUAs. This challenge was overcome through advocacy and meetings to discuss the importance of women's inclusion in community decision-making and how women can contribute to localized peace.

*How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- The project procured and donated equipment to support WUAs to ensure sustainability and continue maintenance work on the irrigation channels after the project ends. However, assessment of other activities that could be implemented would strengthen and increase the sustainability of the initiative.
- In expanding the scope of this intervention, it would be important to assess other areas where water conflicts are prominent and identify local stakeholders, such as WUAs, that can lead localized processes on conflict resolution and infrastructure development.

#### 7.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- The practice is suitable for replication elsewhere. However, it would be important to conduct a context and conflict analysis to identify other areas where water conflicts are prevalent, and are actively hindering access to water and efficient income generation.
- Context-responsive replication could also be underpinned by conducting a stakeholder analysis to identify which stakeholders should be engaged in the process, thereby ensuring a localized approach and thus a higher probability of the solutions proving sustainable.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- While this project worked through the WUAs, the relevant stakeholders may vary in accordance with prevailing structures and norms.
- Also specific to the prevailing local conditions, assessment should identify which stakeholders are excluded from resource management and decision-making processes (women and youth in the context of this project), and support their empowerment in accordance with the constraints on the ground.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- To promote the participation of women in this project, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) presented the case study of another project where women successfully led water conflict resolution processes and made a significant contribution to the project's success. Through learning from the earlier experience, the target group became more sensitized to the empowerment of women within their associations. This approach may be utilized in diverse settings and allow gains to be made in expanding and bolstering the role of women.
- The successes of this project and the precedents set can be shared with stakeholders in other projects to inform them of the significance and benefits of women's participation. ●

*Authors: David Arnold; Jacquelyn Pinat*

*Organizations: IOM Regional Office of the Middle East and North Africa; FAO Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa*



## .....● Briefing A: Gender Best Practices in Somali Flood Risk Management

*Somalia experiences two types of flooding: riverine floods and flash floods. Riverine floods occur along the Juba and Shabelle rivers in Southern Somalia, whereas flash floods are common along the intermittent streams in the northern and southern parts of the country. In the recent past, Somalia has experienced increasing severity and frequency of floods, resulting in human casualties and major economic damage. Serious consideration is now given to flood risk reduction by the respective authorities, enacting mitigation actions to save lives and property.*

*This briefing relates enhanced understanding achieved concerning the importance of the gender dimension in flood DRR training implemented in Somalia. The study and training related below were conducted in one of the highest flood risk districts in the state, and the testimony comes from a single mother with multiple minors living in one of the most vulnerable communities in the Beledweyne District in Central Somalia. The overall objective of the study was to understand whether gender issues have been adequately addressed in community planning on flood preparedness, risk reduction and the related consequences.*

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GENDER DIMENSION IN DRR FLOOD TRAINING**

The study undertaken showed that more women died than children or men, due to gender inequalities. When floods occur, the role of women as caregivers and mothers meant that they put the safety of their children and assets before their own survival. Furthermore, women spend most of their lives within the home and possess very limited experience concerning flood events. The training delivered thus put women at the centre of making communities more resilient to climate- and weather-related hazards as well as floods.

The success of the training shows that even in a cultural context where women play a very limited public role, this group can be supported to take on more important roles in reducing disaster risk, and helping their entire communities adapt to climate change. Disaster risk preparedness training on reducing women's vulnerabilities in this regard, such as facilitating the acquisition of new skills, access to information, and

increased disaster recovery capacity through early warning information, represent ways in which the targeted women have been able to adapt to the increased risk of flooding predicted.

For various reasons, women in Somalia are more vulnerable to the effects of floods than men. Among the driving factors behind this dynamic stand differences in employment status, income, gendered social roles, social norms and restrictions, and expected codes of behaviour. Even though the communities targeted experienced a significant reduction in the level of flood damages after the holding of many training and simulations, the impact on the community could be much greater if the training covered the gender aspects of flooding.

## ENHANCING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

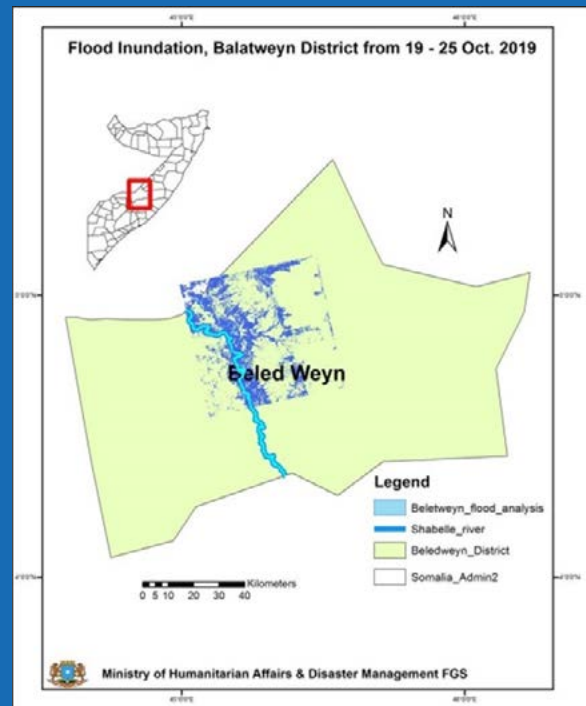
The involvement of local women in the trainings conducted increased their knowledge through information sharing and allowed a better understanding of their vulnerabilities and capacities – so that they might be addressed. By endorsing their participation, the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management was able to include women in the DRR training and empower this group to take on leadership positions and responsibilities for implementation. As floods become more frequent, it will be important for women to have structures in place that allow them to play an active role in mobilizing communities to reduce the impact of flooding.

### IFRAH DHAQANE, SINGLE MOTHER FROM BELEDWEYNE DISTRICT

Ifrah Dhaqane is a single mother with multiple minors. She owns a piece of land and a small herd of cattle in a village in Beledweyne District, a riverine, flood-prone district located in a low-lying flood plain in the Hiran region of Somalia. Ifrah was one of seven women and eighteen men who attended DRR flood training given by the Ministry of Humanitarian and Disaster Management in the district. The training sessions covered elements of community-based flood preparedness. For five days, Ifrah and her fellow participants learned about different techniques of flood risk management, how to prepare for such events, how to react following their occurrence, and where to go in pursuit of survival or to obtain help.

Recollecting the floods of October 2019, Ifrah said, “We didn’t know what to do before the training.” However, she realized that she could survive in a small shelter recently built for her family on higher ground. Following the evacuation, she decided to move to that piece of land, recently acquired in exchange for one of her cows, and that this was the only option available in case of flooding.

Ifrah thus moved to higher ground and when the rising water level of the nearby river started to threaten the village, she packed warm clothing, essential medication, valuables and important documents (such as the title to her land) in waterproof bags. She had also previously stored some seeds (maize and beans) below ground in the shelter built for her family.



Ifrah also set about mobilizing and sensitizing other villagers to help raise awareness within the community, while encouraging others to do the same. Some of her friends and neighbours have also built small shelters on the higher ground, which Ifrah has planned as a rescue site to which these people can evacuate prior to the banks of the nearby river being breached. Ifrah also learned the need for psychological support from the DRR flood training, so she is able to console those who lose loved ones and property due to flooding.

Ifrah Dhaqane is now recognized as a community-based intermediary for early warning information on flooding. Through a direct link with the National Multi-hazard Early Warning Center, Ifrah receives warnings and during the flooding season, she takes measures to save the lives of her family members and members of her community. The head of a household, Ifrah’s family and community now depend on her in every aspect when it comes to navigating floods, and she points out that buying that piece of high land was not a bad idea after all.

**Author: Khader Mohamed**  
**Organization: Government of Somalia**

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# Theme 2

Women  
on the Front Line  
in the Fight against  
COVID-19







## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has charged pre-existing volatile situations around the world, through the additional stress placed on fragile health care, political, and economic systems. As the international community continues to rally, women peacebuilders have mobilized to mitigate the threats arising in their local communities. While grassroots, women-led peacebuilding efforts have long been at the centre of creating and supporting sustainable peace, their work is often undertaken through informal or unofficial roles, with their contribution tending to go unrecognized as peacebuilding work, or documented as such.

This second Thematic Area focuses on women's roles at the core of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. It contains four case studies highlighting the impact of gender mainstreaming and the active engagement of women in COVID-19 prevention and response. Women across all levels of society are playing a key role in these areas, and the selected case studies provide national accounts of this, in the form of:

- An initiative aimed at **gender mainstreaming across Lebanon;**
- **The Together Against COVID-19 initiative in North West Tunisia,** encouraging and strengthening the participation of (rural) women in reducing COVID-19-related health risks;
- An initiative from the Dubai Police that shares the **success stories of women medical professionals on the front line** in the fight against the pandemic;
- A United Arab Emirates (UAE) initiative highlighting **the vital role women play in providing social services for the elderly.** • .....



## ● Case Study 8: Mainstreaming Gender in Disaster Risk Reduction in Lebanon

*Lebanon, a country marked by fragile stability, is exposed to a range of natural and “man-made” hazards, crises and disasters that lead to significant human and socio-economic losses. The impact of COVID-19 followed an unprecedented number of hazards experienced in the country, which had already reduced resilience and increased vulnerability, especially among groups that are marginalized in Lebanese society, such as women.*



**Starting date:** January 2020

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Lebanon, countrywide

**Participants:** Governmental actors at all levels

**Target audience:** Lebanese public, especially women

### **What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- The National Committee on the COVID-19 prevention and response is composed of at least 30 percent women, including key figures such as high-level government officials.
- Crisis operation rooms were activated and prevention and awareness campaigns targeted specific marginalized groups, including women.
- Several crisis operation rooms at the governorate and caza/district level are led by women, who act as focal points for all communities and localities.

- Women played a role in the working group established to develop, implement and monitor an effective, gender-responsive COVID-19 communications action plan.

### **8.1 THE LEBANESE INITIATIVE**

As men and women are affected differently by hazards and disasters – although both men and women both contribute to DRR, the COVID-19 response in Lebanon has looked to:

- Embed gender mainstreaming and the active engagement of women at the heart of national efforts on prevention and response to COVID-19.
- Ensure that women, across all levels, play a key role in tackling COVID-19 in Lebanon, in terms of preparedness and response to the pandemic.

## 8.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

Lebanon has been considered a role model for countries fighting COVID-19, as the undertaken measures have produced high levels of success.

### *How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Measures have resulted in limiting the spread of the pandemic and enhancing national and health resources for effective response.
- Establishment of the National Committee for COVID-19 prevention and response, composed of at least 30 percent women, to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and navigate the path forward.
- Crisis operation rooms set up across the country, aimed at ensuring effective COVID-19 response.

### *How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- The actions taken were the result of decisions made across all levels of governance, at the local, regional and national level, with women engaged in a central role at each level.
- Several of the crisis operation rooms at the governorate and district level are led by women.



**As women play an important role at various levels of Lebanese society, they have naturally been engaged to play an equally important role in DRR and enhancing resilience.”**

## 8.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM LEBANON

Embedding women's empowerment provides a robust underpinning for resilience-building efforts at the personal, household, community and national level. The host of recent disasters experienced in Lebanon have underlined the importance of localizing knowledge and efforts on DRR. Thus, women have featured at the centre of COVID-19 initiatives in the country, in line with the central role played by women in key governmental actors on DRR and within the local community.

### *How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- As women play an important role at various levels of Lebanese society, they have naturally been engaged to play an equally important role in DRR and enhancing resilience. This has been especially true in relation to increasing awareness on prevention and playing the role of first responders and decision makers.

### *What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Establishment of a gender-responsive working group to support risk communication, community engagement staff and responders to produce a communications action plan that helps to prepare and protect individuals, families and the public health during COVID-19.
- Content and information campaigns that have been effective in increasing awareness on COVID-19 safety measures, successfully targeted key segments of the population.
- Gender-responsive outputs that include response plans at various levels, safety continuity plans, and daily situation reports. ●

*Author: Karine Zoghby,  
UNDP Disaster Risk Management Unit  
at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Lebanon*

*Contributing Author: Iman Rafei, Local Government,  
Kaemakam Zgharta District, North Governorate*

*Organization: Government of Lebanon*



## ● Case Study 9: Together against COVID-19 – Tunisia

*The initiative formed part of system strengthening on local sanitation undertaken during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Activities centred on manufacturing or procuring items urgently needed on the front line, and on undertaking COVID-19 testing and awareness campaigns.*



**Dates:** March 2020 - November 2020

**Status:** Officially Completed (outputs continue to be produced in response to demand)

**Location:** Delegation of Ain Draham, Jendouba Governorate, North West Tunisia

**Participants:** Khir and Khemir association; German Embassy in Tunisia; Local public institutions (Ain Draham Hospital, Municipality of Ain Draham, Regional police stations)

**Target audience:** Rural women; General public; Women medical and paramedical Staff, Municipality agents and workers; Students; Elderly or pregnant women living in rural areas

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Rural women were engaged in reducing health risks related to the spread of COVID-19.
- Enhancing the ability of women medical officers and other front-line workers to contribute to COVID-19 response.
- Engaging the skills of women specialists to design and produce protective visors in locally established 'Fab Labs'.

- Harnessing the wealth of experience, skill, and speed of seamstresses operating in the target region to rapidly produce the necessary textile products.
- Women played a role in the working group established to develop, implement and monitor an effective, gender-responsive COVID-19 communications action plan.

### 9.1 THE NORTH WEST TUNISIAN INITIATIVE

The stated objectives of the initiative were to:

- Support the efforts of public structures on the front line in the fight against COVID-19.
- Raise awareness on the standards of protection and provide protective equipment to those at greatest risk, including women.

## 9.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The initiative reached its stated objectives and succeeded in bringing benefit to all parties involved while helping to curb the impact of COVID-19 in Tunisia.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Reduction of the spread of the pandemic within public institutions.
- Enhanced commitment of the local population and compliance with preventive measures.
- Reduced impact of COVID-19 through bolstering first-line public structures with the necessary equipment and protective gear: protective visors for front-line workers, uniforms for municipal workers, waterproof (and washable) mattress covers for hospital beds.
- Installation of control and disinfection booths in high schools, reducing the spread of the virus among students, thereby providing protection that extends to their families, educators and the wider community.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- A dozen women have been engaged in reducing the health risks posed by the spread of COVID-19, with women constituting 90 percent of participants in the various undertaken activities.
- Effective harnessing of the skillsets of rural women to offset the spread of the pandemic in the short term, while contributing to resilience know-how in the longer term.



**Harnessing the skillsets of rural women [helped] offset the spread of the pandemic in the short term, while contributing to resilience know-how in the longer term."**

## 9.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM NORTH WEST TUNISIA

The initiative has produced a number of outputs that have helped to fight the spread of the pandemic in Tunisia. Due to the practical nature of these results, they represent an ideal good practice that may prove useful for any region looking to emulate this success.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Based on the participatory approach – and aimed at strengthening the participation of women, rural women, in particular, were targeted to help reduce health risks related to the spread of COVID-19. In its first phase, the initiative applied the skills of local women specialists in the design and 3-D rendering of protective visors.
- Harnessing the skills of seamstresses in the targeted region to manufacture coveralls, washable bibs, waterproof bedcovers according to industry standard, on short notice.

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The high level of commitment and responsibility shown by participants, and the solidarity and good coordination among the project team and key partners.
- An increase in the level of responsibility and awareness of the local population on COVID-19, and on the importance of the initiative, including its role in reducing disaster health risks.
- The overall positive impact of the initiative through the implementation of sustainable actions to fight COVID-19 and strengthen the local health system.
- Strategically selected target groups were reached (90 medical staff; 50 municipality staff and workers; 350 students; 150 elderly or pregnant women living in rural areas), leading to impact that goes beyond these direct beneficiaries.

## 9.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Preservation helps reduce disaster risks.
- Participatory work and joint responsibility represent key DRR assets.

*What were the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- The vulnerability of the existing infrastructure and a lack of public health structures in the targeted rural areas has been overcome by strengthening the capacity of the local population on prevention measures.

*How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- The sustainability of this initiative is guaranteed by the commitment of the various actors; achieving a similar or increased level of commitment would help underpin success.



**Participatory work and joint responsibility represent key DRR assets.”**

## 9.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- By following the steps taken in North West Tunisia, this practice can be replicated in other critical health situations or in facing disasters, based on the participatory approach, and the transfer and sharing of good practices and skills necessary to reduce risk.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Strengthening of the technological unit (Fab Lab) would be advised, in order to continue the manufacture of protective visors and the sewing of bibs and protective gear. ●

*Author: Rouiti Manel*

*Organization: Association Khir Khemir pour Tourisme Alternatif et Développement Durable*



## ● Case Study 10: Appreciating White Hands Efforts in Combating COVID-19 – UAE

*This short initiative seized the opportunity to relate and disseminate success stories about women workers serving on the front line in the fight against COVID-19.*



**Starting date:** May 2020

**Status:** Completed

**Location:** Dubai Emirate, UAE

**Participants:** Women's Police Council; Dubai Police

**Target audience:** Women front-line workers; General public

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- As medical officers, working at the front line in the fight against COVID-19.
- As police officers and other women front-line workers, with the initiative implemented by

the Women's Police Council in solidarity with all women working at the front line in Dubai Emirate.

### 10.1 THE DUBAI EMIRATE INITIATIVE

The initiative had one central objective: Showcase and highlight the contribution of women front-line medical workers, underscoring their particular value and the efforts made specifically by this group.

## 10.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The initiative produced the desired results and the impact created by the action extended beyond the short time frame of implementation.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- By highlighting women's engagement in combating COVID-19.
- Underscoring the value of women front-line workers led to strengthening their efforts and stiffening their resolve to continue the fight against the pandemic.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- While helping to renew the efforts maintained by women workers currently on the front line, the initiative also provided strong role models for younger women to engage in DRR and resilience activities, including front-line work.
- Engendering an environment of gratitude proved conducive to fighting COVID-19 and building societal resilience.

## 10.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM DUBAI EMIRATE

This practice was deemed to have met its targets and have been of value as it successfully highlighted the efforts of women staff operating at the front line of the pandemic, working side by side with their male colleagues.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- The initiative provided encouragement that fostered positivity, generosity and even greater effort, engaging support for those women professionals fighting COVID-19 and thus helping to renew the fight against the pandemic.

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The recognition, motivation and supportive environment provided for women fighting COVID-19 at the front line.
- The high visibility placed on women front-line workers as role models, thereby providing a solid example for others in society and embedding encouragement and gratitude at the heart of the COVID-19 efforts in Dubai Emirate.



**The initiative provided strong role models for younger women to engage in DRR and resilience activities, including front-line work.”**

## 10.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- The importance of highlighting the roles played by women workers in general, and during crises in particular.

*How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- By undertaking a similar initiative on a larger scale. Initiatives engaged in or outside of the Dubai context would also likely benefit from such broader implementation.
- By uploading success stories on social media accounts.

## 10.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- As it has proven to be a very targeted and effective practice, the action undertaken can likely be reproduced whenever the opportunity arises and prevailing conditions allow.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Shine a brighter spotlight on women's achievements and harness their role in all fields of work, on an equal footing with men. ●

Organization: Dubai Police





## ● Case Study 11: “We Communicate and We Protect Service” – UAE

*As part of the COVID-19 response in UAE, an online service was created to register the local elderly population, covering both nationals and non-nationals alike. This group, which includes elderly women, is most at risk of severe consequences should they contract COVID-19, and could thus be effectively granted priority within the Command Center catering to their health demands during the pandemic, as well as allowing accurate location of their whereabouts.*



**Starting date:** 2020

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Dubai Emirate, UAE

**Participants:** UAE government services; Internal and external authorities for community development

**Target audience:** The elderly (citizens and non-citizen residents) – 11,800 registrants

### 11.1 THE DUBAI EMIRATE INITIATIVE

The objectives of the initiative were very focused:

- Effectively grant priority to elderly residents in receiving urgent services, including paramedic and health-care services.
- Foster cooperation between the relevant authorities to achieve the above goal.

## 11.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

This initiative helped in the quest to achieve the Good Governance Vision to care for the elderly, whether national or non-national, in the Emirate of Dubai, and serve this group with the highest level of care and risk protection during the COVID-19 pandemic.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- By enhancing the focus on the most at-risk group, who require special care and precautionary measures.
- The maintaining of an up-to-date database, which includes the location of elderly residents, allowed greater responsiveness to their (urgent) needs, thus mitigating the risk of COVID-19.
- Moral support and care provided to elderly women and men residents have helped to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on this high-risk population group.
- Applying precautionary and protective measures for the elderly in their home has not only reduced risk but has also lowered the level of strain potentially placed on services.
- The initiative helped prevent the spread of COVID-19 and apply preventive measures, boosting resilience to continue the fight against the pandemic.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- Women have contributed to following up on and overseeing the initiative, under the supervision of the female head of the Happiness and Positivity Council.

## 11.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM UAE

The initiative proved successful, meeting its stated objectives. Indeed, a direct follow-up initiative was launched following the completion of the implementation period.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- A comprehensive action plan for COVID-19-related initiatives focusing on employee psychological health has been put in place.

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The positive impact achieved: less than 60 elderly persons have been infected by COVID-19 in the target area.



**Moral support and care provided to elderly women and men residents has helped to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on this high-risk population group.”**

## 11.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Some groups require a special focus during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as psychological support.

*How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- The initiative only had access to a small number of participants at the government's services. This was overcome by adding different modules to help the target category.

## 11.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- The practice continues, which is a measure of its merit and suitability for replication. Proactive instructions on replication would provide a solid base for replication elsewhere.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Difficulty in online linking to different stakeholders so as to include all categories and update the elderly database.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of women needs to be central to the psychological support provided to different groups in society. This was evident in the support provided to the elderly and the follow-up undertaken on their cases. ●

Organization: Government of UAE

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# Theme 3

Gender  
Mainstreaming  
for Sustainable  
Development





## Abstract

The importance of gender mainstreaming for sustainable development is highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The full participation and equal involvement of women are needed to achieve the three pillars of the SDGs: environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, and social sustainability. Theme III of this best practices document thus highlights several examples of women's strong will and hands-on leadership, brought to **eight initiatives** aimed at sustainable development.

The first such initiative concerns the contribution of women to scientific research aimed at **reducing earthquake risk in Algeria**. The second initiative concerned the **engagement of girls and women at the local level to introduce a forage crop in southern Mauritania**, with the goal of facilitating transformational leadership and economic empowerment. There then follows an outline of a case study that successfully undertook **awareness-raising among women and girls in Iraq on DRR for sustainable development**. The fourth case study in this theme relates a **risk-awareness project for housewives and school students implemented in Jordan**.

The second half of case studies that fall under the Thematic Area of sustainable development is opened by a depiction of two initiatives in the Gaza Strip, State of Palestine: Case Study 16 on **utilization of innovative digital tools by young women to create safe and accessible public spaces** and Case Study 17 on **women's role in achieving sustainable societies and promoting human rights**. The penultimate sample case study of this theme involved **awareness-raising among Mauritanian women on their participation in the development process**, including environmental disaster risk reduction. Theme III is concluded by a depiction of efforts on **gender equality and women's empowerment among smallholders in Upper Egypt** and a briefing from Egypt underscoring the importance of **gender mainstreaming in water sector management**. •.....



Photo: University of Chlef

## ● Case Study 12: Women's Research Contribution to Reducing Earthquake Risk in Algeria

*This long-running initiative has aimed to contribute to the reduction of earthquake risk in Algeria, training future executives through teaching and supervision, launching multiple research projects, and establishing a research laboratory.*



**Starting date:** 2005

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Chlef, North-West Algeria

**Participants:** University of Chlef

**Target audience:** Academics; Postgraduate students

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Increasing the role of women in the engineering fields related to disaster and boosting the input of women in future developments in these fields.
- Embedding a gender balance in the various academic programmes offered, producing cohorts that contain a large number of highly trained women graduates.

### 12.1 THE ALGERIAN INITIATIVE

The stated objectives of the project have been to:

- Train academics to train executives in the fields of public and industrial research, providing regional human resources specialized in construction that reduces seismic risks.
- Training of senior (master's and doctoral level) executives intended for research centres and universities.

## 12.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The initiative has achieved an impact on multiple levels, with the training delivered ensuring more effective intervention on the disaster.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Undertaking an 'Earthquake Engineering' master's degree meant graduates, including many women, passed the national competition and continued to doctoral level, advancing the level of expertise available for disaster and climate risk reduction.
- Advancement of the broader academic discourse in the field, through various national publications and articles in international journals from programme participants, including several of the women trained.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- The role of women as head postgraduate trainers has encouraged many women studying at the undergraduate level to continue to postgraduate level; many of whom have now become trainers themselves.
- Access to education and knowledge has enabled Algerian women to step outside the solitary role of mother to actively address the disaster and climate issues faced, increasing the capacity of their local community to identify, mitigate and respond.

## 12.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM NORTHERN IRAQ

The Algerian experience in reduction of natural hazards and technological disaster risk began after the El Asnam earthquake (1980), with efforts significantly enhanced following mass flooding in Algiers (2001) and the Boumerdes earthquake (2003). During this time, deep insight into the effective management and mitigation of disaster has been gained, and built upon in the recent training, teaching and research initiatives. Much of that which has been developed and learned could be applicable in contexts beyond Algeria.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Women were empowered to assert themselves in society and express their needs and demonstrate their skills in both approaching the risks associated with disasters and the acquisition and transfer of knowledge through specialized training.



**Access to education and knowledge has enabled Algerian women to step outside the solitary role of mother to actively address the disaster and climate issues faced."**

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Development of valuable human potential and high-level technical expertise. Several courses in DRR have been taught, with prestigious master's and doctoral programmes established to deepen capacity.
- Implementation of research projects aimed at better assimilating and reducing seismic risk in compliance with international standards, preserving human lives and public goods.
- The training provided has produced research theses and publications for scientific journals, as well as participation in national and international scientific events.
- Launch of sectoral and intersectoral research programmes aimed at reducing major risks, as well as policy change and official programmes in the field.
- Embedding and reinforcement by new officers of a large number of institutions and specialized establishments.



Photo: University of Chlef

## 12.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Women's engagement in disaster prevention and DRR management can be swiftly enhanced once the underpinning policy and implementation path for official programmes are in place.
- Once women have received the relevant training, they are able to constructively contribute to research centres and institutions operating in the field.
- Engaging women's strong will and determination can produce powerful impact, in this case leading to a significant number of girls and women embracing the project aims and enacting change.

*How can this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- Through support for women's associations encouraging member involvement in DRR activities, establishing DRR research within universities, and participation in national and international scientific events for knowledge/experience acquisition and exchange.
- Strengthening off intersectoral approaches in the implementation of national policy to reduce major risks could bring increased strength. Ways of achieving this include informing the public, especially women, on the major risks and practical right of intervention; encouraging girls and women to undertake training and research on major risk reduction; and involving more women in projects aimed at reducing major risks.



**Women's engagement in disaster prevention and DRR management can be swiftly enhanced once the underpinning policy and implementation path for official programmes are in place."**

## 12.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Through generalization of teaching related to the reduction of major risks, making it possible to train the appropriate HR to prevent and manage such risks.
- By launching sectoral and intersectoral research programmes aimed at improving risk management through the assessment of hazards and vulnerabilities.
- Through creating a document similar to the 2011 National Delegation for Major Risks produced in Algeria, assigning responsibility for the coordination and evaluation of activities undertaken within the framework of the national system for the prevention of major risks.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- The difficulty women face in juggling their participation in and contribution to wider society and care responsibilities within the family.
- Insufficient financial resources for improving or intensifying major risk reduction activities.
- Insufficient or complete lack of access to high-level expertise for women.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Encourage women to acquire specialized training aimed at reducing major risks.
- Empower women for the proper management of major risks as part of national policy.
- Make funding available to achieve the objectives set out at (every) project launch. ●

*Author: Zamila Harichane*

*Organization: University of Chlef*



## ● Case Study 13: Fodder Production for Women's Resilience and Leadership on Climate Change – Mauritania

*This initiative focused on the introduction of fodder cultivation (cowpea and maralfalfa) as an innovative activity to mitigate the impact of pastureland shortage, due to recurring drought. The programme successfully created the necessary conditions to immerse women in the role of active participant in ensuring the resilience of their communities, having a significant positive impact on the situation of women in the region.*



**Location:** Southern Mauritania

**Participants:** Spanish Cooperation; Oxfam and its partners (AMAD, APLV, ROSA)

**Target audience:** Local women farmers; Milk processors; Market gardeners; Youth groups

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Women as active farmers, receiving fodder seed and instruction on producing valuable fodder.
- Women as pillars of the local community, who can be constructively engaged to bolster community resilience and encourage more expansive roles for local women.

### 13.1 THE MAURITANIAN INITIATIVE

Giving priority to actions that mainly target women and young people, the objectives of the initiative were:

- Strengthen the transformational leadership of women at the local level.
- Enhance women's economic empowerment, through the introduction of a fodder crop.



### 13.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

During lean periods or years of drought, (particularly) poor households decapitalize their livestock due to lack of pasture. Thus, the production of fodder would make it possible to produce livestock feed for these periods, while allowing household income diversification. Successful implementation has led to an increase in milk production and processing capacity, generating income and increasing the purchasing power of communities, especially women and young people (through the sale of fodder). This also has produced spillover effects, as a relatively good yield of fodder makes it possible to stabilize – or even lower – the prices of other (supplementary) products.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Alternative grazing has been secured, limiting the consequences of drought.
- Optimized use of the (sustainable) resources available.
- Successfully limiting the transhumance of livestock and increasing production.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- Boosting the availability of dairy products during periods of drought, reducing child malnutrition, and thus bolstering resilience.
- The processing of milk in 'mini-dairies' has boosted the economic empowerment of the women targeted, strengthening their capacity to face disaster and climate challenges.
- Advocacy work to raise levels of inclusion and representativeness in consultative and organizational structures has increased resilience.
- Engaging women on the local level has led to adoption by private/public actors of approaches pioneered by the project, and their official promotion in state agricultural programmes/policies.

### 13.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM MAURITANIA

This success achieved by the action has meant that it has already been emulated by other states in the subregion, and has made it possible to undertake subsequent actions, such as the creation of the aforementioned mini-dairies. In fact the development of the fodder production sector has had a multiplier effect on mini-dairies, particularly through its contribution to stabilizing the number of dairy cows available and compensating for the seasonality of milk production.



**Engaging women on the local level has led to adoption by private/public actors of approaches pioneered by the project.”**

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- As the action focused on various overlapping areas, its success drew on women's skills in each of these areas. This in turn led to strong outputs, which stand as the product of engaging women's skills to address risk and develop resilience, as well as the strengthening of these skillsets.
- Engaging the business acumen of the targeted women led to an increase in their income and thus a reduction in risk and increased resilience.

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Production of fodder means livestock feed during pastoral lean periods, at a reduced cost, and allows producers to diversify their income through marketing and selling (surplus) fodder.
- Stabilizing the number of dairy cows available during periods of drought.
- Facilitating small-scale milk production and processing capacity, thereby generating income and increasing the purchasing power of local communities, especially women and young people.
- Advocacy of small-scale actions at the local level has led to the promotion of fodder crops within state agricultural programmes and policies. Fodder perimeters are currently being set up by both state and private sector actors in Mauritania.

### 13.4 LESSONS LEARNED

#### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Engaging the endeavour and practical skill of farming women on the small scale can produce a significant impact in multiple realms of risk reduction and resilience-building.
- If appropriately planned and piloted, modest local community efforts can result in spillover affecting the national level, and the wider subregion.

#### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- Both building on and applying the experiences of this project within a wider spectrum can be facilitated by sharing the initiative via appropriate platforms, such as the [Climate Change portal](#).

### 13.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

#### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- In similar contexts, success could be achieved through facilitating exchange visits, the sharing of technical sheets and capitalization worksheets on the initiative.

#### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- The need for irrigation water is integral to the future success or further expansion of the initiative.
- Lack of land available for large-scale cultivation may present a constraint. ●

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## ● Case Study 14: National-Level Awareness-Raising and Training on Disaster Risk Reduction – Iraq

Implementation of this initiative focused on raising awareness and delivering training programmes on the importance of disaster risk governance and establishing sound institutional arrangements to support DRR efforts. This took place at the national level and activities such as undertaken looked to impart an understanding of the disaster risks prevailing in Iraq, and the three-phased disaster management process in place.



**Status:** Completed

**Location:** Iraq

**Participants:** Ministry of Health and Environment; Other government ministries/agencies; Environmental stakeholders

**Target audience:** DRR workers

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Women played an important role in the dissemination and application of the programmes.
- Women are both the trainers and the trainees targeted by the implementation.

### 14.1 THE IRAQI INITIATIVE

Among the specific objectives of the initiative were:

- Encourage expedited achievement of Target E of the Sendai Framework Global Targets, to develop a national DRR strategy, and foster a better understanding of Sendai Framework monitoring.
- Train participants on systematic, accurate collection and recording of data and national institutions on national database implementation and strengthening synergy on data collection/exchange.
- Ensure involvement of women in the dissemination and application of the training programmes, and all aspects of their delivery – as both trainers and trainees.

- Raise awareness of women and girls on disaster risks and community preparedness mechanisms.
- Strengthen capacity to develop chronological, spatial, and situational analysis based on database methodology, and showcase this methodology to link the expected extreme climate change indicators with disaster losses indicators.
- Facilitate sensitization on coping with disasters and preparation of statistical reports.
- Identify priority future steps towards implementing the Sendai Framework in Iraq for the 2018–2020 period.
- Use databases within the internationally funded project proposals to offset and address damages and losses due to extreme climate change events.

## 14.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The initiative achieved its stated objectives, making a significant contribution to the DRR discourse in Iraq. A tangible increase in the level of engagement, knowledge, technical expertise applied in the field has also been achieved.

### *How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Through education and sensitization of DRR workers on international practices in the field and relevant programmes have been delivered, boosting professional performance.
- By identifying risks and developing national and local strategies to reduce loss and damage.
- Via awareness-raising on threats faced and calculation of loss and damage.

### *How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- Through women's participation in providing logistical support and in the role of trainers in the programmes delivered.
- Via coordination and facilitation of communication among the various state institutions and joint teamwork.



**Engaging targeted women resulted in increased knowledge on DRR and potential risks, alongside practical know-how to protect their children and family should such risks transpire.”**

## 14.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM IRAQ

The gendered aspects of the initiative proved particularly successful, significantly contributing to the overall impact of the actions undertaken.

### *How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Engaging targeted women resulted in increased knowledge on DRR and potential risks, alongside practical know-how to protect their children and family should such risks transpire.
- By sharing women's knowledge of potential risks with men, helping to prevent them from arising.
- By drawing from the experiences of the trainers through their work in this programme and imparting these skills to the targeted groups.

### *What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The high level of coordination between ministries and governorates and the nominating of suitable persons to participate in the programme.
- The creation of technical teams in all governorates and impactful work towards implementing this programme.

#### 14.4 LESSONS LEARNED

##### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- By diligently implementing the programme content, loss and damage caused by disasters that Iraq is exposed to have been reduced.

##### *What were the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- The lack of financial allocations presented a challenge not overcome during the course of project implementation.
- The lack of information available on other countries' experiences constituted a further challenge that remained outstanding.

##### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- Strengthening could be achieved by all stakeholders cooperating to provide financial allocations and build capacity (sharing available learning on the experiences of other countries).

#### 14.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

##### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- By applying the same programme in different fields, and with the same mechanisms used by the project team.

##### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- The tribal system.
- Lack of a broader approach to women's freedom of movement, and the injustice which women are subjected to concerning (limited access to) leadership and education.

##### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Provide safe livelihoods and other alternatives, such as the enactment of supporting laws, legislations and decisions in this regard. ●

*Organization: Government of Iraq*



## ● Case Study 15: Risk Awareness Project for Women Working in the Home and School Students – Jordan

The Civil Defense Directorate implemented an array of sensitization programmes, initiatives and activities that will educate each sector of society and raise DRR awareness in a way that enriches the concept of awareness. These interventions also aim to facilitate total readiness to cope with any accidents that may arise, in order to mitigate the damage to the extent possible and shape a society that is more cognizant of climate risks.



**Status:** Completed

**Location:** Jordan

**Participants:** EU; Civil Defense Directorate

**Target audience:** Women working in the home; School students; Teachers; Women's associations; People with special needs (and their families and caregivers)

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- As key players in providing information on combating and mitigating risk, with women members of the Civil Defense Directorate commissioned to deliver key lectures.
- The target audience of this project included large segments of society, mainly women, who play a significant and fundamental role in mitigating risk in the home.
- As builders of awareness on how disaster risks can be addressed across the wider community.

### 15.1 THE JORDANIAN INITIATIVE

The central objective of this initiative was to raise awareness on DRR among the target audience. This overarching aim was served by:

- Holding awareness-raising lectures that imparted knowledge in a hands-on manner.
- Publication of materials aimed at guiding and educating the target audience on both DRR and household risks.

## 15.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The risk awareness project was implemented in cooperation with the Programme for Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-made Disaster, enhancing awareness of household risks and how to avoid them. Women played a paramount role in implementing this project, delivering instruction, whether in a theoretical or practical manner, through hands-on rescue lectures that showcased procedures for dealing with injuries in case of exposure to potential household risks.

### How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?

- Through contributing to raising the levels of disaster and climate risk awareness and theoretical knowledge, as well as practical know-how, among the target groups.

### How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?

- Engagement of women through the provision of DRR instruction responsive to the prevailing needs of the individual, the household and the wider community has led to increased capacity at each of these levels.
- Dissemination of a number of educational and instructional products providing guidance on DRR has facilitated success. Several of these products now stand as sources of reference within the home or act as platforms for engaging children on disaster and climate risk topics.



## 15.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM JORDAN

The gendered aspects of the initiative have proven successful, and significantly contributed to overall impact. It is noteworthy that, in order to achieve the principle of sustainability, this awareness programme was once again implemented through the EU twinning project. Moreover, the risk and disaster awareness-raising process is one of the periodic and basic programmes presented during day-to-day civil defense work.

### How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?

- The skills of women learned in the particular home environment were leveraged to reduce risk and build resilience within that household.
- The skills of a diverse cross-section of women were harnessed to build resilience and reduce risk, including students, teachers and caregivers.

### What are the main success factors of this initiative?

- Increased awareness of DRR within multiple sections of the community.
- Publication of engaging educational products that have led to heightened awareness.
- The initiative contributed to the integration of women into the DRR area, providing and receiving information and building awareness to reduce risk.

## 15.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### What are the lessons learned from this practice?

- The sensitization programmes and lectures delivered may be widely welcomed and supported by the targeted audience, as occurred in this case.
- The lynchpin of successful implementation has been the practical nature of the educational products delivered.
- Targeting the most vulnerable groups in society has contributed to reducing the amount of damage caused by disasters and day-to-day accidents.

## 15.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

### How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?

- Such awareness-raising projects can contribute to increased DRR awareness among women, and their integration into the field. However, this is best achieved by taking into account and adapting to prevailing local conditions. ●

Organization: Government of Jordan



# ● Case Study 16: Young Women Utilize Innovative Digital Tools to Create Safe and Accessible Public Spaces in the Gaza Strip – State of Palestine

*The initiative aimed to contribute to the fulfillment of the human rights of women and youth while increasing participation in post-conflict reconstruction and recovery. This was achieved by supporting the development of public spaces, ensuring gender sensitivity and inclusiveness of marginalized groups such as IDPs and female heads of households.*



**Dates:** January 2017 – December 2018

**Status:** Completed

**Location:** Al-Shoka, Beit Lahia, and Al-Zawayda municipalities, Gaza Strip, State of Palestine

**Participants:** Belgian Development Cooperation; United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People (SHSPPP); Palestinian Housing Council; GGateway; Aisha Association

**Target audience:** Local community, especially young women

## **What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- As staff members of local councils in conflict-affected areas; young women architects, and marginalized communities, especially those traditionally underrepresented, including women

and youth. Women made up over 50 percent of beneficiaries.

- As playing a vital role in creating safe and accessible public spaces to improve their built environment, and various activities aimed at enhancing women's civic participation and awareness of their rights.
- As women architects receiving training on various gender topics; with some beneficiaries offered job placements to acquire profile-enhancing skills and expertise.
- As women architects receiving training on using video gaming as a tool to engage community members in the design of public spaces, subsequently playing a role in implementing the chosen design and holding workshops for the community (of which 50 percent of participants were women).
- As women youth involved in the municipal decision-making process on the selection and layout of public spaces, and onsite activities.



## 16.1 THE (FIRST) GAZAN INITIATIVE

The specific objectives of the programme can be summarized as follows:

- Build the capacity of female and male youth and adolescents on civic participation, human rights and digitalization.
- Develop safe and accessible public spaces for women and youth in an inclusive and gender-responsive manner.
- Build the capacity of women and men working for local councils or other entities, and architecture and planning students on gender-inclusive spatial planning, human rights and digitalization.
- Increase institutional and professional capacity among responsible entities on safe and accessible public spaces, information sharing and utilizing digital technology.
- Change attitudes and behaviour on the right of women and girls to enjoy public spaces free from violence.

## 16.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The specific achievements and overall impact of the programme have become evident in several ways. These span the short-term encouragement given to local women to participate more fully in the civic setting to deeper shifts in the approach to public space design in the Gaza Strip.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- The newly constructed public spaces conveniently link locations, making it easier and more attractive to move around by foot, bicycle, or other forms of eco-friendly, non-motorized mobility, thereby reducing carbon emissions and reliance on fossil fuels.
- Public spaces are critical for environmental sustainability and the green spaces reduce carbon emissions via absorption; environmental considerations were heeded during each stage of the creation process.
- Environmentally-friendly solutions, such as the use of renewable resources, were adopted in designing and constructing the public spaces.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- Young women took full part in the decision-making, leadership and planning processes, their participation helping to yield more sustainable design ideas and models for the public spaces.

- Engagement improved and harnessed women's knowledge, experience, and energy in creating safe and accessible public spaces that enhance community resilience and improve well-being.

## 16.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE GAZA STRIP

The video game Minecraft was used to facilitate engagement of women youth in the design and implementation of safe and accessible public spaces, providing an opportunity to make informed decisions to improve their built environment and enhance community well-being. Moreover, utilizing digital applications enhanced women's access to knowledge on protection against violence.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Women youth received different training sessions/tools that enhanced their ability to actively participate in creating safe public spaces. Women's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) skills were leveraged to develop Minecraft models that formed the cornerstone for the design of public spaces.
- The women architects targeted utilized their knowledge and ICT skills to translate the Minecraft model into a viable design and assist the local municipality in designing other projects.
- The project team harnessed the knowledge and ideas of women youths to develop online applications via 30 workshops on the application functionality and services.

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Successful utilization of ICT technologies to boost human rights and engage young women in the planning decision-making process.
- Utilizing different tools to disseminate results achieved and motivate youth to develop their network (e.g., through social media groups, workshops, campaigns).
- Establishment of a Programme Steering Committee, comprising representatives from UN agencies and local partners.
- Maximizing the number of targeted youth who benefited from training and information sessions, and the number of people using the online applications while motivating youth to assist their local government in improving the built environment.
- The high level of coordination achieved and the integration of monitoring and evaluation into the project design helped to produce high-quality results in a timely manner, building on the lessons learned from each site and sharing and exchanging knowledge between partners.

## 16.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Public participation can be assured at the early stage of project activities to minimize conflict, facilitate the implementation process and bring an enhanced sense of ownership. As a result, the social and economic sustainability of the project is maintained.
- The participatory approach has proven that bringing local government and local communities together is critical to aligning municipal strategies with community needs and requirements, helping to bridge the gap between these two entities and strengthen participatory governance.

### *What were the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Focusing on youth and women's participation in recovery planning and implementation had proven challenging in the Gazan context and the project represented an opportunity for much-needed development in this regard. The programme thus employed a bottom-up approach that started with conceptualization and resulted in establishing safe spaces in an inclusive manner, wherein youth and women feel a sense of ownership and pride.
- In targeting youth and adolescents who face systematic social marginalization and a loss of purpose, partners had to ensure that community activities were appealing and engaging, if participant commitment was to be sustained throughout each phase of the programme.
- Many community members were hesitant to participate in activities, which could have negatively affected the degree to which the public spaces reflected the community needs and requirements, and the prevailing sense of ownership. Information sessions and effective coordination and collaboration between all actors served as the vehicles for overcoming this challenge.
- A number of mitigation measures were undertaken to ensure that project implementation successfully navigated the complex technical requirements of the Gazan context.



**Bringing local government and local communities together is critical to aligning municipal strategies with community needs and requirements.”**

### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- During the design of public spaces, participants should represent all community segments, encompassing differing needs and leading to responsive public spaces that meet the needs of all.
- Strong collaboration with municipalities, local councils and community-based organizations (CBOs) is required to ensure proper targeting and inclusion of the youth and women selected.
- The public spaces should perform a variety of purposes (other than public gardens) and respond to needs highlighted by youth and women during the gender assessments.
- The programme focused on digitalization and ICT, particularly supporting new approaches with regard to women's participation in ICT-based incubators and businesses. The success achieved would suggest that this aspect might be drawn upon to an even greater extent in future initiatives.

## 16.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Disseminate positive results and outputs achieved through various tools: workshops, brochures, media campaigns, etc.
- Conduct study and analysis on the context of the targeted localities to identify the optimal tools for community engagement.
- Identify existing capacity and skills in the targeted localities, and all relevant stakeholders that may affect the planning process, thereby ensuring a smooth process.
- Maintain a high level of coordination with key actors, especially community members.
- Engage community members in identifying the appropriate type of public space, based on their needs and priorities, and in selecting the optimal site.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- The scarcity of public land owned by municipalities.
- Lack of interest among local government in investing in the creation of public spaces, as these actors tend to prioritize investment in other areas.
- Prevailing socio-economic conditions affecting community willingness to participate in the decision-making process, due to a lack of trust in local government.
- A political situation that is not conducive to implementing participatory initiatives.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Utilize different types of media campaigns to motivate women and maximize their participation.
- Identify the factors that hinder/decrease participation (e.g., social and economic factors), and then utilize available resources to address those factors.
- Maximize the availability of resources that facilitate women's participation (i.e., location, time, and provision of transportation).
- Assign one or more women leaders to help improve coordination and hence produce more active participation. ●

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## ● Case Study 17: Women Lead the Way for Sustainable Development in the Gaza Strip

*The Participatory Spatial Planning Programme was successfully implemented, with both normative and operational actions undertaken. These efforts included revision of relevant policies at the local and regional levels and implementation of good practices. The overall aim of the programme was to strengthen local and national institutions active in spatial planning to support the provision of basic services in a transparent and accountable manner.*



**Dates:** November 2015 – June 2019

**Status:** Completed

**Location:** 8 municipalities in the Gaza Strip, State of Palestine

**Participants:** Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; SHSPPP; State of Palestine ministries; Local NGOs

**Target audience:** Community members, especially women and girls

### **What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- The programme directly targeted marginalized communities, especially those segments of society traditionally underrepresented, including women and girls (62 percent of those targeted).

- Women, traditionally excluded from the decision-making process at all levels, were engaged in various roles, as:
  - Recipients of legal and technical training and sessions related to HLP rights and urban planning, including best practices;
  - Contributors to identifying the top priority interventions in different development sectors, reflected in the master and detailed plans;
  - Actors empowered to make decisions in tangent with local authorities on how to shape their neighbourhoods, through active participation in community representative committees.

## 17.1 THE (SECOND) GAZAN INITIATIVE

In pursuit of the main aim, several specific objectives guided the work of the programme:

- Strengthen the capacity of local and national institutions for the provision of participatory, transparent, and accountable urban and spatial planning.
- Increase the participation of women and men in selected municipalities in spatial planning processes.
- Improve municipal capacity to conduct and monitor participatory spatial planning, including on the requisite business processes and the technical skills of staff.
- Enhance community social cohesion through participatory neighbourhood and municipal spatial planning processes.
- Build intra-governmental and government-citizen collaboration through participatory spatial planning processes at the neighbourhood and municipal levels.
- Development and approval of municipal and neighbourhood design plans.



**Women took full part in the decision-making, leadership and planning processes, helping to develop ideas and methods in response to climate and DRR. This led to responsive design plans that enhance community resilience.”**

## 17.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The overall impact of the programme has been seen on multiple levels, producing a very visible change in the targeted communities, while also enacting change at a root level.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Through developing design plans that address biodiversity, water scarcity, and decreasing availability of agricultural land and green areas, establishing roles and regulations to mitigate risk.
- Planning adopted measures that help to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions by reducing urban congestion through, for example, promoting compact, high-density and mixed-use development.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- Women took full part in the decision-making, leadership and planning processes, helping to develop ideas and methods in response to climate and DRR. This led to responsive design plans that enhance community resilience to climate change and disaster.
- The programme reached many women, especially those marginalized in society, through various gender mainstreaming efforts. The resulting increase in local capacity can be seen in various features:
  - Women make up at least one-third of community representative committees, and at least half of the participants at focus group discussions on priority identification and information sessions on good governance;
  - Facilitating women in identifying their top priority projects has led to these priorities being reflected in the master and detailed plans developed for local infrastructure;
  - Pre- and post-surveys, developed to measure community members' capacity to engage in decision-making as part of spatial planning processes, showed that this capacity increased from 35 percent to 87 percent (with women comprising 59 percent of those polled).

### 17.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE GAZA STRIP

The initiative has proven successful, and women's involvement has represented the lynchpin in this achievement. This holds true for all levels of the initiative, from each of the activities undertaken within the targeted communities to the broader impact seen across the Gaza Strip.

#### *How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- The role played by women in the community meant that their involvement as a key partner increased the credibility of the design plans developed, as being more responsive to the needs of the community. This also contributed to improved collaboration between community members and local governments, resulting in conducive trust-building.
- The time, energy and goodwill of women in the targeted localities were harnessed through different training tools for enhancing their ability to actively participate in responsive spatial planning.
- The voice of women as heard in the focus groups held led to accurately identifying the most urgent local needs and priorities; women subsequently undertook central tasks in validating the plans developed and approving the final drafts. Their participation was key to building consensus for change towards more sustainable development, leading to good governance.

#### *What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The comprehensive community engagement process facilitated, based on an active and inclusive participatory approach, with full representation of women, men, adolescents, the elderly and the disabled. This took the form of, inter alia, awareness-raising, public meetings, focus groups, surveys at community level, technical assistance and workshops.
- Establishment of the Municipal Technical Support Centre, a 'one-stop shop' for information on and coordination of municipal/neighbourhood spatial planning, facilitating discussion among project partners, coordination of activities, and the enhanced role of the community in the local government planning process.
- The maintaining of a high level of coordination with all actors, including implementing partners, local governments, and community members.
- The development of highly responsive design plans approved by community members and local governments, considered a cornerstone for building a sustainable society that remains resilient in the face of adverse political, economic, and social change.

### 17.4 LESSONS LEARNED

#### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- There is a need to implement top priority projects to rebuild community trust, which in turn can improve local government-community collaboration and increase community willingness to participate in planning.
- Municipality representatives should inform major real estate owners in the targeted neighbourhoods on the purpose of the project, ensuring a smooth legal process and minimizing the number of objections.
- Continuous coordination and follow-up with municipality staff is necessary to take into consideration and reflect any changes in master and detailed plans.
- Members of the municipal council should be engaged early on in the planning process, to avoid having to make changes to design plans at a later stage.
- Spatial planners should analyse the norms, mentalities and social attitudes prevailing in targeted communities, applying tools and methods that work within this context, thereby ensuring effective and successful participatory spatial planning processes.

#### *What were the main challenges that the initiative encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Low levels of local community trust in local and governmental institutions, due to their lack of involvement in the planning and implementation processes, has been overcome by:
  - Establishing community representative committees as key partners in the planning process;
  - Holding information sessions, in each municipality, to clarify and promote the community's role in the planning process;
  - Dissemination of posters and brochures in Arabic to increase public participation;
  - Reflecting the vision and priorities of local communities in planning proposals.
- Local planning/building regulations constituted an obstacle. This challenge was overcome by proposing new land use categories, reflected in the master plan proposals developed.
- The use of outdated local maps was navigated by updating and adjusting the maps based on satellite imagery and onsite visits and discussions with municipalities and government ministries.



**The role played by women in the community meant that their involvement as a key partner increased the credibility of the design plans developed, as being more responsive to the needs of the community.”**

- Lack of local interest in planning projects was overcome by holding sessions with local groups to highlight benefits, show good practices in different areas and motivate residents to develop their neighbourhood. Meetings were also conducted with people holding familial power ('Mukhtars') to encourage participation.
- The lack of information on property ownership, residents and facilities was mitigated by updating maps to accurately reflect the current situation and the latest data. Meetings were also held with the respective officials, and surveys used to update the base map of each municipality.

## 17.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Disseminate positive results and outputs achieved.
- Employ locale-specific study and analysis to identify the most appropriate tools for community engagement.
- Identify all stakeholders that may affect the planning process, in pursuit of a smooth process.
- Identify those capacities and skills that already exist within the local community.
- Ensure a high level of coordination with key actors, especially among community representatives.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Absence of a political will and insufficient engagement of local authorities may result in rejection of plans by the community and/or government, making the plans redundant.
- Testing socio-economic conditions may affect the willingness of community members to participate in the decision-making process, linked to a prevailing lack of trust in local government.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Identify factors hindering broad participation by women, such as social and economic factors, and utilize available resources to address those factors.
- Facilitate women's participation by using available means, holding events at convenient venues and times, and providing transportation to events.
- Assigning at least one woman leader will make for better coordination, and hence more active participation. ●

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## ● Case Study 18: Women for Development – Mauritania

*Engaging women in the continuous fight against drought that must be waged in Mauritania formed the underpinning basis for project implementation.*



**Starting Date:** 2020

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Hodh El Gharbi State, Laayoune City, and Atwil and Tamishkat municipalities, Mauritania

**Participants:** Local women (self-funded)

**Target audience:** Women from rural and urban areas

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Women are targeted for participation in cleaning and tasks related to water (provision of water to vulnerable households) and distribution (provision of blankets).
- Women's participation occurred within the frame of sensitization campaigns on preventing the spread of COVID-19.

### 18.1 THE MAURITANIAN INITIATIVE

The central objective of the project was to:

- Raise awareness among women on the importance of participating in the development process, including in regard to environmental DRR and the COVID-19 pandemic.





**By fostering among local women a culture of house tree planting and ensuring cleanliness of the local environment, residents are better able to adapt to climate phenomena affecting Mauritania.”**

### 18.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The risk of drought is endemic to Mauritania and presents a continuous challenge at all levels of society. The initiative, therefore, aims at raising awareness among women to cope with drought in ways that are well-suited to the prevailing conditions.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- By increasing the level of knowledge among women on providing water and food via local means.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- By fostering among local women culture of house tree planting and ensuring the cleanliness of the local environment, making residents better able to adapt to climate phenomena affecting Mauritania.
- Women's political participation and presence at all levels of development and areas of service provision (sanitation, water management and agriculture) have helped meet the project objectives.

### 18.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM MAURITANIA

The initiative has successfully enhanced the role of women in the development process. Similar success has been seen in the efforts to raise awareness among women on the importance of being part of the drive to limit water shortages (combating dehydration in high summer), bolstering resistance to an acute shortage, and facing hunger-related risks.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- By tapping into the local resources and know-how, especially on foodstuffs, to generate income.
- The skills of the targeted women were harnessed in the creation of products from local materials.

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Women are convinced of the merit of the project and its underlying principles and are thus willing to work on project activities.
- Local communities have accepted women's involvement in the project activities and society has begun to recognize the broader role women should play in DRR and addressing climate risk.
-

## 18.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Women represent strong partners in the development process, especially in regard to environmental issues and coping with risk.

### *What have been the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Financial challenges have been temporarily overcome through community-based funding, with donations forming the financial basis on which project implementation is taking place.
- Challenges presented by prevailing social (and moral) norms and traditions were overcome once the great endeavour of the initiative was recognized.
- Any objections to the initiative faded when the gravity and urgency of the environmental threats being faced were taken into consideration and the imperative to seek sustainable solutions.

### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- By turning the initiative into a cause that targets development areas and real environmental risks, a cause that must prove sustainable.



**Women represent a reliable pool of strength and an underlying force that can engage in all manner of development processes.”**

## 13.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- The success and benefit of the initiative for society make it suitable for emulation in different temporal and spatial contexts.

### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Social restrictions, (low levels of) acceptance of women's economic participation, poverty among women, and a prevailing lack of gendered awareness on the policy level.

### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Women represent a reliable pool of strength and an underlying force that can engage in all manner of development processes. However, for the full potential of this strength to be engaged, local and international awareness on the role of women and prevailing gender dynamics must be raised. ●

*Organization: Government of Mauritania*



## ● Case Study 19: Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment and Enhancing Climate Resilience among Smallholders in Upper Egypt

*The initiative centres on activities to enhance climate resilience among smallholder farmers, with a focus on women's empowerment and gender equality. The method used to this end is enhancement of productive capacity and gender-equitable access to resources and opportunities, while sustainably maximizing outputs from land and water resources.*



**Starting Date:** 2013

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** 49 villages in Aswan, Luxor, Qena, Sohag and Assiut Governorates, Upper Egypt

**Participants:** United Nation Climate Change; WFP; Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation; NGOs

**Target audience:** Smallholder farmers

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Aligned with the pillars on climate change and DRR in the National Council of Women (NCW) National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, the project's activities strengthen women's role in coping with environmental risks, climate

change and unsustainable consumption through agro-processing activities.

- The ability of women in the targeted areas is expanded through their role as participants in awareness-raising activities on coping with climate change and finding alternative production methods.
- Providing local women with both physical means of production and access to finance has allowed this group to expand their entrepreneurial role and engage in environmentally friendly industries.
- A gender analysis was conducted that provided detailed insight into the different capacities, roles, and aspirations of women and men in upper Egypt, allowing equitable and fair project implementation.

## 19.1 THE UPPER EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE

To achieve its objective, World Food Programme (WFP) smallholder support adopted a holistic approach that worked on four tracks in parallel, serving both men and women through:

- Increasing smallholder production.
- Enhancing water- and land- use efficiency.
- Diversifying and augmenting sources of income.
- Building ownership and institutional capacity among stakeholders to ensure sustainability.

## 19.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The activities conducted enhanced women's access to finance and employment opportunities, enabling income generation while achieving increased security and well-being in the wider community. The effects of implementation have spilled over into a change in institutional engagement, covering project activities and the various areas addressed.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Lined canals reduced irrigation water consumption by 55 percent and provided water to downstream plots.
- Intercropping has maximized per unit land/water output, reducing production costs and generating revenue from two crops instead of one; land consolidation increased farm productivity by 50 percent.
- Lending of animals and agro-processing units to local women generated a sustainable average yield, ensuring that farming remains a viable pursuit.
- Equitable access to resources led to increased cooperation among farmers, who came together to jointly manage local resources in an effective and sustainable way that is adapted to local needs.
- The additional income realized by smallholders households helped to cover expenditure in key social areas (health and education), boosting well-being and capacity to engage with pressing disaster and climate risks, as well as those that may arise in the future.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity building?*

- Through the loans received, women were able to generate income that both enhanced their level of independence and their role in decision-making on household expenditure. This injection of resources also stimulated the local economy, enhancing self-sufficiency.
- By strengthening the role and capacity of both women

and institutional systems for increased development and sustainability, achieved through awareness-raising sessions, training, instruction, technical support and farm visits.

- The focus on hands-on, practical guidance means that further engagement in areas that help to mitigate the impact of disaster and climate challenges is likely.



**Through the loans received, women were able to generate income that both enhanced their level of independence and their role in decision-making on household expenditure."**

## 19.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM MAURITANIA

On account of its advances in several overlapping areas, the initiative embodies good practices that may be emulated. This activity enhanced awareness on the different impacts and risks of climate change and on the importance of resilience-building, and women's role in reducing disaster and climate change risks and in contributing to the economy and society. The tangible impacts achieved by the initiative also make it suitable good practice on water and energy conservation, preserving land through the collaboration of women and men beneficiaries to increase smallholder incomes.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- A gender analysis facilitated inclusive stakeholder involvement and implementation that allowed the role and skills of women to be leveraged in the pursuit of DRR and resilience-building.
- Observing local norms and traditions allowed the specific roles played by women in the local community to be enhanced and expanded, through the delivery of tailored activities that achieved the desired impact for beneficiaries.

### *What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Anchoring revolving loans and activities to build individual and institutional capacity.
- Involving beneficiaries in the decision-making, planning, implementation and monitoring of activities through institutional entities, thereby ensuring sustainability and impact.
- Ensuring increasing cost-sharing by farmers for improved productivity and water savings.
- Promoting and supporting the participation of women, including through, inter alia, increasing access to loans.
- Adoption of methods and strategies by government bodies that align with the project activities and outlook, with a direct benefit for state organizations derived from supporting the project's sustainability on an institutional level.
- Creation of organic ties and mutual concerns through the project, among those staff members and experts involved in project activities – and the institutes they represent.

## 19.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- The delivery of suitably adapted project activities can produce near-immediate results, increasing the capacity and well-being of beneficiaries and presenting prospects for a more resilient future.
- With a foundation built on bringing direct benefit at the individual and local community level, broader institutional change can emerge.
- Local practices and traditions concerning the role of women can be respected and navigated by working with local partners to encourage the participation of women in project support committees at the village level, and the appointment of women to different steering committees.
- Harmful gender norms can be successfully challenged through conducting appropriate project activities and awareness-raising.

### *What have been the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- As local traditions and norms restrict women from deriving great benefit from on-farm project activities, this group was specifically targeted to benefit from areas of activity where their participation is culturally acceptable.
- The challenges presented by prevailing social conditions were navigated by holding awareness sessions to encourage men to allow

to access the economic opportunities presented.

- Resistance from farmers to adopting new practices and collective work was overcome through project design that facilitated trust-building and encouraged participation. Demonstrating the positive results of the new techniques also helped in this regard.
- Limited capacities of local CBOs were faced by delivery of training, and on-the-job support to build technical and institutional capacities among these partners.

### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- Shortage of funding continues to impede project expansion and the fulfillment of participation requests. Addressing this aspect could strengthen both this initiative and others of a similar ilk.
- Enhanced capacity to employ long-term approaches would result in more profound, and more sustainable change (e.g., first building the capacity of local partners and then later entrusting them with the operation and assets).
- The use of domestic varieties, national experts and low-cost techniques proved good means of enhancing sustainability of interventions, while also supporting upscaling and replication. Any activities that further highlight and support the local nature of the intervention would bring added benefit, both in the target region and farther afield.
- As the livelihood of smallholders is reliant on stressed water and land resources, an integrated approach that deploys several different kinds of interventions, such as increasing productivity, improving water- and land-use efficiency, and diversification of income sources, is needed to effectively build resilience.
- While gender norms sometimes restrict activities, continued activities on gender equality and women's empowerment and awareness are essential for building community resilience on disaster and climate change.



**Local practices and traditions concerning the role of women can be respected and navigated by working with local partners.”**

## 19.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Replication is possible, but it would need to be based on a participatory gender analysis to understand the effects of climate change and social and economic conditions on the lives, food security, and nutrition of women, men, girls, and boys (and their communities).
- The design and adjustment of project activities must be based on the results of the context and gender analysis.
- Adequate funding and strong local partners and commitments to strengthen the capacities of partners and communities further would also be required to replicate this activity.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Prevailing social, economic and even political norms affecting the position of women to benefit from project activities were navigated through a combination of working within the frame of these norms, demonstrating the benefit of activities, capacity-building among the broader society, and challenging the basis on which such norms have been established. There exist many such constraints, and these would have to be navigated if beneficiaries are to be optimally served.
- Resistance to new techniques of farming, water management, etc. represents a further vein of constraint.
- The extent of deep-seated change on the institutional level may also constitute a constraint.



Photo: WFP



**While gender norms sometimes restrict activities, continued activities on gender equality and women's empowerment and awareness is essential for building community resilience on disaster and climate change."**

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Invest in the capacity strengthening of women and in engaging men and boys in achieving gender equality and women's empowerment.
- Invest in the capacity strengthening of stakeholders on gender equality, and gender-responsive monitoring and inclusion needs, capacities, roles, and aspirations of women and men, allowing equitable and fair project implementation. ●

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*Organization: WFP Regional Bureau  
for the Middle East and Northern Africa*



## ● Briefing B: Women in the Egyptian Water Sector

*Women's engagement in the decision-making process is one aspect of the gender mainstreaming taking place in the water sector. In Egypt, women hold many important positions in the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation. Moreover, a Gender Equity Unit was established within the Ministry, in accordance with a 2002 ministerial decree, to mainstream gender concerns at the ministry and community levels. The Unit has conducted several training for both women and men related to mainstreaming gender in Ministry activities, disseminated public information and messages on gender, and gathered data from the field to analyse and monitor gender issues in the water sector.*

### ENGAGING WOMEN IN LOCAL WATER MANAGEMENT

Regarding women's engagement in water management on the local level, the Water User Associations established in the late 1990s aim to develop a participatory approach to irrigation management. A WUA is made up of a group of farmers utilizing a common water source have direct contact and conduct consultation with Ministry officials and district engineers to manage the water resource. Due to cultural barriers concerning women's participation in WUAs, a quota for women was assigned by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation to reserve two seats for women members. However, the women members did not receive proper capacity-building training and did not have active roles in decision-making. As a consequence, the quotas were removed and women members were elected through the same mechanism as used to elect men.

WUAs are fully or partially established and active in the Governorate of Fayoum and in Nile Delta. Fayoum is the only governorate that has full coverage, with WUAs and more active participation among women

compared to other regions. However, women members tend to be mainly represented as residential water users and, to a lesser extent, agriculture water users, despite their significant involvement in irrigation activities. As women in the area received awareness-raising sessions and capacity-building workshops, they became more knowledgeable concerning water management, which enhanced their roles in the WUA. Nonetheless, further capacity-building activities are needed in order to practically tackle gender issues in local rural communities.

It can be concluded that the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation is quite aware of the importance of gender mainstreaming in the management of the public water sector, yet the mechanisms employed have not been fully successful in tackling the different aspects of gender issues in the institutional context or at the local level.

**Authors: UNESCO Cairo Office;  
North South Consultants Exchange**

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, stands on a high vantage point of ancient stone ruins. She is looking out over a dense urban landscape with many multi-story buildings. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of late afternoon or early morning. The stone structures are made of large, weathered blocks. A blue circle is partially visible on the left side of the page, overlapping the text.

# Theme 4

Preventing and Responding  
to Gender-Based Violence  
through Disaster Risk Reduction





## Abstract

Gender-based violence (GBV) has been shown to increase in prevalence and severity within communities experiencing the effects of a disaster, and is rooted in gender inequality and unequal power relations. Thus, integrating GBV services into disaster-related services can help ensure the continuation of GBV services during times of disaster.

This penultimate Theme IV contains two case studies from Egypt. The first case study highlights success achieved through the use of **cash assistance programmes for preventing and responding to GBV affecting refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt**. The second case study draws from the Egyptian experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, providing details on the **mobilization of the private sector to deliver essential GBV services and community and culturally sensitive 'dignity kits' to women** suffering due to the crisis.



## ● Case Study 20: Cash Assistance for Preventing and Responding to Gender-Based Violence among Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Egypt

*Despite significant growth in the use of cash assistance in humanitarian assistance, this method is still typically used solely to meet housing and other basic needs, with few agencies combining transfers with protection programmes. Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a serious protection concern in the Egyptian operational environment and there exists a significant gap in the ability to ensure both immediate and interim support for SGBV survivors and those at risk. In many instances, gender is not appropriately prioritized during the provision of cash assistance in humanitarian and development settings..*



**Starting Date:** 2019

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Cairo, Giza, Alexandria, Damietta, Sharkia, Qalyoubia, Aswan Governates, Egypt

**Participants:** United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); Girls and Women Safe Spaces

**Target audience:** Refugees; Asylum seekers, Migrants; Members of the host community

### **What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- The project targeted women, girls, men and boys to identify survivors and persons at high risk of SGBV. Refugees in Egypt report a multitude of abuses and many survivors, particularly women and girls from African communities, find themselves in a very vulnerable situation due to difficult socio-economic conditions.
- The project was designed using a user-centred approach, thus showing responsiveness to the roles played by the women involved (e.g., assistance targeting women refugees is designed by women refugees, for women refugees).
- The rights of women and girls are life-saving priorities and the initiative aimed at operationalizing their role within the existing policy-level guidance.



## The project was designed by women refugees for women refugees.”

### 20.1 THE EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE

Set against the aforementioned background, the initiative looked to:

- Employ a user-centred design approach to beneficiaries, particularly women and young girls, to identify the preferred type(s) of assistance, mode of delivery, and risks associated with accessing services.

### 20.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The project has strengthened the protection of SGBV survivors and those at high risk within migrant communities. Gender-blind or gender-neutral humanitarian programming can overlook characteristics and differences of vital importance between different members of the population, limiting the adequacy and effectiveness of programming. The project thus provides at-risk individuals with hands-on, practical support that is responsive to their prevailing needs.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Through the provision of emergency and interim cash assistance to identified vulnerable persons to help with their navigation of a very challenging environment, thereby mitigating the effects of a crisis and further risks.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- The project was designed by women refugees for women refugees, whereby UNFPA utilized the concepts of design thinking and user-centred design in tailoring the project to the needs of the communities and survivors, in particular women and young girls.

### 20.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM EGYPT

Preference for cash assistance is growing in strategic areas of humanitarian intervention. However, there are several examples of cash-based approaches that have not met their aims. For this reason, attention to nuance is vital, as well as joined-up thinking on the overall funnel driven by cash-based support and the wider impact it may have. As such, the experience in Egypt has much to offer in the way of guidance.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- By embracing the knowledge and budgeting know-how of the targeted groups to gain practical insight into how best to meet prevailing needs, especially those of young girls and women.

*What have been the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Successful delivery of cash assistance for survivors and persons at high risk of SGBV, using a mixed targeting method to identify beneficiaries, with on-the-spot assistance for emergency cases.
- Intervention that addresses the multisectoral dimension of SGBV, and provides space for more autonomy among beneficiaries in addressing their priorities and needs.
- Lessening the potential that SGBV survivors receive overlapping sources of support from multiple humanitarian partners.
- Facilitation of the reporting of SGBV incidents, in a confidential manner, and providing dependable support for survivors.
- Promotion of safe spaces as community hubs, resulting in some spaces now being hosted within government centres to facilitate access to SGBV services.

## 20.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- When deployed in a targeted manner that is responsive to local considerations, cash-based assistance can produce superior results to more widely used methods of support provision.
- Cash assistance for protection purposes should be provided in combination with mixed migration actors or working groups to include vulnerable migrants and UNHCR appointment slip holders in their assistance scheme.

### *What have been the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- The initial kick-off for establishing cash or voucher assistance programmes is an expensive and lengthy process compared to traditional humanitarian programming. This has been overcome by designing the cash-based intervention for a medium-long term duration (over six months), with a medium-sized portfolio of cash assistance.

### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- It is highly recommended to link cash for protection to case management or vulnerability assessment mechanisms, thereby facilitating accurate identification of those beneficiaries eligible for assistance and monitoring of the impact of cash assistance.

## 20.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Replication could be achieved in contexts of mixed migration or refugees located in urban settings living alongside the host community.

### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Social or cultural stances on SGBV may present a constraint and would need to be navigated in line with the conditions and sentiment prevailing on the ground.
- The availability of necessary (financial) infrastructure in the local area could also potentially represent a constraint, as facilities are needed to support the cash transfer system: postal services, ATMs, mobile money systems, etc.

### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- Encourage project activities among women that can be self-sustainable and are linked to livelihood and work opportunities.
- Employ clear criteria for vulnerability assessment and link cash assistance to the case management process. ●

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*Organization: UNFPA  
Arab States Regional Office*



Photo: UNFPA

## ● Case Study 21: Mobilization of the Private Sector in Delivering Essential Services and COVID-19 'Dignity Kits' – Egypt

*The initiative aims to provide health-care workers and women at high risk to COVID-19 with 'dignity kits', to ensure personal hygiene at a time when these populations are at most risk.*



**Starting Date:** March 2020

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Greater Cairo Region, Egypt

**Participants:** UNFPA; World Health Organization (WHO); Care International; Etijah; Ministry of Health and Population; Private sector companies (P&G, Reckitt Benckiser, Luna Pharma, Egyptian Company for Paper Products, Consolidated Casual)

**Target audience:** Health service providers; Local communities

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Women are at the heart of the project, as both initiators and supervisors.
- The beneficiaries of the dignity kits are mostly (two-thirds) women with high exposure to COVID-19.

### 21.1 THE EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE

The main goal of this initiative is to:

- Deliver dignity kits to a large number of people, targeting health-care workers in 'fever hospitals' as a priority.



**The concept of women helping women lies at the centre of this COVID-19 response, with an emphasis placed on teamwork.”**

**21.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS**

The expected impact of the project is reduced COVID-19 risk among those most exposed to the virus. Concerning health-care workers, the activities undertaken constitute a way of acknowledging and supporting their dedication to fighting the virus, exposing themselves to risk in the line of duty.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- By reducing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis.
- Through strengthening resilience and resolve to continue the fight against the pandemic.

*How has women’s engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- The project was initiated by women staff members, who were aware of the items needed by women in such a crisis situation to ensure hygiene and protection.
- As the initiative is still ongoing, the impact on gender issues has not yet been measured.

**21.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM EGYPT**

Issuing health-care workers with hygiene kits represents good practice, largely because of its practical nature and dual impact. The kits contain items that are useful in the short term, but their provision also acknowledges and supports the dedication to fighting the battle at hand.

*How has the initiative used women’s skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- The project engaged the needs of women and girls, including prioritizing their unmet needs to help mitigate the effects of the pandemic and reinforce the fight to bring it to an end.
- The concept of women helping women lies at the centre of this COVID-19 response, with an emphasis placed on teamwork, whereby, through an inclusive process, different staff members could reach out to their networks for support, and draw on a wide range of partners.
- UNFPA recognized the role of women as front-line health workers, boosting the resilience of a group that represents 70 percent of the world’s health and social workforce.

*What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Delivery of thousands of hygiene kits to members of the target group, designed to be community and culturally sensitive to the local context.
- Fostering a ‘snowball effect’, whereby the idea of developing dignity kits for female front-line workers focused on menstrual hygiene evolved to include 11 items; with one donating partner willing to donate one item turning into a range of multiple-item-donating partners.
- Mobilizing contacts and further potential partners, which resulted in broad outreach and impact.
- Efficient use of existing technical expertise to identify vulnerable groups and at-risk population, assist prioritization, and tailor dignity kits to the prevailing needs and resources. This enabled strategic and fast action to be undertaken even in the initial absence of clear guidelines on COVID-19 response.

## 21.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### What are the lessons learned from this practice?

- Mobilizing multiple actors facilitated rapid crisis response, across different programmes and team members, to quickly develop a concept note and reach out to private sector partners. In this way, cooperation and responsiveness were maximized.
- Private sector companies were more attracted to very specific beneficiary targets, as opposed to more vague, larger targets.

### What have been the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?

- Due to the speed with which the pandemic developed, strains could potentially have been faced in quickly producing a mapping of potential private sector partners for project activities. Building on an existing mapping allowed for rapid resource mobilization.
- Working with the private sector in a situation that is constantly evolving presented various challenges, due to the increase in needs. In order to mitigate the impact of this factor, the project team included scenarios and future projections in the concept note, enabling private sector partners to envisage future trends.

### How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?

- Concluding in-kind agreements proved very time-consuming. A fast-track system could be put in place to respond to emergencies with strategic partners.

## 21.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

### How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?

- Provision of dignity kits already constitutes a common development initiative in times of crisis. However, their successful adaption to the specific contexts presented by the novel challenge that is COVID-19 could be achieved by drawing on the experience of this project and the lessons learned.

### What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?

- A hindrance to scaling up, in the COVID-19 context, would be the imposing of a (complete) curfew or confinement.
- Contexts with potentially limited access to markets from which to procure hygiene materials and dignity items, including camps, people in confined areas or under curfew.
- Contexts where specific groups (e.g., women and young girls) would be at greater risk if they were to personally procure items contained in the dignity kits.

### Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?

- Mobilization of private sector partners for the provision of hygiene kits could be boosted by setting in place – as quickly as possible – a solid mapping of private sector firms offering items that could be included in the kits. ●



Photo: UNFPA

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May El Sallab,  
FGM Analyst, UNFPA Egypt

Organization: UNFPA  
Arab States Regional Office

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# Theme 5

Gender-Responsive  
Disaster Risk Reduction  
in the Agriculture  
and Water Sector







## Abstract

Climate-related hazards are putting natural resources used by community members, particularly women, at risk. This has not least affected developing countries, where women are typically responsible for securing food, water, and energy for cooking and heating. Drought, desertification, and erratic rainfall all result in a shortage or lack of resources to fulfill the needs of not only women but, by extension, their families and communities. However, when women are supported in acting as active participants in preparedness and response efforts, their role within the family and community can be leveraged to a great advantage.

The final section of this best practices document, Theme V opens with a case study highlighting the role of **women in the decision-making process on water resources management planning and climate-related DRR planning across the Arab States Region**. After this, appears a case study on a project providing support for energy-efficient solutions through **improving the coping capacities of vulnerable herder communities and reducing exposure to disaster shocks in the State of Palestine**.

A project focused on the role of **women in water conservation and flood preparedness in Iraq** forms the next case study. Coverage of an initiative on **gender equality and women's empowerment through overcoming harvest losses in Sudan** follows thereafter. The theme is closed by a briefing on increasing the **involvement of women in the Palestinian water sector**. •.....



Photo: Arab Water Council

## Case Study 22: Network for Arab Women in Water – Arab States

The Network for Arab Women in Water (NAWW) comprises a policy platform established to articulate and investigate crucial water-related issues of global and regional concern that profoundly affect women, including their livelihood and well-being. The NAWW aims to develop broader strategies to reduce gender disparities in water access while promoting the role of women in water management programmes and activities such as local water committees and water-related development efforts. The Network also identifies how different challenges impact the lives of women across the region.



**Starting Date:** March 2019

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Arab States Region (hosted in Cairo, Egypt)

**Participants:** Arab Water Council (AWC)

**Target audience:** Various segments and stakeholders from across the region

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- The NAWW is fully managed and operated by women experts in the water field.
- The network emphasizes the development of leadership programmes to build future women leader groups.
- Developing a strong database, including not just women but all relevant stakeholders interested in providing support on gender equity issues and implementation of the SDGs.
- Supporting education and career opportunities for women in water and associated fields.
- Supporting women to play key roles in decision-making on water resource management planning and climate-related DRR planning.

### 22.1 THE ARAB STATES INITIATIVE

The specific goals of the initiative are to:

- Provide opportunities that foster valuable connection and collaboration, facilitate access to knowledge, and ensure effective and equal participation in leadership and decision-making.
- Establish a powerful regional collaboration mechanism for women from the Arab States in the water field.
- Identify key water challenges/risks facing women and produce innovative solutions.
- Identify and address crucial water-related risks of global and regional concern that directly affect women's livelihood and well-being.
- Establish potential areas for collaboration on the regional and local levels to support the implementation of the gender equity SDG and its sub-targets.
- Promote the role of women in regional and local water development programmes and decision-making.

## 22.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

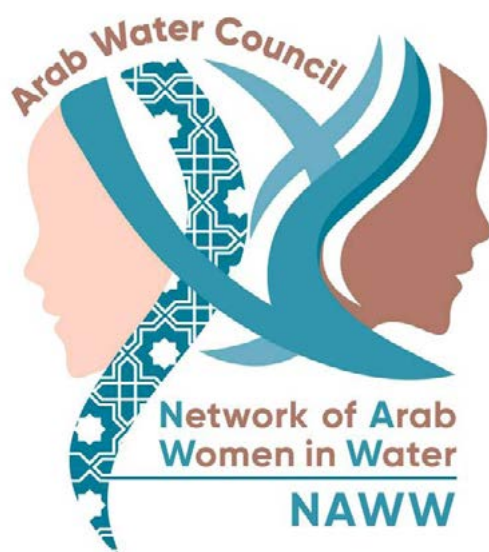
In many countries of the Arab States Region, services such as social development and institutions that support development are more accessible to men than women. Moreover, access to higher education for women tends to be limited, due to a number of factors, including social, religious and traditional barriers. This status quo is also reflected in the water sector, but the initiative has made inroads into changing this dynamic during its first years of implementation.

### *How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Through advocacy for strong interlinkage between women, water, DRR and sustainable development in the drafting and implementing of policy in these areas.
- Via promotion of gender-disaggregated indicators and gender equality in the water and climate sectors.
- By bringing together women working in the water and climate sectors from different Arab states under one umbrella of knowledge, experience and equal opportunity sharing, and enabling them to raise urgent national and regional water and climate risk issues.
- By way of undertaking advocacy efforts for equal access for men and women to the labour market, financial investments and tools.

### *How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity building?*

- The NAWW is led by a board of directors comprised of many distinguished leaders in the water and environmental fields in the Arab States Region, drawing on a pool of knowledge and expertise on a wide array of topics in these fields.



## 22.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE ARAB STATES

The initiative is successfully supporting the engagement of women from different parts of the Arab States Region, via various functions, events and platforms. This has led to a host of positive developments within the water, food, climate and energy interventions across the region. As one of the first gender/scientific platforms in the region, the Network has piqued a great deal of interest and secured significant buy-in from local, regional and international organizations.

This engagement with the initiative has helped to achieve the objective of advocating for the strengthened women's expertise and inclusion in the water sector across the region; with increased attention given to women's participation in different regional events since the establishment of the NAWW.

### *How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Comprising a diverse network of women, the NAWW draws on myriad expertise and knowledge relating to different themes and topics in the broad water-gender-sustainable development nexus. When specific expertise is needed (globally, regionally or nationally), the relevant member is called upon to provide targeted input.

### *What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Successful advocacy for equal access for men and women to the labour market, financial investments and tools.
- Promotion of gender-disaggregated indicators and gender equality in the water sector.
- Establishment of a knowledge exchange hub and a learning platform for women in the Arab States Region.
- Advocacy highlighting the necessity of recognizing women in water and sustainable development programmes as experts, leaders, professionals – and equal to men – in order to achieve truly equitable access to water.

## 22.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Advocacy for gender equality and enhancement of women's capacities in scientific fields can produce significant results, within a relatively short time frame.
- Making data, knowledge and tools available for women's participation and inclusion in different sectors can produce equally impactful results.

*What have been the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- A lack of funding constituted the major challenge faced. This was overcome by the participant continuing its support for the promising activities undertaken.

*How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- By enhancing outreach within the region as well as including this (or similar) networks within international events such as the World Water Forum.



**Advocacy for gender equality and the enhancement of the capacity of women in scientific fields can produce significant results, within a relatively short time frame."**

## 22.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- The network established comprises a regional platform that benefits from country focal points, performing the network's function on a national level, before scaling up on a regional level (through the AWC).

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Lack of appropriate funding would present one such significant constraint to successful implementation.
- The limited extent of regional coordination and communication on the role and capacity of women in the water sector would constitute a constraint, both within regional endeavours and government plans and strategies.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- The NAWW plans to create an ICT-based knowledge exchange hub and learning platform, along with regional workshops to share best practices, lessons learned and innovative ideas implemented in the region, helping to serve the overarching goal of achieving gender equality and advocating for women's rights within the water field, and that of sustainable development. ●

*Author: Heba AlHariry*

*Organization: Arab Water Council*



Photo: FAO/Hend Younis

## ● Case Study 23: Reducing Women's Burden in Vulnerable Herding Communities in the West Bank & Gaza through Innovative and Sustainable Energy Alternatives and Climate Adaptive Practices – State of Palestine

*Life in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is characterized by continuing restrictions on access to natural resources, limited movement of both goods and people, and reduced production capacity. Small-scale herders in the West Bank face persistent challenges in accessing water, grazing land and electricity. The growing electricity deficit has also impacted the household income and food security of herding communities, where women are traditionally responsible for productive activities – and are hence the most affected by this shortfall. This initiative, therefore, aimed to assist these communities in meeting their energy requirements and alleviate the burden on women, pioneering the introduction of low-cost, safe and sustainably produced olive-cake 'energy briquettes' as a replacement for conventional heating fuel.*



**Dates:** June 2018 – May 2019

**Status:** Completed

**Location:** West Bank and the Gaza Strip, State of Palestine

**Participants:** FAO; Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada; Ministry of Agriculture of the State of Palestine; Young Men's Christian Association; Inaash AL Qarya Al Khayrya Association; Multi-donor partnership project (EU, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland, Spain)

**Target audience:** Herding households

### **What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- The project engaged with the multiple roles played by women in herding communities, who are traditionally responsible for productive activities that take place within the household, including fetching water and firewood, grazing animals and cleaning animal shelters; undertaken in addition to regular household chores.
- The role of the targeted women as agents of change in the prevailing social climate within herding communities, alleviating the gender disparities that exist.

### 23.1 THE PALESTINIAN INITIATIVE

The specific objectives of the initiative are to:

- Reduce exposure and improve the coping capacity of herding communities to face environmental and “man-made” shocks, by supplying energy briquettes to be used as an alternative to wood.
- Preserve the environment and strengthen household resilience to climate and other energy-related shocks and reduce the risk of climate-induced disaster, resulting in an increase in longer-term food security.
- Provide renewable energy sources and other infrastructure to ensure sustained access to water, reduce risk to livestock and improve the carrying capacity of grazing lands.
- Provide investment support to further improve energy briquette production.

### 23.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

Some 2,375 herding households, covering 12,350 people (6,052 women and 6,298 men), were reached by this project. A total of 280 households each received one ton of sustainable and climate-friendly olive-cake energy briquettes. Solar power units were also supplied to 149 poultry farms and 11 dairy farms in the Gaza Strip, in addition to in-kind support – such as the construction and establishment of 82 rainwater cisterns, and the distribution of movable livestock shelters for 600 households and 150 tons of drought-resistant fodder seed.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- By leveraging the power of renewable resources and sound resource infrastructure construction to improve the coping capacity of vulnerable herder communities and reduce exposure to disaster shocks related to energy deficits and system unreliability.
- A stable source of energy beyond the energy grid or firewood, the energy briquettes helped to preserve the environment and strengthen household resilience to climate- and energy-related shocks, reducing the risk of climate-induced disaster in the long run, and resulting in longer-term food security.
- Through the reduction of the need for women to gather fuel in an unsafe environment, and in the amount of time spent on collection, enabling women to engage in safer and more productive activities.
- Significant contribution to improving animal production systems, providing livelihood opportunities for young people and improving the lives of women in herding communities, thereby contributing to offsetting the impact of deteriorating livelihood conditions.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity building?*

- Women comprised the key players in the project, directly implementing the innovative approaches to energy production. Assisting women in herding households positively impacted lifestyle, animal productivity and income levels, affecting both the individual households and the wider community, enabling herding families to protect their homes and their livestock nurseries.
- By looking at the root causes of vulnerability to shocks, the specific needs, vulnerabilities and risks for the targeted women and design interventions were identified. This paved the way for resilience-enhancing assistance that improved working and living conditions while building the capacity of women to cope with threats to livelihood and well-being.

### 23.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM THE STATE OF PALESTINE

Support for energy-efficient solutions has helped to improve the coping capacities of vulnerable herder communities and reduce exposure to disaster shocks related to energy supply. The project has been recognized for empowering communities through reducing their vulnerability to risks and hazards, stabilizing food production, and enhancing the profitability of income sources; as well as improving working and living conditions through facilitating equitable and easier access to energy and improved livestock production practices. As such, it represents good practice for other undertakings in this area.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- A gender stocktaking analysis identified the various roles played by women, allowing these roles to be leveraged in creating capacity for DRR while increasing coping capacity and building resilience to energy shocks.
- Utilizing context-sensitive energy solutions that reflect local conditions on gender dynamics enabled empowerment of the targeted women within the scope of the skills they apply in their daily life, while also encouraging contemplation and discourse on the traditional gendered roles within the community.

*What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- The burden of the multitude of chores performed by herding women was eased, and the corresponding traditional gender disparity was highlighted.
- Increased prosperity, safety and resilience, on the level of the individual, the household and the wider community, with positive spillover effects extending beyond these spheres.
- Increased health and well-being, of both the herding communities targeted and the herds they tend.

## 23.4 LESSONS LEARNED

### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- In a context bearing the effects of climate change and restrictions on movement of people and goods imposed by the political situation – both in the past and during the COVID-19 pandemic, energy briquettes have proven a reliable source of energy, particularly for women, to sustain households and pastoral livelihoods.
- Mobilizing local resources and know-how in a context-sensitive and astute manner can help ease the immediate effects of inadequate access to energy supply.
- While the project proved successful in reducing exposure to violence against women (VAW) during firewood collection, prevention of violence within the community and household remains a factor, with greater advocacy efforts on VAW needed to tackle the root causes.
- Risks related to gender roles that put women in harm's way during times of disaster can be minimized by ensuring that both women and men have access to adequate knowledge and information on what to do in the event of a disaster or an enduring energy crisis.

### *What were the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Baseline data collection was not explicitly disaggregated and subsequent identification of the respective energy requirements, therefore, proved challenging. This has been reflected in post-distribution monitoring.

### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- Access to the requisite aggregated data would help implementation, with targeted questions explicitly posed to households prior to commencement of project activities.
- By modifying energy briquettes or other energy-efficient sources to take into account other specific energy needs among the local population. This could be done by conducting analysis of locally available materials, to identify possibilities for the local development of energy briquettes.
- Promote lessons learned on energy response and support in the context of limited sovereignty, which policymakers and decision-makers can promote in a politically sensitive context.



**Utilizing context-sensitive energy solutions that reflect local conditions on gender dynamics enabled empowerment of the targeted women within the scope of the skills they apply in their daily life.”**

## 23.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Successful replication would require assessment of the local context. The two areas focused on in this project have distinct characteristics – particularly in regard to the ongoing blockade of the Gaza Strip, and similarly responsive accommodations would likely need to be made.

### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- Project upscaling could be achieved by diversifying the range of energy sources and target activities. For example, while the olive-cake energy briquettes used in this project were largely geared toward powering facilities for cattle, sources could be diversified in line with the main resources of the local context.

### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- There exists a strong opportunity for energy-efficient sources to be used to power cisterns and other water infrastructure, providing increased access for women and thereby expanding and strengthening their role in this area, as well as their overall well-being and the options available to them more broadly. ●

*Author: Jacquelyn Pinat  
Organization: FAO Regional Office  
for the Near East and North Africa*



# ● Case Study 24: Water Conservation and Flood Preparedness on Sinjar Mountain – Iraq

The Sinjar Mountains region in Northern Iraq remains a priority area for resilience and livelihood work, as the local communities have been significantly impacted by conflict involving the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Set against this backdrop, this initiative looked to increase regional resilience on multiple levels, helping to build livelihoods and bring the community together, while making structural improvements to local infrastructure. Spanning 40 hectares of mountain terrain, innovative landscaping measures were created to improve the infiltration rates of rain and snowmelt water on slopes, feed sources of water and irrigation systems, catch water runoff, and prevent mudslides and water loss. Almost 20,000 fruit trees were planted to help support the community long-term, through harvesting and establishing a sustainable income source..



**Dates:** May 2019 – February 2020

**Status:** Completed

**Location:** Sinjar Mountains region, Ninewa Governorate, Iraq

**Participants:** WFP; Triangle Génération Humanaire; German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ); Japan

**Target audience:** Members of the local community

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- As members of the local community; the project reached 980 participants, including 405 women.
- During enrolment, community outreach was undertaken to include as many women as possible, prioritizing women-headed households as the most vulnerable community members.
- Of the 50 team supervisors involved in the project, 18 were

women. Supervisors received extra training and attended coaching workshops, gaining skills in project management as well as new knowledge, such as complaints and feedback mechanisms.

- A meeting with women community representatives was held to define the priorities and vulnerabilities of women-headed households. These meetings ensured that working groups and beneficiary selection were carried out under 'do no harm' principles, mindful of community standards and practices, and GBV protection mainstreaming principles.

## 24.1 THE NORTHERN IRAQI INITIATIVE

The specific objectives of the initiative were to:

- Increase the availability of water in the region, to produce a greater (and more sustainable) drinking supply, a larger pool for use in irrigation of mountainside pasture, and help mitigate the impact of flash flooding.
- Boost livelihoods, resilience and social cohesion to enhance and protect local water sources.



## 24.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

The project introduced practical, labour-intensive landscaping measures. Over 6,000 water and soil conservation structures were completed, on various levels of the mountains. This helped increase the infiltration rates of snowmelt and runoff water, and the water runoff velocity on the slopes has been curbed and controlled. The enhanced and improved water resources are now a communal asset. Farmers can continue to cultivate their produce even in the dry season, and mountain water is conserved for the local drinking supply.

### *How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- Protecting catchment areas mitigated the effects of flash flooding, reducing the risk of harm that occurs during the rainy season. The landscaping measures also decrease the costs associated with flash flooding response, while safeguarding means of production.
- In total, 19,746 (fig, pomegranate and olive) trees were planted to boost livelihood opportunities and agricultural production, while reducing disaster and climate risk.
- Another 3,630 *Leucaena* trees were planted as fodder for grazing cattle, helping livestock farmers in the mountain community.

### *How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity building?*

- All participants received cash stipends, regardless of gender or level of economic independence, increasing resilience in a flexible manner that placed the needs of the beneficiary to the fore.
- Women participants worked to create effective water conservation and flood mitigation structures.
- Women teams were created, being led by a women supervisor wherever possible. The women supervisors helped ensure that all stakeholders worked together to reduce risk and expand capacity throughout the community – across all genders, age groups and sectors.
- Women participants who were also heads of households were engaged in the project through training and the additional income they received helped to improve their short-term food security.

## 24.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM NORTHERN IRAQ

The project gave women participants the chance to earn a living both during and after the project, while removing barriers such as lack of opportunity or confidence to lead a team. Women were also able to learn and use new or enhanced skills to contribute to their community's efforts on water conservation and DRR. Both women and men contributed to improving sustainable irrigation in the Sinjar Mountains region and mitigating the impact of flash floods and water runoff. Several aspects of the project thus represent good practice for similar endeavours in this area.

### *How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Women supervisors were respected and well-regarded throughout the initiative, boosting the confidence and role of both the women involved and women across the local community.
- Conflict with ISIL has led to a lack of employment opportunities in the target region, especially for women and youth, driving them to employ negative survival strategies. The project thus offered affected people access to an alternative source of income.
- Training women, particularly giving opportunities to women supervisors, and women from vulnerable women-headed households, has motivated participants to continue working in agriculture – protecting community assets in the face of climate change and harvesting the trees planted to sustainably generate income and provide for their families.
- Through the provision of cash to households, the project successfully helped to meet the basic needs of targeted families and enabled savings to be built up for use by younger family members.

### *What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- In addition to the tangible results achieved and its impact on direct beneficiaries, the project has, through distribution of cash stipends and improved irrigation and flood mitigation measures, created a ripple effect – indirectly reaching a larger segment of the community. The catchment and flood protection measures embedded are expected to have long-term benefits.
- Harvesting the trees planted is expected to provide a significant source of income over the coming years while contributing towards fostering knowledge and engagement in this area.
- The project reached many who had never before had an opportunity to acquire this type of knowledge or generate income in this way. Participants expressed through the project a sense of purpose, and the powerfully visible results (conservation structures, growing saplings, and grazing cattle) have provided a

basis for positive evolution in the longer term.

- Given Sinjar's multi-ethnic makeup, the project played a role in fostering dialogue between groups. Communities that had never worked together before, or who mistrusted each other, successfully came together for the common good and to protect their vital assets. This represents an impact that extends beyond the scope of this project.
- An automated meteorological station has been installed at the project site, providing valuable information on meteorological conditions, especially rainfall. This information will allow decision-makers and farmers to better understand the impact of climate change and adapt their agricultural practices accordingly.



**Giving opportunities to women from vulnerable women-headed households, has motivated participants to continue working in agriculture.”**

#### 24.4 LESSONS LEARNED

*What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Through engaging the most appropriate local actors and deploying responsive project design, this endeavour succeeded in protecting natural water sources and mitigating against flash floods, thereby securing long-term availability of resources – in a region with few available water resources for agricultural production.
- Regular meetings held with local leaders and authorities ensured that the project approach was understood by these stakeholders, boding well for the sustainability of the structures built beyond the end of the project.
- Sharing the long-term effects of the project helped create a sense of ownership within the community, particularly among women-headed households.

*What have been the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- The multi-ethnic population of the Sinjar region has been marked by mistrust between segments of society, exacerbated by conflict and a charged environment. Ensuring cross-community support, therefore, represented the major challenge. To build engagement, community leaders ('Mukhtars') and the local mayor were involved in both the project planning stages and throughout implementation, and local technical experts engaged. In this way, the principle of inclusivity of all groups was woven into the fabric of the project.

- During early consultations, the community suggested the separation of working teams by gender, to ensure that there be no risk of harm from a breach of cultural values. This set-up allowed a harmonious working environment, and women reported feeling safe while carrying out their work.

*How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- Involving community leaders even earlier in the project planning process may produce increased benefit, and ensure long-term ownership and sustainability of the project.

#### 24.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

*How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- The practices outlined above are well suited to replication, both in the Iraqi context and beyond. Future projects could involve relevant ministries and stakeholders at the central government level to replicate the success in other regions vulnerable to water shortages, climate change and/or flooding.
- The Sinjar experience suggests that recreating simple yet effective soil and water conservation structures, along with tree planting, could lead to similar success in other vulnerable regions.

*What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- This project represents further proof that through balanced and responsive engagement of a range of local actors, populations marked by a complex set of social, economic, political and religious attributes can be successfully brought together for the greater good. However, its expansion would depend on successfully identifying the prevailing constraints and navigating these constraints in a way that is acceptable to all stakeholders – and in line with the underpinning ethos, design, and momentum of the project.
- The key in the context of the Sinjar Mountains region will be the maintenance of the project structures, assets and achievements, including the upkeep of the trees and harvesting.

*Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- To scale up women's role, involvement, and leadership, a longer planning time frame for such projects is recommended, to allow for more intensive outreach – so that more women can be included in project activities. ●

*Author: Sharon Rapose, Iraq Country Office  
Organization: WFP Regional Bureau for the Middle East and Northern Africa*



Photo: WFP/Abdulaziz Abdulmomin

## ● Case Study 25: Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through Post-Harvest Losses in Sudan

Abundant in natural resources, given increased stability Sudan could regain its role as a regional breadbasket. However, smallholder farms are intermittently affected by a number of climate hazards, with the climatic shocks of recent years exacerbating this dynamic. Moreover, food security and climate change assessments indicate that Sudanese soil is set to be less productive, bearing the brunt of a hotter, drier climate. In order to minimize disaster and climate change risks, several activities have been implemented to strengthen the resilience of chronically food-insecure households and food systems, through a combination of interventions. Among these endeavours stand the focus of this case study: Post-Harvest Loss (PHL) reduction aimed at achieving gender equality and women's empowerment and enhancing resilience in the face of climate change and disaster risks.



**Starting Date:** 2016

**Status:** Ongoing

**Location:** Sudan

**Participants:** WFP; Federal and State Ministries of Agriculture; NGOs; International NGOs; Arab Organization for Agricultural Development; EU Directorate-General for International Partnerships; Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency; United Kingdom Department for International Development; BMZ; France; Canada

**Target audience:** Smallholder farmers

**What are the specific roles identified and implemented by women?**

- Gender aspects are integrated into the different parts of the project, from design to implementation and monitoring, and a gender analysis has been conducted to highlight the different needs, roles, capacities, challenges, and opportunities faced, with the

programme adapted accordingly.

- The results of a baseline study facilitated adjustment to project design to ensure that the roles, needs and capacities of the women and men targeted are suitably accommodated.
- During implementation, the project specifically targeted women-headed households and women farmers' associations – in recognition of the importance of their roles in PHL reduction, and in building resilience to disaster and climate change risks.
- Project messaging and trainings are tailored towards women and women farmers, as these groups are often quick to adapt to new technologies, and because women tended to dedicate the benefits gained from using the new storage facilities to ensuring their own well-being and that of their children.

## 25.1 THE SUDANESE INITIATIVE

The overall objective of the project is to enhance the food and income security of smallholder farming households by reducing PHL, thereby enhancing resilience.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- Increase household food availability by reducing pre-farm gate losses through capacity-building and equipment provision.
- Increase household income by empowering smallholders to sell surplus grain at higher prices through provision of technical and strategic support to farmers' associations and farming households.
- Strengthen the capacity of smallholders and farmers' groups to better access markets and value chains through engaging the private sector.
- Increase food safety, health and nutrition through reduction of aflatoxin contamination of crops.
- Create awareness, align market incentives, and motivate the private sector to serve a newly created market for hermetic storage.

## 25.2 IMPACT AND RESULTS

As women make up a large proportion of the agricultural sector (accounting for 87 percent of rainfed agriculture), they are particularly vulnerable to climatic changes. Therefore, investment in affordable and simple techniques like hermetic storage achieve notable food security, nutrition, economic and broader social benefits, especially for women.

*How has this initiative contributed to disaster and climate risk reduction?*

- The innovative hermetic storage campaign supported the upscaling of resilience programmes on climate change and disaster risks, providing the targeted women and men smallholder farmers with more efficient food storage techniques.
- Through strengthening the capacity of smallholders and farmers' groups, especially women, and enhancing access to markets and value chains through the involvement of the private sector.

*How has women's engagement made this initiative successful in disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity-building?*

- Monitoring showed that women farmers contributed significantly to value chains at the pre-production and production phases, proving efficient and resourceful. Those women who used hermetic bags have thus reaped the economic benefits while mitigating the effects of adverse climatic conditions and fostering an environment of engagement and resilience.
- Organizing women into associations and groups contributed to the success of this initiative,

empowering women farmers and giving them a voice in decision-making on disaster and climate risk reduction and resilience capacity building that extends beyond the project interventions.

- Women formed small cooperatives to finance their agricultural activities and were included in training and demonstrations on hermetic storage.
- By holding workshops delivered by women trainers, it proved possible to reach women participants in states in eastern Sudan, typically considered more conservative than the central and western states of the country.

## 25.3 GOOD PRACTICE FROM SUDAN

The PHL project represents good practice as focusing on women and their economic participation presents a distinct opportunity to improve livelihood and food security in Sudan, on the path towards reaching the goal of Zero Hunger.

*How has the initiative used women's skills and expertise to reduce risk and build resilience?*

- Through capacity-building and provision of equipment, the project assisted women-headed households in increasing food availability by reducing pre-farm gate losses.
- The project increased women's income and resilience by empowering women smallholder farmers to sell surplus grain at a higher price.

*What are the main success factors of this initiative?*

- Successful implementation and design of activities that produce meaningful change in the lives of the target group, underpinned by a participatory approach that engages all stakeholders through models for building resilience that equitably address the needs, priorities, roles and workloads of women and men, and which can be developed and scaled up.
- Collection of information on the project beneficiaries, including in regard to women's role in agriculture and the PHL process, enabling appropriate interventions to be designed.
- Engagement of key community leaders and influencers, essential in ensuring project success and ownership by the local communities.
- Successful leveraging of local women's ability (to quickly adapt and learn skills that reduce PHL) and the role of local women farmers' associations for rapid evolution of the project
- Ensuring government ownership of the project, and therefore sustainability, by conducting several studies to gain systematic evidence on the benefits and efficiency of using hermetic bags, which also provide evidence of the corresponding boon for food security, income, nutritional health, poverty levels, and resilience to climate change and disaster risks.

## “ Recognizing women’s unpaid labour and domestic roles as work is essential to ensuring the enhancement of the socio-economic status of women within households and communities.”

### 25.4 LESSONS LEARNED

#### *What are the lessons learned from this practice?*

- Farmers in Sudan tend to follow the opinion of local influencers. It is therefore vital to address these leaders and partner with them during each project phase, so that they adopt the idea, own it, and work with the project to disseminate the proposed techniques.
- Recognizing women’s unpaid labour and domestic roles as work is essential to ensuring the enhancement of the socio-economic status of women within households and communities while dismantling gender stereotypes needs to form an essential part of this (and any) initiative focused on enhancing resilience and reducing climate change and disaster risks.

#### *What were the main challenges encountered and how have they been overcome?*

- Overcoming the ingrained mindset of farmers in terms of fixed habits, practices, roles, and techniques represents the major challenge encountered. It takes time and effort to change older modes of thinking, but women farmers proved quicker in adopting new technology, thus facilitating effective navigation of this challenge – project activities targeted primarily women farmers.
- Resistance to change is being tackled most effectively by implementing the project in a hands-on manner, whereby the farmers get to experience first-hand the benefits of the new storage technology for their crops.

#### *How could the work of this initiative be strengthened in future initiatives?*

- This project has shown that it is vital to strengthen individual and organizational awareness on the workloads and time constraints of women and men, and the implications for value chain development. Future initiatives may wish to bolster this aspect even further.
- Working with the women farmers’ association has proven beneficial to achieving the desired results. These associations can be powerful mechanisms in increasing the overall wealth of the community and their engagement may prove key to the success of future projects.

### 25.5 POTENTIAL FOR REPLICATION

#### *How can this practice be replicated in similar and dissimilar contexts?*

- Sustainability, replication and upscaling can only be achieved by partnering with both the government and the private sector.
- Investing in empowering women smallholder farmers, and in disseminating information and innovative techniques that are tailored to both women and men, would be key to replication, both within the Sudan context and beyond.

#### *What are the social, economic, political and other constraints to expanding the initiative?*

- The product at the heart of this project, the hermetic bag, is still largely unknown to many farmers and it takes time and effort to convince farmers to invest in this new technology.
- Sudan is not densely populated and lacks an extensive retail network, not only to supply hermetic bags but also to inform farmers on how to use the bags. The requisite information, therefore, had to be tailored to men and women with different backgrounds and literacy levels, which may otherwise have represented a constraint on expansion.

#### *Building on this experience, what are your recommendations for strengthening and expanding the role of women more effectively?*

- The lack of visibility of women’s productive roles, especially as smallholder farmers, home-based or small-scale producers, or entrepreneurs, represents a major challenge to expanding and strengthening women’s roles more effectively. Visibility may be enhanced by activities that ensure recognition of the roles played by women within the community and their output, promoting the view that women are legitimate value chain actors who should enjoy access to the resources and services they need to be more efficient and competitive. ●

*Author: Post-Harvest Losses Team, Sudan Country Office*

*Organization: WFP Regional Bureau for the Middle East and Northern Africa*



## .....● Briefing C:

*In the State of Palestine, women face many challenges to participating in water governance issues, due to the prevailing patriarchal societal structure and the specific context, which sees the State of Palestine's water resources fully controlled by Israel occupation. On an institutional level, the involvement of Palestinian women in the environment sector, specifically the water and waste management sectors, is very limited. The statistics consulted for this briefing indicated that representation of women does not exceed 8 percent in service provision utilities, and 32 percent within ministries and public authorities in these sectors.*

*However, women play a central role in water management and hygiene at the household level, and this group are also responsible for major farming activities in rural areas. Moreover, as women and girls are usually responsible for water collection and transportation, they are more vulnerable to violence and humiliation under occupation.*

### **GENDER STRATEGY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT SECTOR**

The State of Palestine is aware that women need to be further integrated into the environmental sector, and that their roles should be strengthened on the policy, professional and community levels. In this context, the milestone Gender Strategy for the Environment Sector, which places an emphasis on water and solid waste, was developed in 2012 for the period 2013–2017.

The Strategy was prepared by a national team comprising representatives from a range of institutions and organizations, including the Palestinian Water Authority, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of National Economy, and the National Team for Waste Management. Environmental NGOs, academic institutions and environmental consultants also participated in the preparation process. The Strategy contains nine strategic goals,

with corresponding policies and interventions falling under three main areas: gender mainstreaming policies, institutional capacity building for women, and women's community participation.

In order to monitor the implementation of the set goals, each strategic goal is measured by specific indicators, as is each individual policy and intervention (i.e., there are three sets of indicators to follow up on each of the nine strategic goals). Thus, the milestone National Strategy constituted an early example of the efforts that have been exerted to move towards gender mainstreaming in national policy, so that no one is left behind.

**Authors: Global Water Partnership Mediterranean, North Palestine Water Authority; Union for the Mediterranean**

**Source: Palestinian Water Authority, 2015; State of Palestine, 2012**

## Further reading

- Fletcher, A. and R. Schonewille (2015). *Overview of resources on gender-sensitive data related to water*. United Nations World Water Assessment Programme, Gender and Water Series, UNESCO.  
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