

The Climate Change, Gender and Displacement Nexus in the Arab States Region:

Evidence from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen

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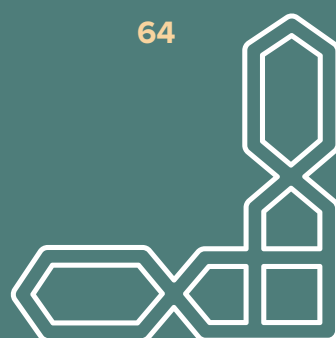
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CAHS	Climate Action for Human Security in Iraq's Al-Hawizeh Marshlands (UNDP project in Iraq)
ERRY	Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (UNDP project in Yemen)
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FSRRP	Food Security Response and Resilience Project (UNDP project in Yemen)
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
GII	Gender Inequality Index
GRES	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contribution
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
JNCCP	Jordan National Climate Change Policy
LNOB	Leave No One Behind
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SRSE	Strengthening Resilience and Socio-economic Inclusion through Employment Creation (UNDP project in Iraq)
SWICS	Scaling Up Water Innovation for Climate Security in Northern Jordan (UNDP project in Jordan)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WEP	Women's Economic Participation Project (UNDP project in Lebanon)

Glossary

Term	Definition
Gender	“Gender refers to the roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society at a given time considers appropriate for men and women. In addition to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, gender also refers to the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader sociocultural context, as are other important criteria for sociocultural analysis including class, race, poverty level, ethnic group, sex; sexual orientation, age, etc” (UN Women). ¹
Climate change	“A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods” (UNFCCC). ²
Displacement	“The movement of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters” (IOM). ³
Climate security	Climate security encompasses both the direct threats posed by climate-related hazards and the indirect risks, such as displacement, conflict over resources and weakened governance, which can exacerbate existing vulnerabilities and tensions within and between communities or states. ⁴
Human security	A condition that is met when the vital core of human lives is protected, and when people have the freedom and capacity to live with dignity. In the context of climate change, the vital core of human lives includes the universal and culturally specific, material and non-material elements necessary for people to act on behalf of their interests and to live with dignity. ⁵
Vulnerability to climate change	Vulnerability significantly determines how climate change impacts are being experienced by societies and communities. Vulnerability to climate change is the degree to which a system is susceptible to, and unable to cope with, adverse effects of climate change, including climate variability and extremes. Climate change is a multidimensional, dynamic phenomenon shaped by intersecting historical and contemporary political, economic and cultural processes of marginalization. ⁶



Executive Summary

The Arab States region has been experiencing unprecedented changes in weather and environmental patterns, which are expected to worsen in the coming decades. Already recognized as the world's most water-scarce region, the Arab States region is predicted to be among the first in the world to run out of water, making it particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.⁷ As temperatures are rising faster than the global average, the region has been experiencing more frequent, intense and prolonged drought. These dynamics are expected to exacerbate desertification and land degradation and increase the incidence of sand and dust storms, with devastating effects on livelihoods and food security.^{a,8}

Women in the Arab States region experience climate change differently from men due to institutional and legal inequalities and deeply entrenched social norms that limit their economic, social and political participation, as well as their access to resources, opportunities and decision-making spaces.⁹ Many women in the region rely on agriculture for their livelihoods and are responsible for managing scarce food, energy and water resources—all of which are increasingly affected by climate change.^b At the same time, women tend to be first responders in the fight against climate change and often bear the brunt of the “double burden” of productive and care work, a situation that is further exacerbated when men migrate as a result of climate shocks.

Climate change poses a significant challenge to the approximately 38 million people who have been forcibly displaced¹⁰ in the Arab States region due to conflict, instability and unsuitable living conditions. Climate-induced disasters—including floods, storms, wildfires, drought and extreme temperatures—have also displaced additional hundreds of thousands in the region.¹¹ Displacement is expected to increase in both frequency and intensity in the coming years. This trend is concerning, as climate change is not only a driver of displacement but also a “threat multiplier,” potentially exacerbating local conflicts in affected areas.

a With less than 5 percent of the region's GDP coming from agriculture, forestry and fishing (World Bank, 2023) the Arab States region is the highest food-importing region globally, with a growing gap between food production and consumption (ESCWA, 2022). Accordingly, food security in the region is highly vulnerable to global food shortages and unprotected against price spikes. This burden is disproportionately felt by poor households, which can lead to forced migration in search of improved livelihoods.

b In MENA countries, less than five percent of land is owned by women (Wilson Center, 2022), reflecting significant gender inequality in asset ownership. Agriculture is the largest employer of women in the region; they make up about 50 percent of the workforce and thus face significant risks due to their involvement in this climate-sensitive sector (ICARDA, 2020).

Displacement diminishes economic and social capital, making internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees more susceptible than non-displaced people to both multidimensional and income poverty.¹² Displacement also hinders people's ability to adapt and respond to the negative impacts of climate change. Research on displacement shows that it increases women's exposure to poverty and to domestic and sexual violence, while also limiting their participation in public life and access to knowledge and resources.¹³ These intersecting factors make women more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than men.

As the causes and impacts of climate change and displacement become increasingly intertwined, their gendered consequences are becoming more complex, making them critical to understand. While evidence on the climate security nexus is growing, a gap in the literature remains on how climate change affects gender inequality in the Arab States region, particularly in contexts of displacement.

This study seeks to address that gap by:

- Examining and unpacking the interconnection between climate change, displacement and gender inequality in four countries in the Arab States region. In doing so, it aims to examine if and how climate change intensifies pre-existing gender inequalities and vulnerabilities in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen, using both secondary sources and primary qualitative data, while highlighting existing gaps in evidence around the nexus;
- Reviewing and drawing lessons from selected UNDP projects that have addressed these interconnections in the four countries; and
- Providing recommendations for effective policymaking and programming, based on findings that could be applicable beyond the four countries.

Findings

This report explores the intersections of climate change, displacement and gender equality and presents its findings through nine key insights:



Insight 1: Displaced women in rural areas are at high risk of losing critical livelihoods as their labour is concentrated in climate-vulnerable sectors, including agriculture and home-based food production.



Insight 2: Climate-driven economic stress is pushing more women into productive work, resulting in an increase in the “double burden” of productive and care work. At the same time, existing gender norms reinforce the unpaid care, domestic and communal work performed by women and girls, placing additional pressures on forcibly displaced women facing humanitarian crises.



Insight 3: Forcibly displaced women in climate-affected areas are at greater risk of gender-based violence (GBV) such as domestic violence and early marriage, as scarce resources increase economic pressure and household tensions.

-  **Insight 4:** Displaced populations' increased vulnerability to water scarcity has gendered impacts on sexual and reproductive health that reduce access to safe and dignified hygiene and menstruation.
-  **Insight 5:** Although many forcibly displaced women depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods, they rarely, if ever, own land. Persistent gender-based barriers to land ownership limit their control over land and its use and, consequently, their ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
-  **Insight 6:** Forcibly displaced women face barriers in accessing markets, financial services, information, expertise and social capital that limit their capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
-  **Insight 7:** Strongly held traditional gender norms are being challenged in communities of displaced people, where economic stress from climate change and displacement is putting pressure on women to contribute to household income.
-  **Insight 8:** Forcibly displaced women are underrepresented in decision-making circles, and their voices and perspectives can often be overlooked in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.
-  **Insight 9:** Although climate policies in the four countries acknowledge gender equality and human mobility issues, particularly within their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), the nexus of climate change, gender inequality and displacement is not adequately addressed in practice.

Based on these insights, this report presents **a gender review of six UNDP climate-related projects, examining how these projects are informed by the findings** outlined above.

The assessment of six UNDP projects revealed both promising approaches and areas for improvement. Importantly, even projects not explicitly designed around the climate-gender-displacement nexus often included elements directly relevant to it. This underscores how interconnected these issues are in practice, particularly in relation to improving access to livelihoods, fostering economic empowerment and enhancing agricultural productivity. As a result, many interventions initially conceived with a narrower scope have generated broader, multifaceted outcomes.

The insights into the linkages between climate change, gender inequality and displacement offer a preliminary framework for programming design. This framework can help ensure that interventions are intentionally tailored to the nexus, fostering more inclusive and impactful outcomes. Further research would allow for continued improvement of the framework over time.

Recommendations

-  As countries revise their national climate plans, there is an opportunity for policymakers in the Arab States region to adopt an integrated approach that incorporates the climate-gender-displacement nexus.
-  Policymakers at the global, national and local levels must ensure the integration of gender-responsive climate change considerations into conflict-prevention instruments and frameworks to address the complex issues underlying migration and displacement. Similarly, humanitarian responses must also systematically address the distinct risks posed by climate change to forcibly displaced people, particularly women, and its potential to trigger further displacement.
-  National policymakers must create spaces for the meaningful participation and inclusion of forcibly displaced people throughout the process of planning and responding to climate-related hazards.
-  Programme-implementing agencies must adopt a systematic approach to conducting intersectional gender and displacement analyses in climate change projects/programmes, considering differences in needs, opportunities and risks for women of different ages, disabilities and backgrounds.
-  Implementing agencies should integrate transformative gender strategies, tackle unpaid care work and social norms and engage men in their programmes to leverage the disruptive potential of climate change and displacement to trigger social change.
-  National policy processes must open up spaces for the meaningful participation of forcibly displaced men and women and people suffering multiple disadvantages in the entire process of climate planning and response.
-  To fill the most pressing information gaps and promote data sharing, national-level institutions and programmes must systematically collect national and local data relevant to climate change, disaggregated by gender and displacement status.
-  Further quantitative and qualitative research is essential to thoroughly investigate the gendered impacts of climate change on displaced communities in the target countries and beyond.
-  Cross-disciplinary collaboration and coordination among stakeholders must be strengthened to enable integrated responses across the standard thematic boundaries of climate change, gender inequality and displacement, in connection with operationalizing the wider humanitarian, development and peace nexus.
-  Flexibility and new funding streams that respond to the above approaches are required to strengthen the humanitarian, development and peace nexus.^c

^c The humanitarian–development–peace nexus is an integrated approach that promotes coordination between humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding to reduce needs, risks and vulnerabilities in crisis-affected settings. It seeks to strengthen resilience and prevent crisis recurrence by addressing root



Introduction

The Arab States region has been experiencing unprecedented changes in weather and environmental patterns, which are predicted to only worsen in the coming decades.

Already recognized as the world's most water-scarce region, the Arab States region is expected to be among the first to run out of water, making it particularly vulnerable to climate change.¹⁴ Temperatures in the region have been rising faster than the world average. Based on projections by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a global average increase of 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels would lead to median temperature increases of 2.8°C in non-Mediterranean Arab States by 2100.¹⁵ While the Mediterranean region is expected to experience slower absolute warming (a median 2.4°C under the same scenario), it will still be among the regions experiencing the greatest change in heat stress, defined as the combined impact of high temperatures and humidity.¹⁶ In addition to impacting morbidity and mortality, the overall disease burden and human discomfort, rising temperatures are projected to drive higher rates of surface evaporation. With droughts becoming more frequent, intense and amplified, these climate-driven dynamics are expected to exacerbate desertification, accelerate land degradation and increase the frequency of sand and dust storms, with devastating effects on livelihoods and food security in the Arab States region.^{d,17}

Women in the Arab States region experience climate change differently from men. Institutional and legal inequalities and deeply entrenched social norms defining gender roles limit their economic, social and political participation and access to resources, opportunities and decision-making spaces.¹⁸ Many women in the region depend on agriculture for their livelihoods and are responsible for managing scarce food, energy and water resources that are increasingly affected by climate change. At the same time, women tend to be first responders in the combat against climate change, often bearing the brunt of the “double burden” of productive and care work, which is only exacerbated when men migrate as a result of climate shocks. However, the above inequalities and women's limited access to decision-making restrict their ability to adapt and respond to climate change, especially in conflict-affected, remote and rural areas, and in situations of displacement.¹⁹

Climate change poses a significant challenge to the approximately 38 million people²⁰ in the Arab States region who have been forcibly displaced due to conflict, instability and inadequate living conditions. Displacement diminishes economic and social capital, **leaving IDPs and refugees more vulnerable** than non-displaced people to both multidimensional and income poverty²¹ and **limiting their capacity** to adapt to or cope with the adverse impacts of climate change. Displaced populations living in camps, temporary settlements or inadequate shelters are often highly vulnerable to further displacement caused by floods and storms, which threaten their safety, security and livelihoods.²² Research also highlights women's heightened exposure to poverty and domestic and sexual violence, as well as their limited participation in public life and restricted access to knowledge and resources.²³ These factors make them more vulnerable than men to the impacts of climate change.

causes and aligning efforts across sectors for greater impact.

d With less than 5 percent of the region's GDP coming from agriculture, forestry and fishing, (World Bank, 2023) the Arab States region is the highest food-importing region globally, with a growing gap between food production and consumption (ESCWA; 2022). Accordingly, food security in the region is highly vulnerable to global food shortages and unprotected against price spikes. This burden is disproportionately felt by poor households, which can lead to forced migration in search of improved livelihoods.



© UNDP Iraq • Mohammed Al-Bahbahane. Iraq's Mesopotamian Marshes symbolize resilience amid growing threats from climate change and water scarcity.

In the Arab States region, the impacts of climate change has driven displacement in several ways.

First, climate-induced disasters—including floods, storms, wildfires, droughts and extreme temperatures—have displaced hundreds of thousands in the region and are expected to increase in frequency and intensity in the coming years. For example, in southern and central Iraq, as of September 2025, 186,210 individuals were living in displacement due to droughts, with some villages losing up to half their population.²⁴ Second, climate change is acting as a risk multiplier, driving displacement by exacerbating or triggering conflict. This threat is particularly acute in the Arab States region, where many conflict-affected areas are also some of the world's top climate risk hotspots.²⁵ Many countries in the region face challenges in meeting the basic needs of communities that rely on climate-sensitive sectors, such as agriculture. Such livelihoods are affected by climate-related environmental degradation, resource scarcity and uncertainty, risking further displacement and stress on resources. The inability to adequately and equitably respond to the deterioration of climate-strained livelihoods can aggravate grievances both within and between communities as well as between communities and authorities.²⁶ These tensions exacerbate fragility in conflict-affected areas and add pressure to already-strained relations in countries struggling with multiple development challenges.²⁷ For example, water shortages contributed to local conflict in Iraq²⁸ and Yemen,²⁹ threatening public health. Notably, climate change is not yet recognized as a valid reason for claiming refugee status (see Box 1).

Box 1. Climate change and displacement

While climate change forces millions of people globally out of their homes, neither the 1951 Refugee Convention nor its 1967 Additional Protocol acknowledges climate-related hazards as grounds for refugee status. This critical convention was originally drafted to respond to the refugee crisis that followed the Second World War and applies only to people with well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, and/or membership of a particular social group or political opinion. According to UNHCR, most climate-related displacement occurs within national borders, yet the Convention may apply “when an individual’s risk of facing persecution or violence is increased by climate change.”³⁰ There are growing calls for the UN to update its frameworks and protocols to better protect and respond to the needs of people displaced by climate impacts.^{31, 32}

There is a growing body of evidence highlighting the climate-gender-displacement nexus and the gendered impacts of both climate change and displacement.

Gender analyses have shown that displaced women are less resilient to climate change as they are likely to reside in substandard shelters, which makes them more prone to climate risks and negative coping strategies. They are more exposed to gender-based violence (GBV) yet have lower access to services. Women are also responsible for managing scarce resources, bearing the brunt of the “double burden” of productive and care work. At the same time, women in displaced settings have contributed to the response to climate change and must be at the centre of solutions.^{33,34} The United Nations emphasizes the importance of gender-responsive approaches to climate security and peacebuilding, highlighting the benefits of involving women and girls in climate action and resource management.³⁵

As the above discussion illustrates, the impacts of climate change and displacement are intertwined, and so are the gendered consequences of each, making understanding them increasingly important. While there is growing evidence on these topics, there is still a gap in the literature on how climate change interacts with gender inequality in the context of displacement in the Arab States region. Addressing this knowledge gap and clearly identifying the issues at the core of this nexus will help determine the most effective mechanisms to drive meaningful change and mitigate negative impacts.

The report is organized into three sections that each correspond to one of the main aims of the research:

1. to examine whether and how climate change intensifies pre-existing gender inequalities, drawing on primary and secondary data from Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen, and highlighting existing gaps in evidence around the nexus;
2. to explore how the climate-gender-displacement nexus is being addressed in these countries, drawing lessons, evidence and good practices from selected UNDP-supported projects implemented on the ground; and
3. to present recommendations for effective evidence-based policymaking and programming informed by the study’s findings.





SECTION 1

Intersections of climate change, gender and displacement

1.1 Methodology

The objective of this section is to unpack the interconnections among climate change, displacement and gender inequalities to uncover how climate change intensifies pre-existing inequalities, focusing on Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen.

1.1.1 Country focus: Climate, gender and displacement nexus

This study focuses on Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen to examine the intersection of climate change, gender and displacement, considering factors such as countries' exposure to diverse climate risks and displacement pressures, as well as the persistent gender inequalities embedded in their social and legal frameworks. Box 2 presents key indicators on climate change, gender inequality and displacement for the four focus countries.

 Iraq	 Jordan	 Lebanon	 Yemen
 ND-GAIN readiness score	 ND-GAIN readiness score	 ND-GAIN readiness score	 ND-GAIN readiness score
43.6	52.3	44.7	36.2
 Water availability per capita	 Water availability per capita	 Water availability per capita	 Water availability per capita
2,338 <i>m³ / year</i>	94 <i>m³ / year</i>	656 <i>m³ / year</i>	74 <i>m³ / year</i>
 Displacement	 Displacement	 Displacement	 Displacement
1.1 million <i>IDPs</i>	4.3 million <i>refugees</i>	1.5 million <i>Syrian refugees + 346,209 new IDPs</i>	4.5 million <i>IDPs</i>
 Gender Inequality Index (GII)	 Gender Inequality Index (GII)	 Gender Inequality Index (GII)	 Gender Inequality Index (GII)
0.558	0.433	0.360	0.838

Box 2. Key climate change, displacement and gender inequality indicators for Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen country selection

Climate change indicators

- Analysis of **Notre Dame Global Adaptation Index** (ND-GAIN) country rankings reveals significant disparities in climate change resilience across the region, particularly in terms of vulnerability and readiness. The United Arab Emirates holds the highest regional score (60.3 out of 100), while Sudan ranks the lowest (32.7). As expected, higher-income, fuel-exporting countries demonstrate greater readiness, whereas fragile and crisis-affected states are more vulnerable.
 - There is also notable variation among the ND-GAIN scores for the four focus countries. Jordan scores the highest (52.3), followed by Lebanon (44.7), Iraq (43.6) and Yemen (36.2). Yemen ranks lowest on both readiness and resilience, reflecting its heightened vulnerability to climate impacts.
- Of the four countries, Yemen and Jordan face absolute **water scarcity**, with annual per capita water availability in 2018 at just 74 m³ and 94 m³, respectively. With 656 m³ of water per capita annually, Lebanon is classified as water-scarce. Iraq's per capita water availability stood at 2,338 m³ per year,³⁶ below the annual global average of 5,589 m³ per capita in 2018.³⁷
- The Arab States region has been experiencing rising temperatures and extreme heat waves. Data for the Middle East and North Africa region indicate that **average annual temperatures experienced** a strong warming trend, increasing 0.36 °C/decade between 1981 and 2020.³⁸ Climate projections for the region under a business-as-usual scenario indicate that in the second half of this century, about half of the population will be exposed to recurring super- and ultra-extreme heatwaves, with high temperatures reaching 56°C or more and lasting for several weeks.³⁹

Displacement indicators

The Arab States region is home to significant numbers of refugees and IDPs, including:

- In **Iraq**, 1.1 million Iraqis have been internally displaced due to historical conflicts, ongoing insecurity and climate change.⁴⁰
- **Jordan** hosts 4.3 million refugees from multiple countries, including the State of Palestine, Syria and Yemen, among other countries.⁴¹
- **Lebanon** hosts around 1.5 million⁴² Syrian refugees and has 346,209 new IDPs as of September 2024⁴³.
- **Yemen** had 4.5 million IDPs at the end of 2024.⁴⁴

Gender inequality indicators

- **Gender Inequality Index (GII)**⁴⁵ in 2023⁴⁶—Iraq: 0.558; Jordan: 0.433; Lebanon: 0.36; and Yemen: 0.838.
- **Women's labour force participation rate**⁴⁷—Iraq: 10.8% in 2021 (10.7% modelled estimates in 2025); Jordan: 15.8% in 2023 (13.9% modelled estimates in 2025); Lebanon: 29.4% in 2019, and Yemen: only 6% in 2014 (4.9% modelled estimates for 2025).
- **Women's participation in the lower house of parliament**⁴⁸ in 2025—Iraq: 28.9%; Jordan: 19.6%; Lebanon: 6.3%, and Yemen: 0%.

1.1.2 Data collection methods

- **Primary data:** Six key informant interviews were conducted with practitioners and experts in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen, and four focus group discussions (FGDs) were held in Iraq with displaced women and men residing in Baharka Camp, an IDP camp in Erbil, in Iraq's Kurdistan region. More details on the demographics of key informant interviews and FGDs are available in annex 1.
- **Secondary data:** Sources include reports, peer-reviewed articles, presentations, news articles and statistics published between 2010 and 2024, focusing on climate change, gender and/or migration/displacement in the focus countries.

The analysis was guided by the gender analysis framework developed by Jhpiego, a Johns Hopkins University Affiliate, which provides a systematic way to organize information about gender differences in the context of displacement across different life domains.⁴⁹ For the purpose of this study, the following aspects were examined: practices and participation; access to and control over assets and resources; beliefs and perceptions; and institutions, laws and policies; with power dynamics as crosscutting in all domains (Table 1).

Table 1. Study domains according to the gender analysis framework^e

Gender analysis framework domain	Gendered aspects of climate change in context of displacement
Practices and participation: The norms that influence the behaviours, activities, roles and responsibilities of men and women, including information on their distinct roles, the timing and location of their activities, and their ability to participate in various economic, political and social activities, as well as in decision-making.	• The influence of climate change on how time is used and spent by displaced women and men. • The influence of climate change on the gendered division of labour within displaced households. • The influence of climate change on the roles and responsibilities of women and men around paid and unpaid work.
Access to and control over assets and resources: Information on gender relations that affect access to and control over the resources necessary for a person to be a productive participant in communities and nations. These include tangible assets (such as land, capital and tools) and intangible assets (such as knowledge, education and information).	• The influence of climate change on displaced women's and men's access to and control over assets and resources, including natural resources such as water and land, as well as access to education, schools and capital.
Beliefs and perceptions: The cultural belief system or norms about what it means to be a man or woman in a specific society. These beliefs affect men and women's behaviour, dress, participation, their decision-making capacity and their access to education, services and economic opportunities.	• The impact of climate change and displacement on gender norms and power dynamics, particularly how livelihood disruption and resource scarcity redefine roles, responsibilities and expectations of women and men. • Harmful practices increase as a result of climate change, such as child marriage and GBV.
Institutions, laws and policies: Information about men's and women's different formal and informal rights, and how they are differently affected by policies and rules governing institutions.	• Existing laws and policies that challenge or facilitate displaced women's and men's differentiated adaptive capacity in the face of climate change.
Power: Pervades all domains—it informs who has, can acquire and can exercise the authority to acquire and expend assets. It affects decisions about one's own body and one's children and determines whether an individual can take advantage of opportunities, exercise rights, move about and associate with others, enter into legal contracts, and/or run for and hold office. Power also determines how men and women are treated by different institutions, policies and laws.	

^e The Johns Hopkins University Gender Analysis Framework provides a structured approach to understanding gender roles and relations across four domains: access to assets; practices and participation; beliefs and perceptions; and institutions, laws, and policies, with power dynamics influencing all areas. It helps identify how gender differences affect individuals' lives and health outcomes, enabling more equitable integration into health systems and broader social development.

1.2 Key findings

The findings are based on the existing literature and primary qualitative research. They are organized into nine key insights across the domains of the gender analysis framework.

1.2.1 Practices and participation

Insight 1 Displaced women in rural areas are at high risk of losing critical livelihoods as their labour is concentrated in climate-vulnerable sectors, including agriculture and home-based food production.

In Iraq, 14 percent of employed women work in agriculture, compared to around 8 percent of men, while women make up about 20 percent of the sector's workforce.⁵⁰ In Yemen, around half of working women are estimated to be engaged in agriculture.⁵¹ A research study on climate adaptation found that almost two-thirds of Yemenis still rely on agriculture to make ends meet and that more than 75 percent live in rural areas, where women represent about 95 percent of the labour force.⁵² In Jordan and Lebanon, women's formal employment in agriculture is low, but their actual participation in agricultural activities is significantly higher, particularly in rural areas, where it often takes the form of informal or unpaid family labour. Agriculture therefore remains a key livelihood source for rural and refugee women in both countries, despite their limited representation in official statistics. Furthermore, over 18 percent of economically active women in Jordan are engaged in home-based projects, mostly food production and processing. These activities are closely linked to agricultural value chains and are thus highly vulnerable to climate change impacts, including reduced productivity and rising input prices.⁵³ In Lebanon, women in rural areas account for up to 43 percent of the agricultural workforce.⁵⁴ Across contexts such as these, women's contributions to agriculture are frequently underestimated, as activities such as packaging, sorting and processing are often unpaid and perceived as extensions of domestic care responsibilities. This is particularly evident in Iraq and Jordan, where such labour is rarely captured in official statistics.⁵⁵

Often, the income women make from agriculture and home-based food production work is critical to supporting their families' basic needs. Climate change poses a threat to these vital livelihoods. In rural communities in Iraq, while women are primarily responsible for unpaid care work, they also engage in subsistence agriculture to support their families, such as collecting dates and vegetables from nearby groves to sell in village markets for a small income. However, many groves have been damaged by droughts and water scarcity.⁵⁶ Similarly, in Jordan, climate change, and more specifically changes in rainfall patterns and farming cycles, are impacting food preservation and production timelines, thereby affecting the products women sell and their ability to sustain economically viable agricultural activities.⁵⁷ In Yemen, many women have been working on farms since childhood to support their families. For the majority of these women, agriculture is their only source of income, without it, they risk losing food security and stability. Much of Yemen's agriculture depends on rainfall, which makes it vulnerable to changes in precipitation patterns.⁵⁸



© UNDP Yemen. One of 60 farmers in Taiz supported by UNDP's Food Security Project to protect farmland from floods.

Forcibly displaced women are disproportionately represented in sectors that are highly vulnerable to climate change, and their limited livelihood opportunities further compound their vulnerability. For instance, in Lebanon and Jordan, agriculture is one of the few sectors in which Syrian refugees and displaced persons can secure work permits. The vulnerability assessment of Lebanon found that more refugee women were working in agriculture in 2022 than the previous year.⁵⁹ Not only does this lead to a high concentration of displaced people, both men and women, in the climate-vulnerable agricultural sector,^f but it also limits displaced households' ability to diversify and adapt their livelihoods in the face of climate change. Further, many people displaced from Syria are employed informally, leaving them more vulnerable to poor working conditions, arbitrary termination, withheld wages, exploitation and harassment.⁶⁰ Several studies in Jordan have found that refugee women are more likely than men to work informally, due in part to perceptions that their lower levels of education and experience mean they are not qualified for formal work.⁶¹ Given these factors, informal agricultural work is the most common type of employment for Syrian displaced women in both Lebanon⁶² and Jordan. Without social and labour protections, and with restricted ability to work in other sectors, many refugee women working informally in the agricultural sector have livelihoods that are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Climate change compounds the constraints faced by forcibly displaced people, particularly those originating from farming areas, by impeding the viability of return as a lasting solution. Economic conditions are an important consideration for displaced households when deciding whether to return. Climate change's impact on resources such as water and land is making these considerations more challenging. In fact, the rate of return among farming households in Iraq is noticeably lower than the rate among non-farming households, due to climate-related impacts such as water scarcity, soil salinity and low productivity that pose major challenges to return.⁶³ This situation was also mentioned during FGDs conducted with women in an IDP camp in Iraq, as multiple participants identified water scarcity in their areas of origin as a deterrent to return.

^f ILO (2018) found that Syrians accounted for almost 70 percent of the total workforce across 33 commercial farms surveyed in Mafraq and Irbid governorates in Jordan. A study by the American University in Beirut (2020) found that while the agricultural sector employs only 5.5–6 percent of the Lebanese population, 24 percent of Syrian refugees in Lebanon are estimated to work in the agricultural sector.

Studies of return dynamics for Syrian refugees in Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan have found salient gender differences in some aspects of return. For example, return decision-making is often unequal across gender lines, and women face unique cultural and legal challenges to reclaiming housing, land and property without the support of male relatives. For example, title documents are rarely in women's names, complicating claims when male relatives have died.⁶⁴ Despite these challenges, initial trends suggest that displaced Syrian women may be returning to Syria at higher rates than men. This may be due to conscription policies that discourage men and families with military-aged male members from returning, as well as high male mortality rates, which have increased the number of female-headed households.⁶⁵ Actual return data since the fall of the Syrian regime show that 51 percent of the approximately 750,000 returnees were women.⁶⁶ Further analysis is needed to better understand the gender dimensions of return. In Iraq, concerns related to water scarcity were reported as a key challenge to return.

Insight 2 Climate-driven economic stress is pushing more women into productive work, resulting in an increase in the “double burden” of productive and care work.

“It is sad because part of the main reason we are not going back home is that we are afraid that we will face another displacement. We lived in a village in Mosul. I have heard that the people suffer from a lack of water, and many have left the village and moved to the city. How can I face another displacement?”

FGD, woman aged 35+, IDP camp, Iraqi Kurdistan

Climate change is increasingly pushing women into income-producing work to support their families, while still shouldering the primary responsibility for unpaid care work. In times of crisis, disease or disaster, women take on additional responsibilities and are often overburdened with both paid and unpaid work. Importantly, the new roles women take on during such events usually come in addition to, rather than replacing, their existing responsibilities.⁶⁷

This dynamic is particularly evident in displaced communities, where humanitarian crises intensify pressures on households. In such contexts, women, especially displaced women, are often required to take on productive work while continuing to fulfil traditional roles and responsibilities such as childcare, cooking, cleaning and other domestic labour. In Lebanon, for example, livelihood loss among some Syrian displaced men has challenged their traditional breadwinner role, and obliged women in their households to engage in paid work

to secure household income, while their unpaid responsibilities remain largely unchanged.

Evidence from across the Arab States region aligns with this pattern. According to a 2023 UN Women study in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon, refugee women overwhelmingly reported increased responsibilities both within the household and in providing for their families, particularly in Iraq and Lebanon. However, this increase in women's paid and unpaid labour did not always translate into changes in household decision-making dynamics, except in female-headed households.⁶⁸ In Yemen, many women, particularly those who are internally displaced, have also taken on additional roles that were traditionally performed by men, as conflict and climate factors have resulted in many men being killed, injured or forcibly displaced. Like Syrian refugee women in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon, Yemeni women continue to shoulder traditional household responsibilities while also serving as their families' primary income earners, resulting in a "double burden" of productive and care work.⁶⁹

Climate change further intensifies this growing burden of work both inside and outside the home. Scarcity of resources such as water, food and basic income increases stress around household management and makes meeting basic family needs more difficult. At the same time, climate change increasingly threatens women's income-generating activities outside the home—particularly in agriculture and home-based food production, in which women are overrepresented—thereby limiting their earning potential and livelihood stability (as discussed in insight 1).

The research also identified a trend in which climate impacts on agriculture are forcing men to seek livelihoods farther from home, further reshaping women's roles and responsibilities. A 2022 study in Iraq found that in the climate-affected city of Baiji, men and boys were moving from farms to cities to seek temporary and permanent employment, leaving women and children with increased household and agricultural workloads.⁷⁰ Key informant interviews with experts in Iraq and Lebanon echoed this trend. While evidence is emerging, further research is required to fully understand these dynamics across different locations.

Insight 3 Forcibly displaced women in climate-affected areas are at greater risk of GBV as scarce resources increase economic pressure and household tensions.

"We see the impact on rural communities, which depend on agriculture as their main source of income. We see that farmers struggle to plan for their season each year. Because of water scarcity... they cannot adapt to climate change, including drought. They cannot adopt smart agriculture practices, they cannot buy water... [As a result] men seek income, resources or job opportunities in the city centre. They tend to migrate, even married men, leaving women behind to take care of their houses. This is where we see women being more affected."

Key informant interview, Iraq



© UNDP Lebanon • Fouad Choufany Ain Zebde, Lebanon – Catherina Sleiman, a farmer benefiting from enhanced irrigation systems.

Household water scarcity is increasingly identified as a trigger of tension, with women most often responsible for managing water—a task that becomes increasingly stressful in the face of climate change. While women are rarely responsible for proactive tasks such as refilling the household water tank and often lack access to household finances to purchase additional water, some reported being blamed by their husbands for household water shortages.⁷¹ In both Jordan and Iraq, water scarcity has been linked to increased likelihood of family disputes and intimate partner violence.⁷² An expert from Lebanon explained that as climate change increases pressure on natural resources, it will continue to affect women's ability to fulfil their perceived responsibilities, including the provision of food and water. This issue is especially amplified for forcibly displaced women.

Women's responsibility for collecting and managing household water can expose them to risks of violence outside the home, with forcibly displaced women facing heightened vulnerability. For example, in Jordan, water availability per capita is not



uniform, and refugees residing in camps have the least access.⁷³ While most households outside of camps are directly connected to the public water grid, people living in camps must collect water from communal taps, a responsibility that primarily falls to women. In Azraq camp, Jordan, water scarcity has contributed to tensions between neighbours and communities, and women are

reported to face verbal abuse and sexual harassment as a result. Female-headed households are most at risk but tend to under-report violence and sexual harassment due to social norms and the stigma associated with sexual harassment. Instead of reporting violence, women often opt to travel longer distances to find alternative sources, which can extend the hours they spend on housework and increase time poverty.⁷⁴ In Iraq, overcrowding around water collection points is also raising security concerns for internally displaced women and impacting gender dynamics. Internally displaced women in Iraq who were originally tasked with collecting water are no longer doing so alone due to safety concerns. Overcrowding and fights in queues have pushed many women to bring their husbands or brothers with them, or to stop going altogether. This change in gender dynamics—men and women going together to water collection points—is reportedly causing community tension.⁷⁵ Key informants from Yemen indicated that many women have been forced to travel longer distances to fetch water for their households due to shortages, putting them at risk of harassment and injury.

The management of scarce water resources is stressful for both men and women. However, women typically bear primary responsibility for household management. As a result, they experience a disproportionate share of this stress.

Tensions rooted in harmful gender norms, combined with the insecurity, resource scarcity and economic stress associated with displacement and climate change are also visible within the home. Incidents of intimate partner violence and domestic violence are higher during displacement and in times of economic scarcity, stressors that tend to be exacerbated by climate change. In

contexts where harmful gender norms already exist, tensions, frustrations and anger stemming from harsh social and economic conditions and the breakdown of support networks often result in physical, economic and psychological abuse

of women and children by male family members. For instance, a study conducted among internally displaced men in Ninewa, Iraq, revealed that women are more vulnerable to GBV because men, by their own acknowledgement, redirect their anger towards women.⁷⁶ The same study found that the most commonly cited perceived trigger of domestic violence was the economic situation of families, as findings from this research further confirmed. Similarly, an assessment among Syrian displaced persons living in Lebanon found that GBV and violence against children increased in the context of displacement. This was primarily linked to harmful expressions of masculinity: when men lose their roles as breadwinners and feel unable to provide for or support their families, some resort to violence against their spouse and children.⁷⁷



In displacement settings, the economic situation of families is the most commonly reported perceived trigger for domestic violence.

The economic and social stress of climate change can also increase the risk of early marriage. Rates of early marriage are often higher in communities facing displacement

“GBV is accepted by the community. They see it as a practice that the male head of the family is allowed to do. We are seeing this connection become stronger when women lack income or resources. Some communities and some family members think it’s acceptable if a man beats his wife because he is under pressure because he can’t find job opportunities or provide for his family.”

Key informant interview, Iraq

as well as those living in poverty,⁷⁸ conditions both exacerbated by climate change. While detailed research and data on this link are lacking for the four target countries, this trend is most common in settings where social and gender norms prioritize women and girls’ reproductive roles as wives and mothers over education and economic participation.⁷⁹ This suggests that further examination of this issue may be warranted in the target countries. While early marriage is itself a form of GBV, many displaced families perceive it as a protective coping mechanism against sexual violence and a way to face financial struggles.⁸⁰

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Participation and practices

- Up-to-date, gender-disaggregated data on the employment of non-displaced, internally displaced, refugee and returned people in the formal and informal economies by sector in the target countries.
- Detailed studies on the linkages between climate, displacement and 1) early marriage, 2) sexual and reproductive health and 3) return dynamics in the four target countries. Such research could help identify those most vulnerable to negative impacts, especially by exploring the conditions for these topics across different geographic, socio-economic, and ethnic/cultural lines.

1.2.2 Access to and control over resources

Insight 4 Displaced populations’ increased vulnerability to water scarcity has gendered impacts on sexual and reproductive health that reduce access to safe and dignified hygiene and menstruation.

Water scarcity and household rationing can place additional stress on women during menstruation,⁸¹ especially for displaced women.⁸² Deprioritizing menstrual hygiene in water-scarce contexts, both during acute and prolonged displacement, can leave women without adequate access to clean water needed for safe and dignified menstruation.⁸³

During acute displacement events, including those caused by disasters, access to water and hygiene items can be severely disrupted, and access to privacy can be limited, posing challenges to safe and dignified menstruation.⁸⁴ This is especially true in informal housing and crowded camp settings, which are often affected by greater water scarcity and inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene services.⁸⁵ Across contexts, girls' inability to safely and comfortably manage menstruation at school can also act as a push factor for dropping out.⁸⁶

Global research shows that climate change also has pressing direct and indirect implications for women's sexual and reproductive health and rights. Climate change can significantly affect maternal and newborn health by driving livelihood losses and increasing food and water insecurity. In addition, growing water scarcity undermines water, sanitation and hygiene conditions that are essential for sexual and reproductive health. Water scarcity can also lead to dehydration, posing a significant threat to both mother and child during pregnancy. Heat is also correlated to poor outcomes, with a 1°C increase in temperature the week before delivery corresponding to a 6 percent increase in the likelihood of a stillbirth.⁸⁷

Research across the region has found that displacement is linked to poor sexual and maternal health, as displaced women tend to be more vulnerable to maternal mortality, sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies, early or forced marriage and sexual exploitation. Stigma, reinforced pre-existing discriminations and a lack of information driven by gendered norms can make sexual and reproductive health needs more difficult to meet during displacement. These barriers compound already limited access to essential maternal and neonatal care, as well as to reproductive health counselling and education, family planning, contraceptives, and testing and treatment for STIs.⁸⁸ While the general findings suggest important connections, detailed research on the linkages between climate change and sexual and reproductive health and rights for displaced women in the target countries is lacking, making this an important area for further exploration.



Insight 5 Although many forcibly displaced women depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods, they rarely, if ever, own land. This limits their control over land and its use and consequently their ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

While rural women in countries like Iraq or Yemen depend more on agriculture than men, gender gaps in land ownership persist, undermining women's preparedness to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Estimates are scarce, but the available data indicates that women make up only around 5 percent^g of agricultural landholders in the MENA region, despite the fact that about 40 percent of them work in agriculture. Of the four target countries, women's land ownership remains particularly weak in Jordan and Lebanon.⁸⁹ A study in Iraq placed women's land ownership among farm managers and wage workers at 17 percent.⁹⁰ While data for Yemen are unavailable, estimates suggest that women own only around 1 percent of agricultural land.⁹¹ Women also face numerous challenges in accessing their housing, land and property rights.⁹² Such limited land ownership increases women's dependence on male relatives, reduces their bargaining power and restricts access to credit and investment, undermining their adaptive capacity.⁹³

Displacement can cause significant additional barriers to women's ability to obtain and retain land ownership, limiting their capacity to adapt to climate change. In Iraq, many IDPs and refugees have had their land and property appropriated or otherwise faced disputes upon return due to family conflicts, lost deeds or unlawful occupation. In such cases, women seeking to retain land can be at a particular disadvantage due to greater insecurity of tenure, including higher rates of missing documentation, long-standing social and economic barriers, and limited access to justice, as well as discriminatory inheritance and divorce laws and practices.⁹⁴ Similar challenges exist for Syrian displaced and refugee women residing in Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq in claiming property rights in Syria.⁹⁵ In Yemen, restrictive laws and traditions are compounded by conflict-related tenure insecurity, increasing competition for access to water sources, overlapping land governance and inadequate dispute resolution mechanisms—all of which severely limit forcibly displaced women's access to secure land ownership. Water scarcity in Yemen has contributed to land disputes, as individuals and communities compete to retain access to dwindling sources for agriculture and livestock.⁹⁶ Despite relying on agriculture for their livelihoods, refugee women face legal barriers to purchasing land in host countries due to standard restrictions on land ownership for non-citizens.^h

Insight 6 Forcibly displaced women face barriers in accessing markets, financial services, information, expertise and social capital that limit their capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Access to markets, finance and technologies plays a pivotal role in empowering women, including displaced women, to strengthen their resilience and their adaptation and mitigation efforts in the face of climate change. Through access to markets, women can commercialize goods and services, increasing their earnings and achieving greater financial autonomy.⁹⁷ Access to finance enables investing in climate-resilient practices and

g Based on data from 8 countries in MENA.

h For example, an ILO (2022) review of national policy in Iraq found that refugees are not permitted to own land.



© UNDP Iraq • Mohammed Al-Bahbahane. Local vendors sell fresh fruits and vegetables to communities in Iraq's Mesopotamian Marshes.

technologies that improve agricultural techniques and is therefore crucial for diversifying livelihoods.⁹⁸ Likewise, financial stability helps women recover from climate-induced shocks more effectively. Additionally, climate information can empower women to make informed decisions about their economic activities, thereby strengthening their adaptive capacities.⁹⁹

Many forcibly displaced women lack access to physical markets and finance, limiting their capacity to adapt to climate change and climate-induced disasters. Findings from FGDs conducted with female and male IDPs in Iraq indicate that gender norms often limit women's access to markets, for example by discouraging women from going alone to marketplaces and assigning this responsibility instead to male relatives. While women's freedom of movement varies by household and community,ⁱ insecurity tends to increase restrictions in unsafe, new or untrusted environments, which could include IDP and refugee camps, areas experiencing climate-related community tensions over scarce resources, or areas affected by disaster. Participants in FGDs also reported that access to family financial resources is traditionally controlled by male relatives, especially in the case of women who are not earning their own income. This situation limits women's ability to make autonomous financial choices and hinders their ability to respond quickly to emergency financial needs. This finding was echoed in a gender analysis of the climate-affected marshlands in Iraq, which showed that in most families, houses, productive land and agricultural equipment belonged to the male head of household.¹⁰⁰

Access to credit—a resource often unavailable to forcibly displaced women—may have a significant impact on their capacity to adapt to climate change. While findings on

i A UN Women (2018) report found that in Lebanon, opinions among Syrian refugees varied regarding whether they had more, the same or less freedom of movement than before their displacement. In Jordan, while about a quarter of Syrian refugees reported having fewer freedoms, others reported that they had a more active life outside the household than ever before.

the overall connection between climate resilience and credit are mixed,¹⁰¹ experts have observed that a lack of formal credit lines can impede women's ability to invest in climate-resilient livelihoods (such as drought-tolerant crops or water-efficient technologies) or to access the training and information they need to increase their resilience.¹⁰² The research indicates that refugees' overall access to formal financial services is low.¹⁰³ In Jordan, regulatory requirements and documentation barriers have historically limited refugees' access to bank accounts and formal financial services,¹⁰⁴ restricting their ability to save or use financial products. However, the Central Bank of Jordan is now advancing reforms to expand financial inclusion for refugees and other non-Jordanian residents, recognizing the economic and social benefits of doing so.¹⁰⁵ Forcibly displaced women face additional challenges, as they are less likely to have assets (such as land) that would qualify them for loans and are often affected by stereotypes about women's economic roles, which reduce their access to financial information and lower their confidence to apply for lending schemes.¹⁰⁶ Limited access to finance also restricts access to safety nets or insurance schemes in the event of disasters, further exacerbating their impact.

Forcibly displaced women's access to information and expertise is limited by biases that discount their potential contributions outside the home, hindering their ability to develop adaptive solutions to climate change. Findings from FGDs in Iraq suggest that the majority of participants, regardless of gender, emphasized the need to prioritize livelihood programmes for unemployed men within the family. This preference is rooted in traditional perceptions of men as primary breadwinners, with women only considered for such programmes after male family members. Women in these discussions said that although they had expressed interest in attending community programmes or training courses, their childcare responsibilities limited their ability to leave home regularly for extended periods. These sentiments were echoed by women in the other three target countries. In Yemen, for example, women have historically been underrepresented in technical and vocational education and training, as the skills taught are associated with jobs typically performed by men. When Yemeni women did participate, it was primarily in fields viewed as feminine, such as sewing and hairdressing, where skills are already in abundant supply and offer limited income potential.¹⁰⁷ These barriers can lead to significant gaps in skills and expertise, particularly in new technologies and innovative techniques related to combating climate change. The research also suggests that women lack important information on climate change. For example, a study conducted among rural women in Jordan found that approximately half had limited knowledge of the causes and impacts of climate change, including women holding leadership positions at the local level.¹⁰⁸ This suggests a need to increase awareness and understanding of climate change and its gendered impacts to support effective resilience and adaptation efforts.

This research finds that, in the context of displacement, women in many communities also have lower access to social capital in addition to lower access to information and finance. Displacement disrupts and fragments family and community social ties, and this can be more difficult for women to overcome, as they often spend most of their time in the home, while men tend to be more active outside it, going to markets and seeking work. As one key informant from Iraq noted, the loss of social ties and capital among women can be an invisible trend that leaves them with fewer means to recover from hardship due to their lower levels of economic and societal activity. Women often depend on social networks for support with unpaid care responsibilities and setting up informal community credit

and savings groups. Loss of such social capital reduces their adaptive capacity in the face of climate change. Further in-depth research on this dynamic is lacking, suggesting an opportunity to explore the gendered impacts of disrupted social ties and the experiences of reconstructing social support networks amid pressure from both forced displacement and climate change.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Access to and control over resources

- Country- and community-level insights into the impact of displacement and climate change on women's access to social capital.
- Gender-disaggregated data on the proportion of displaced people who hold bank accounts and can access formal loans.
- Gender-disaggregated data on displaced people's access to and ownership of smartphones and detailed information on Internet access.
- Gender-disaggregated data on displaced people's main sources of information, news and data related to climate change.
- Where possible, detailed data on the percentage of agricultural land owned by women and displaced women's loss of tenure in the four target countries.



1.2.3 Beliefs and perceptions

Insight 7 Strongly held traditional gender norms are being challenged in communities of displaced people, where economic stress from climate change and displacement is shifting livelihood patterns, putting pressure on women to contribute to household income.

As noted earlier, climate change is likely to shift gender roles. **In the face of climate-induced stressors, shifting livestock migration patterns, decreased agricultural production, the deterioration of arable lands, drought-related migration and volatile food prices, more women are being forced to take on roles traditionally reserved for men.** This is especially true in contexts of displacement and poverty, where additional strains on livelihoods and food security are common. Research with displaced Syrians in Lebanon found that as patterns of mobility and lifestyles changed, both men and women were forced to redefine core aspects of their identities. For example, many women reported feeling that they have lost their femininity after assuming new roles as income providers for their families. For some women, however, working in paid employment has created a sense of empowerment. Men overwhelmingly reported that the inability to find work caused lower self-esteem and a lost sense of masculinity, as they feel they have failed in their role as primary breadwinners.¹⁰⁹

However, a complex tension emerges around this situation: despite significant economic needs in many households, long-standing norms often remain in place, shaping male and female identities and/or limiting the alternatives available for women's work. In Iraq, women who are forcibly displaced by climate change, many of whom were previously engaged in household farming, have difficulty finding alternative livelihoods due to conservative social norms that deem many occupations inappropriate for women. These views often persist even in the face of increased economic stress within the household.¹¹⁰ FGDs conducted with conflict-affected IDPs in Iraq demonstrated this tension between economic need and existing social norms. Both male and female participants strongly rejected a scenario in which the wife worked outside the home while the husband stayed there because he was unable to find work. The scenario was seen by some to impact the dignity of men, as they are unable to fulfil their role as providers, and by others as a stressor on family relationships.

“Men with dignity will not accept their wives working while they stay at home. They will not accept it. Men with dignity believe that the husband should be the primary provider for the family and are unwilling to accept their wives having to work to support the family. They take pride in providing for their families and feel that it is their responsibility to do so.”

FGD, woman aged 18–30, IDP camp, Iraqi Kurdistan

“The family will split in the end, that’s for sure. The family will not be united. Also, the children will not be raised properly, they will have zero education.”

FGD, man aged 35+, IDP camp, Iraqi Kurdistan

Nevertheless, under appropriate conditions, participants also indicated that increasing women's participation in income-generating activities could be an important means for achieving adequate living standards and improving household self-sufficiency.

"This [paid work] can be empowering for wives, as it gives them an opportunity to use their skills and work to provide additional income for their families"

FGD, woman aged 18–30, IDP camp, Iraqi Kurdistan

"Everyone thinks differently. Other men might not feel the same. It depends on how they grew up and their environment. Some men see it as very offensive. Personally, I see it as an improvement in our society. Previously, I would not allow my wife to work but now I see absolutely no problem with it. It gives me pride to see her working and helping me to provide for our family, and I don't need to ask for help from other people... but if the situation improved, I would not want her working."

FGD, man aged 18–30, IDP camp, Iraqi Kurdistan

As climate change continues to put pressure on livelihoods, traditional gender roles are being challenged. Given the deeply personal connections between gender, breadwinning and people's sense of self-worth and identity, as illustrated in the above quotes, these shifts affect each individual, household and community differently and need to be navigated with care.

Insight 8 **Forcibly displaced women are underrepresented in decision-making circles, and their voices and perspectives are often overlooked in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.**

Refugee and IDP women and girls are underrepresented in decision-making bodies, which limits their ability to discuss and develop strategies to adapt to climate change. Despite having a critical stake in climate change responses, forcibly displaced women in the Arab States region remain sidelined in negotiations, planning and resource allocation. For example, an assessment by IOM Iraq (2016) found that while over 41 percent of IDPs addressed their needs through community committees, 91 percent of the assessed committees had no female representation. Camp committees in Iraq are a vital source of information for planning humanitarian responses. The underrepresentation of women in these committees means that essential perspectives are excluded and the needs and concerns of women and girls may be overlooked.¹¹¹

Excluding forcibly displaced women from these roles omits important perspectives, knowledge and expertise from strategy development and decision-making. There is a growing consensus that women, including forcibly displaced women, can be active

agents of positive climate action, given their role in managing critical household food, water and energy resources.¹¹² In Jordan, women play key roles in household resource management and problem-solving, such as managing solid waste, while men are more likely to address these issues externally, for example, by interacting with and negotiating with the municipality.¹¹³ Because men are more likely to be represented in committees and decision-making bodies, this important household-level perspective is often lost, making it harder to identify and implement household-level climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

The contributions and perspectives of women as household resource managers do not necessarily translate into influence at the national or international level, even among those who participate in local community committees. A report in Jordan found that rural women are more likely to have access to local community organizations and less likely to be engaged with national organizations. They also noted that lack of coordination between local and national stakeholders in climate change adaptation limits the role of local organizations in national responses. This, in turn, limits women's access to information, their ability to influence policy and programming, and their participation in decision-making, potentially leading to policies and strategies that are neither applicable nor effective at the community level.¹¹⁴ Similar dynamics exist in Yemen. While women are largely absent from the political scene, women's networks have been established to advocate on specific issues related to peacebuilding and protection. However, lack of information-sharing and poor communication have often led to a disconnect between political elites and women working at the grass-roots level, with rural women especially marginalized.¹¹⁵ In many cases,



© UNDP Jordan Tafleh, Jordan .A farmer benefiting from new rainwater harvesting systems that reduce operating costs and protect livelihoods against climate change.

displaced women are absent from these spaces altogether.

Excluding forcibly displaced women from community discussions and decision-making both omits important perspectives and limits their access to information and early warning systems. Being left out of community- and national-level discussions also prevents women from accessing information on climate conditions, priorities, strategies and threats outside the home, making them more vulnerable in the event of an emergency. This is further compounded for forcibly displaced women, who are living in “new” communities and are less likely to participate in the public sphere.¹¹⁶

Women’s exclusion from decision-making bodies is underpinned by social norms that restrict and undervalue their ability to participate in community activities outside the home. The gendered division of labour in the Arab States region is influenced by social norms that limit women’s economic and community roles outside the household. Women in the region^j spend five to six times more time on unpaid care work than men do, compared to 3.2 times globally.¹¹⁷ Lack of access to childcare support further limits women’s, especially mothers’, opportunities for representation in community-based governance and participation in decision-making and planning bodies. Furthermore, perceptions of women as leaders are more negative in the region than elsewhere.¹¹⁸ For displaced women, unpaid care responsibilities often increase due to the need to meet survival needs, further restricting their participation,¹¹⁹ an issue compounded by limited services and disrupted social support networks.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Beliefs and perceptions

- Exploration of grassroots efforts (or lack thereof) focused on climate change adaptation and mitigation in the target countries among both men and women. Examination of forcibly displaced women’s roles in and exclusion from these efforts, as well as their capacity to gather underrepresented perspectives and communicate them to higher-level bodies.
- Qualitative research into how far changing practices around women contributing to income-generating activities have been accompanied by lasting and/or meaningful shifts in beliefs and perceptions related to gender norms in communities where climate change and displacement have increased economic pressures.

1.2.4 Institutions, laws and policies

Insight 9 Although climate policies in the four countries acknowledge gender equality and human mobility issues, particularly within their NDCs, the climate-gender-displacement nexus is not adequately addressed in practice.

In the Arab States region, governments are increasingly recognizing the need for integrated approaches to address climate change in the context of multiple, intersecting crises. These include economic and financial instability, high debt and unemployment levels, large populations of forcibly displaced persons, and the escalating impacts of climate-induced

^j Based on available data from Algeria, Iraq, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, the State of Palestine and Tunisia.



UNDP Iraq • Claire Thomas. Traders sell vegetables in Mosul inside Al Yarmouk market, which has been rehabilitated with the support of UNDP's Funding Facility for Stabilization (FFS).

disasters. Nonetheless, many countries in the region continue to lag behind in integrating gender and displacement into their responses to climate change.

Globally, of the 156 countries that had submitted their initial, updated or second-generation NDCs as of March 2022, 61 (39 percent) acknowledged issues relating to human mobility. These were mainly in Central or South America, followed by Africa and Asia.¹²⁰ In contrast, only six countries in the Arab States region (Jordan, Tunisia, Iraq, the State of Palestine, Lebanon and Somalia) address the intersection between climate and displacement in their NDCs. **Globally, of the 110 countries and territories that submitted updated or second-generation NDCs,^k 106 (96 percent) included gender equality considerations, up from 53 in the initial round of NDCs.**¹²¹ In the Arab States region, eight countries (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the State of Palestine, Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia) include gender in their NDCs, though to varying degrees.

A review of NDCs and selected climate policies across the four focus countries of this report shows that human mobility, displacement and gender are acknowledged individually; however, the climate-gender-displacement nexus remains insufficiently addressed. The following section analyses how these dimensions are reflected across the four countries by comparing their latest generation NDCs with previous submissions.

Iraq

Iraq is making significant efforts to develop policies to combat climate change and is increasingly incorporating a climate security perspective. Its first NDC,¹²² submitted in 2021, acknowledged linkages between fragility, crisis and climate change, particularly in relation to disruptions in the implementation of plans and projects to combat climate change and ensure environmental sustainability. For example, due to protracted conflicts, the implementation of the National Environmental Strategy and Action Plan (2013–2017)¹²³ was disrupted. The 2021 submission recognized that women and children are disproportionately affected by climate impacts, but it stopped short of embedding concrete gender-responsive targets or displacement-specific measures.

k As of 1 April 2024.



© UNDP Jordan: Supports the planting of native species to combat desertification and strengthen climate resilience in Aqaba.

The **NDC 3.0**, published in 2025, reflects a more structured effort to embed inclusion within climate action, particularly for displaced persons and women. It emphasizes strengthening resilience in the agricultural sector, an area that contributes around five percent of GDP, sustains rural livelihoods and employs a significant share of women, while highlighting the need for targeted support to rural women, internally displaced women and refugees in climate-sensitive sectors. The updated framework introduces clearer indicators to advance women's participation in climate action and aligns resilience-building with food security, soil restoration, livelihood diversification and economic recovery objectives. While displacement-specific measures could be further elaborated, the NDC 3.0 signals stronger commitment to social inclusion, women's economic empowerment and just transition principles, including dedicated support for rural women to apply climate-oriented solutions that advance the SDGs.

Jordan

By developing the Jordan National Climate Change Policy 2013–2020 (JNCCP) and a series of issue-specific national plans and strategies, Jordan became the first country in the Arab States region¹²⁴ to partially integrate gender into its national climate policy. These policies underscore women's crucial role in climate change mitigation and adaptation, recognizing that climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable groups. Measures introduced to promote gender equality include strengthening financing mechanisms for mitigation and adaptation through market-based instruments to step up mitigation efforts, promoting technology transfer, including women in the National Committee on Climate Change and raising awareness, among others. In September 2022, the country released its National Climate Change Policy (2022–2050), which incorporates gender mainstreaming and outlines actions to be implemented as part of climate-related strategies, projects and programmes to ensure that gender considerations are integrated into all sectoral strategies and activities.

Despite these positive developments, displacement is not systematically addressed from a gender perspective. An analysis by the Ministry of Environment found that plans and policies fell short in their treatment of factors such as location, ethnicity, nationality, socio-economic status and education and have not sufficiently engaged a diverse range

of perspectives in policy design.¹²⁵ With regard to displacement, the primary focus is on integrating IDPs and refugees within the broader category of “vulnerable groups” in climate action plans, without differentiating between displaced men and women. Jordan is still yet to submit its NDC 3.0, however, in its **most recent NDC**, Jordan emphasizes the need to enhance the resilience of displaced individuals and host communities, particularly in relation to water challenges, while also recognizing the distinct impacts experienced by women, girls, men and boys. It underscores the importance of gender-responsive strategies to strengthen climate resilience, with an emphasis on promoting social justice, inclusion and equal human rights.

Lebanon

Lebanon’s **NDC 3.0** marks a clear and substantive evolution from NDC 2.0 (2021), both in scope and depth. While NDC 2.0 strengthened mitigation targets and acknowledged gender as a cross-cutting issue identifying energy, waste and water as priority sectors for gender mainstreaming, it largely remained sector-based, with general commitments to inclusion but limited operational guidance, weak integration of displaced populations, and few concrete mechanisms for implementation.¹²⁶ In contrast, NDC 3.0 places mitigation, adaptation and disaster risk reduction at the core of a fully integrated climate strategy, explicitly aligning climate action with the Rio Conventions (biodiversity and land degradation), the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the Sendai Framework, Agenda 2030 and the Global Biodiversity Framework. It shifts from a primarily environmental framing to a human security and



© UNDP Lebanon. The restoration of Tal Abbas’s earthen canals increased irrigation, expanded cultivated land, and created new jobs for farmers.

resilience lens, positioning climate change as a structural risk multiplier amid Lebanon's economic collapse, infrastructure deficits and rising climate hazards.

Importantly, NDC 3.0 significantly deepens its gender responsiveness by linking climate policy to the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2022–2030), addressing structural inequalities such as women's limited land ownership, economic marginalization in agriculture and exclusion from decision-making. It also expands its focus to explicitly include internally displaced persons, persons with disabilities, informal workers and other vulnerable groups, while promoting women-led cooperatives, digital innovation, early warning systems, climate-smart agriculture, ecosystem restoration and disaster-resilient investment standards. Overall, compared to NDC 2.0's largely declarative approach, NDC 3.0 adopts a more systemic, cross-sectoral and justice-oriented framework that embeds climate action within economic recovery, social stability and inclusive human development, though implementation challenges remain related to the integration of solutions to address the climate-gender-displacement nexus, as well as financing, capacity and data.

Yemen

Although Yemen has yet to ratify the Paris Agreement, it has made important progress in national climate planning by initiating its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process, submitting its **NDC 3.0 Vision and Framework (2025)**, and developing its Long-Term Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS). The NDC 3.0 marks a significant shift toward a more integrated and climate risk-informed approach, recognizing the interlinkages between climate change, conflict, displacement, and pressures on basic services and critical infrastructure. It frames climate change not only as an environmental challenge but as a structural driver of human insecurity, economic instability, food insecurity, and ecosystem degradation, with disproportionate impacts on women and displaced communities. The framework prioritizes climate resilience, economic diversification, social stability, and human development, emphasizing inclusive participation and climate justice to ensure that women, youth, displaced populations, and other vulnerable groups are engaged as both agents and beneficiaries of climate action. This represents a clear evolution from Yemen's 2015 INDC, which acknowledged climate-induced poverty and displacement and identified women as vulnerable but did not meaningfully address gender equality or recognize women's role as stakeholders in climate action. Nonetheless, since the outbreak of conflict in 2015, ongoing crises have significantly constrained Yemen's capacity to advance and implement its climate commitments.

Given the strong interlinkages between climate change, gender and displacement in the Arab States region, the latest generation of NDCs now moving into their implementation phase, provide a strategic opportunity to better integrate gender and human mobility considerations, particularly forced displacement, into national climate frameworks. This includes ensuring that displaced women are recognized not only as vulnerable groups but also as active agents in adaptation and mitigation efforts. Embedding clear targets and inclusive participation mechanisms within NDC implementation can strengthen responses to climate-induced displacement and structural inequalities, while ensuring that the perspectives of displaced women and men, as well as host communities, meaningfully inform climate policy and programming.

At COP30, Parties made progress on the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) under Article 7 of the Paris Agreement, which seeks to enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability to climate change in line with the Agreement's temperature goal, and adopted 59 Belém Adaptation Indicators to operationalize global adaptation tracking. These indicators, agreed under the UNFCCC, are set to provide a monitoring framework across the seven thematic targets, including in key sectors such as water, food and agriculture, health, ecosystems, infrastructure, livelihoods and poverty reduction. While several indicators are relevant to women and displaced women, particularly those related to basic services, climate-resilient livelihoods, early warning systems, social protection and inclusive planning, gender is treated largely as a cross-cutting consideration rather than embedded through robust, mandatory gender-responsive metrics. While disaggregation by sex, age, disability and displacement status is encouraged within the framework, it is not yet consistently required across all indicators, which may limit the extent to which the specific and intersecting vulnerabilities of displaced women are fully reflected in reporting. As a negotiated outcome, the current set of indicators represents an important step forward in global adaptation measurement; however, further technical refinement would strengthen their overall robustness. Additional clarity on methodologies and baselines, greater attention to intersecting vulnerabilities, and a continued shift toward outcome-oriented metrics could enhance their capacity to comprehensively assess resilience progress, including for women and displaced populations.¹²⁷

Box 3. Good practice from Somalia

Somalia's most recent NDC notes that as climate shocks like droughts, floods and resource shortages increase, women and girls are affected the most. This is because they are often responsible for providing food, water and care, yet have limited access to resources, services and decision-making. Climate-induced displacement and insecurity further heighten their exposure to GBV, exploitation and loss of livelihoods, particularly in overcrowded displacement sites where access to essential services such as reproductive health care, protection and income opportunities are severely constrained. Against this backdrop, Somalia has emerged as a regional leader in integrating climate, gender and displacement considerations through its **NDC 2.0 (2021)** and **NDC 3.0 (2025)**, recognizing that climate change exacerbates conflict and disproportionately impacts displaced women and children, who constitute 70–80 percent of internally displaced populations. The country's vision is to advance a just and resilient future in which women, youth and marginalized groups are not merely beneficiaries but active drivers of climate solutions, green growth and inclusive adaptation.

Somalia offers a useful example of progress on the climate-gender-displacement nexus. The country's updated NDC (2021 and 2025) recognizes how climate change can exacerbate drivers of conflict and insecurity and highlights the heightened vulnerability of displaced women to GBV and humanitarian risks.¹²⁸ The NDC identifies women and other groups vulnerable to climate change as agents of positive change, emphasizing their pivotal role in advancing low-emission and climate-resilient development. It also acknowledges critical gender-related challenges across various sectors, underscoring the importance of actively promoting gender equality.



SECTION 2

From research to practice, a gender review of climate-related projects

The objective of this gender review is to assess how six UNDP projects in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen address climate change in contexts affected by displacement integrate gender equality. In doing so, the study also reviews the role of women, particularly displaced women, in these projects and identifies obstacles that limit women's engagement and hinder effective responses to gender-specific challenges.

2.1 Methodology

The review focuses on six selected UNDP projects that meet the following criteria:

- implementation in one of the four target countries;^l
- a direct or indirect focus on climate resilience, climate adaptation or disaster risk reduction;
- implementation after the adoption of the Paris Agreement; and
- a specific focus on women and displaced people.

The selected projects are guided by UNDP's Social and Environmental Standards programming principles,¹²⁹ including Leaving No One Behind (LNOB)^m and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).ⁿ Table 2 provides an overview of the selected projects. The methodology includes a literature review of key project documents and remote key informant interviews with UNDP project staff and partners involved in their implementation.

Table 2. Overview of selected projects

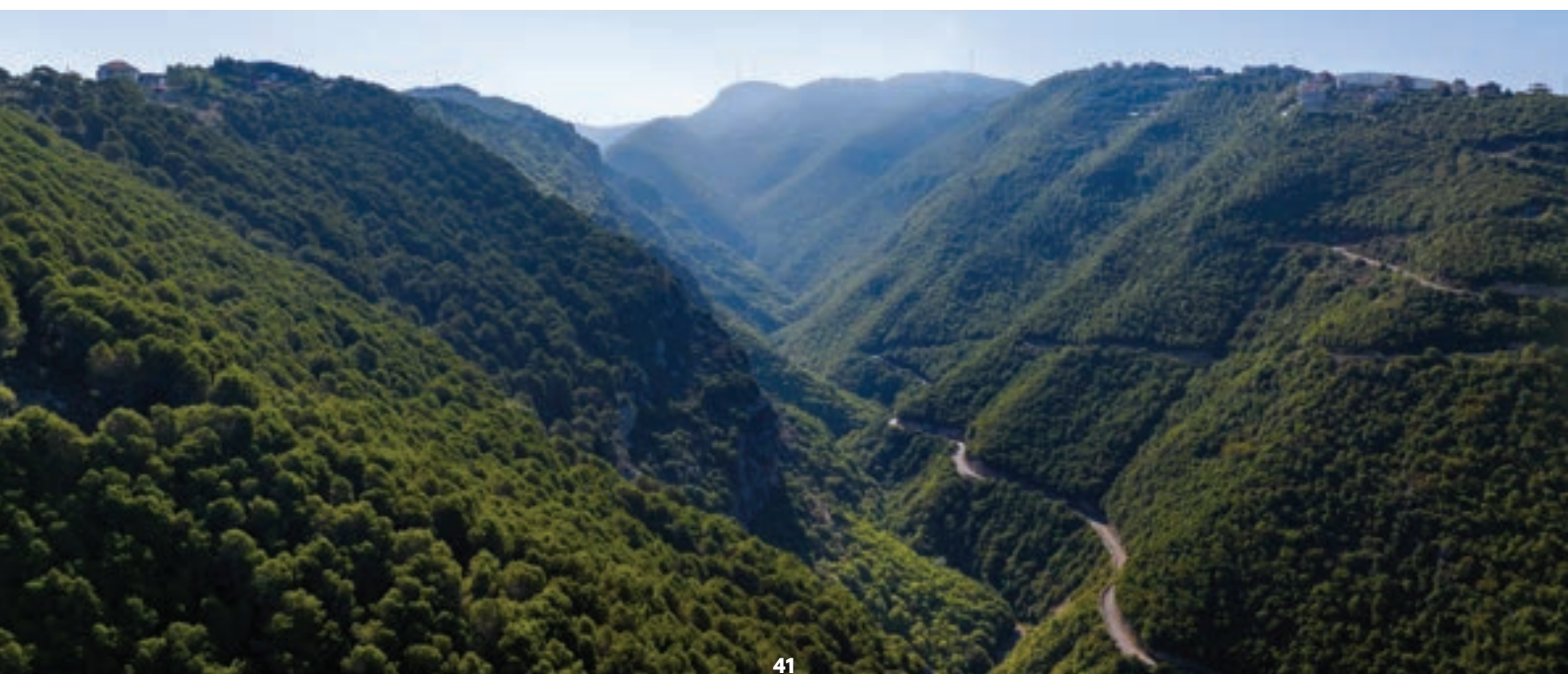
Project	Objectives	Key outputs/outcomes
Iraq - Strengthening Resilience and Socio-economic inclusion through Employment Creation (SRSE Iraq)	Strengthening economic resilience and decreasing vulnerabilities through support for sustainable livelihood creation for the most vulnerable groups in selected governorates.	• Support vulnerable populations in recovering from the economic shock of the COVID-19 pandemic through cash assistance and priority housing rehabilitation. • Create livelihood opportunities by building individuals' capacities and increasing the productivity of selected sectors—housing, agriculture and small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
Iraq - Climate Action for Human Security in Iraq's Al-Hawizeh Marshlands (CAHS Iraq)	Support crisis-affected communities with a special focus on women's empowerment through a) deployment of innovative clean drinking water supply and wastewater treatment systems and b) support for livelihood diversification and ecotourism activities consistent with and in coordination with the Government's natural resource management plans.	• Innovative solutions for clean water, wastewater treatment and climate security were introduced in Al-Hawizeh marsh communities. These included solar photovoltaic water-purification systems and wastewater management via constructed wetlands. • Support for livelihood diversification and ecotourism to raise household income and protect ecosystem services, thereby enhancing resilience against future climate-related displacement among marsh communities.

^l The selected projects were at different stages of completion.

^m As an overarching programming principle, LNOB requires programmatic interventions to address the needs of those most marginalized, discriminated against and excluded, and to empower them as active agents of development. Five factors are used to identify who is being left behind: discrimination, geography, vulnerability to shocks, governance and socio-economic status.

ⁿ Gender equality and women's empowerment seeks to identify and integrate the different needs, constraints, contributions and priorities of women, men, girls and boys into programming. It ensures that both women and men are able to participate meaningfully and equitably, have equal access to programme and project resources, and receive comparable social and economic benefits.

Project	Objectives	Key outputs/outcomes
Jordan - Scaling up Water Innovation for Climate Security in Northern Jordan (Mafrq and Jerash) (SWICS Jordan)	Identify and nurture innovative water-security entrepreneurs and SMEs by scaling up water innovation for climate security in northern Jordan, while addressing youth unemployment, gender inequality and vulnerability to climate change impacts and water scarcity.	- Local water innovation start-ups, entrepreneurs and SMEs received support to strengthen market ecosystems for climate security solutions. - Local climate-security solutions were piloted in Mafrq and Jerash. - Lessons learned were assessed and disseminated to enable replication and scaling up of successful pilots.
Lebanon - Women's Economic Participation Project (WEP Lebanon)	Contribute to the economic empowerment of Lebanese and Syrian displaced women in the targeted locations through value-chain development.	- Strengthened the capacities of Lebanese and Syrian displaced women to integrate into the labour market. - Women-led businesses and cooperatives improved productivity and competitiveness and gained greater access to assets, spurring innovation and addressing unfavourable resource control and ownership dynamics. - Increased public support and improved enabling environment for women's economic empowerment at the household, community, business and municipal levels. - Technical and financial support was provided to municipalities and unions of municipalities to enhance local economic development planning and implementation in support of women's economic empowerment and inclusive value chains.
Yemen - Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY Yemen)	Enhance the resilience and self-reliance of crisis-affected rural communities through support for livelihood stabilization and recovery, local governance and improved access to sustainable energy.	- Communities are better able to manage local risks and shocks, thereby increasing economic self-reliance and enhancing social cohesion. - Institutions are responsive, accountable and effective in delivering services, building the social contract and meeting community-identified needs.
Yemen - Yemen Food Security Response and Resilience Project (YFSRRP Yemen)	Aims to improve the availability of and access to food and nutritious diets for targeted households in both the short and medium terms and to enhance Yemen's capacity to respond to food insecurity.	- Income opportunities for targeted vulnerable households were enhanced. - Small-scale agricultural production and community infrastructure were rehabilitated. - Project management, monitoring and learning systems were established.



2.2 Key findings

2.2.1 Integration of gender equality

Targeting women

In all six projects, the LNOB and GEWE principles were applied^o and vulnerable and at-risk groups were targeted, including women and displaced women. The projects worked with at-risk and/or conflict-affected groups and communities, including IDPs, refugees, rural communities, youth, women and people living in poverty. Across all the projects, displaced women were targeted. For example, the **Women's Economic Participation Project (WEP)** in Lebanon aimed to contribute to the economic empowerment of Lebanese and Syrian displaced women through value-chain development. In Iraq, the **Climate Action for Human Security (CAHS)** project targeted the Al-Hawizeh marsh communities, who are impacted by conflict and climate change, focusing specifically on women from these communities, most of whom were previously displaced. The **Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY)** project aimed to enhance the resilience and self-reliance of crisis-affected rural communities, including internally displaced women, through livelihood stabilization and recovery.

The analysis found that women were targeted in these projects in three main ways: 1) as affected populations in need of support; 2) as participants in community consultations to inform project implementation; 3) as potential agents of change in households or communities requiring opportunities for empowerment.

Women as beneficiaries: In their initial context analyses and targeted gender assessments, many of the projects found that women face unique challenges and vulnerabilities not experienced by men. For example, in the SWICS Jordan programme, “gender and vulnerability assessments found that women in rural areas constitute the majority of the poor and are dependent for their livelihoods on natural resources that are threatened by climate change.” In Yemen, projects found that “rural women and women farmers, who account for most of the agricultural workforce in Yemen,^p have been particularly at risk of hunger. Women also suffer labour-market discrimination, which confines them to informal and casual employment, as well as pay inequity.”

Given these conditions, most projects specifically included women in their targeting criteria. For example, the SRSE Iraq programme stipulated that women should account for 30 percent of participants in cash-for-work and skills training projects. While this falls short of their share in the total population (approximately half), it represents a significant target given that women make up only 11 percent of the workforce in Iraq.¹³⁰ Other programmes took a less direct approach. For example, the SWICS Jordan project did not set a specific percentage target for women beneficiaries but instead based targeting upon community consultations and a gender analysis that considered perceptions of women, displaced people, host communities, farmers and farm workers and woman-headed households to

^o See annex 2 for a detailed analysis of how these principles were applied in each of the six projects.

^p Less than 1 percent of agricultural landholders in Yemen are women. However, women provide 60 percent of labour in crop farming, 90 percent in livestock rearing and 10 percent of wage labour (IFAD, 2021).



© UNDP Iraq • Claire Thomas. Mother of two Rahbia Dahesh Huseein stands outside her Mosul home, which is being rehabilitated by UNDP's FFS to help displaced families return.

identify the most appropriate participants.

Women as consulted participants: Some projects took deliberate steps to engage women in shaping interventions. For example, the SRSE Iraq project consulted women in the design of cash-for-work activities, leading to outcomes such as childcare support, increased privacy and women supervisors. FSRRP Yemen also consulted women project participants to identify priority activities for their involvement in temporary employment opportunities. Including women in project design prior to implementation can increase their agency and elevate their role beyond that of project beneficiaries.

Women as agents of change: Beyond identifying women as in need of support, many of the projects recognized them as important agents of change in their households and communities who could benefit from greater empowerment and opportunity. For example, the SWICS Jordan project highlighted that women have local knowledge of and leadership in sustainable resource management and often adopt sustainable practices at the household and community levels. Women's participation in water management programmes was identified as highly effective in promoting water conservation practices within households and communities. The project found that their involvement in managing small-scale irrigation projects had improved water use efficiency. The ERRY Yemen programme was specifically designed to drive positive developments in community resource management by increasing women's participation in decision-making. Their inclusion led to a shift in community priorities towards education and health, which in turn "contributed to rebuilding the social fabric." In the CAHS Iraq programme, women's involvement in ecotourism was noted as having the potential to "contribute to the establishment of enabling conditions conducive to long-term peace and stability."

Engaging women on the basis of both their immediate needs and their unique capacities to contribute to their households and communities has the potential to compound the positive impacts of programming.

Gender equality analysis

The review finds that all projects conducted some form of gender analysis, although

methods and depth varied. Project documents included country-level and contextual information regarding the status of women and gender inequality, providing an overview of the environment in which each project operates. Project-specific analyses were also included. For example, the **Scaling Up Water Innovation for Climate Security Project (SWICS)** in Jordan conducted a gender analysis to assess differences in the roles of women, men, girls and boys in project-related locations, including their access to assets and participation in different sectors. A gender action plan was developed based on these results. The design of the **Strengthening Resilience and Socio-economic Inclusion (SRSE) project** in Iraq drew on a multisectoral community-based assessment and gender analysis to better understand community needs, GBV risks and social cohesion in the targeted communities. According to the project document, this enabled the inclusion of measures to increase women's participation and adoption of conflict-sensitive approaches throughout implementation.

While such assessments were successful in establishing baseline indicators, identifying stakeholder groups and shaping interventions, not all provided an in-depth understanding of gender power dynamics and relationships, which is necessary for interventions that work around gender norms. For the most part, gender analyses were limited to providing country- and governorate-specific socio-economic and contextual information. For a programme to be gender-responsive and meet the GEWE criteria, it needs to incorporate in-depth gender analyses, including primary research with potential stakeholder groups, including men, women, boys and girls, to generate relevant insights on their needs, potential barriers to inclusion, gender norms, roles and gender power dynamics that relate to the project's intended strategies.¹³¹

For the most part, project designs demonstrated awareness of gender roles and cultural sensitivity. In many cases, this was essential to ensuring women's participation in project interventions. For example, in the SRSE Project in Iraq, a specialist childcare service was provided to encourage women's participation in the vocational training sessions. Additionally, some activities targeting women were conducted in closed areas such as schools and medical centres, to protect their privacy and ensure their participation. The **Yemen Food Security Response and Resilience Project (YFSRRP)** considered the burden of unpaid work on women and tailored cash-for-work activities to women's availability (in some areas in the morning and in others in the afternoon, based on preferences). These strategies to ensure women's participation operated within gender norms but also indirectly challenged them to varying degrees. For example, providing affordable, reliable childcare to increase women's participation in community life challenges traditional gender roles by demonstrating the value of unpaid care work.

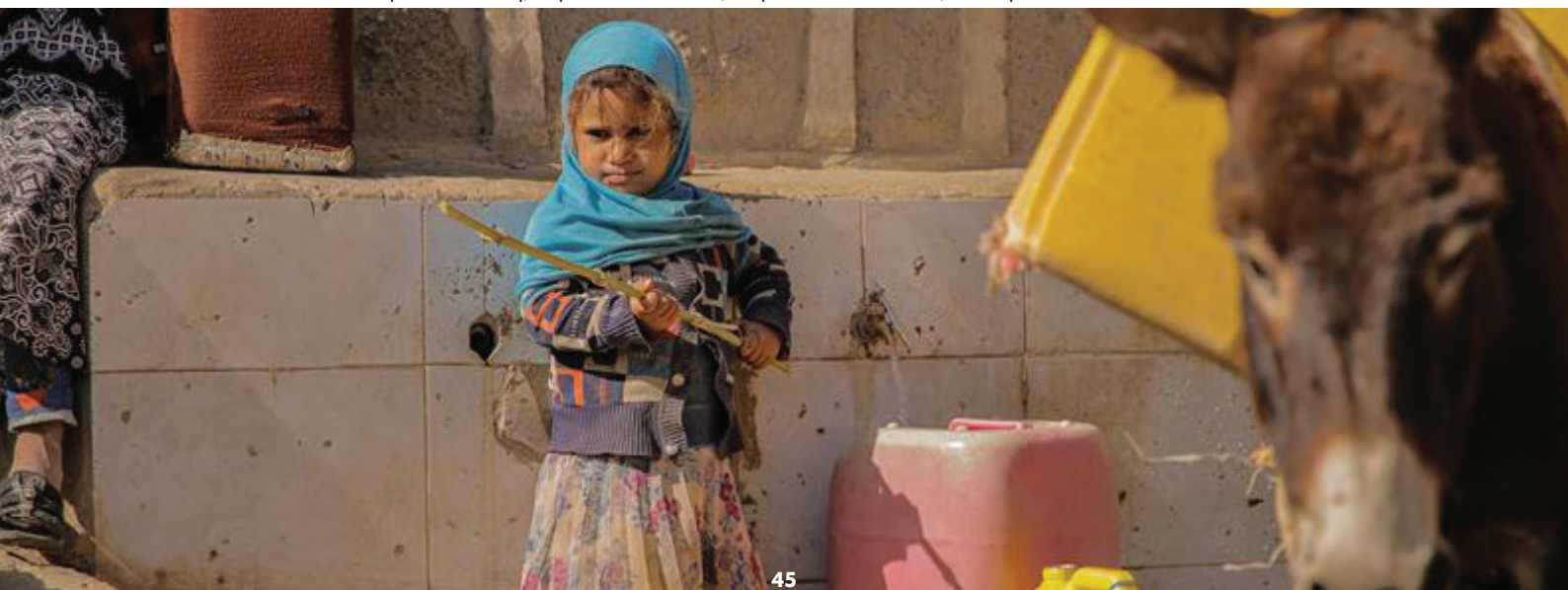
In some instances, the projects introduced activities that directly aimed to transform existing gender norms. For example, one of the ERRY project activities focused on revitalizing village community cooperatives (VCCs), which serve as a bridge between local populations and local authorities. The VCCs were seen as legitimate structures by the local community and worked with community mobilizers and "insider mediators" to develop community resilience plans. Women became quite active in the VCCs, and their involvement led to a greater focus on the provision of basic services—including health, education and water, sanitation and hygiene—in resilience plans. According to project reports, a significant change has been observed in communities' perspectives on women's participation in community governance structures and their ability to influence what they

consider priorities for community initiatives.^q Another positive example in this project were crop and livestock value-chain interventions that benefited women. ERRY was the only one of the six assessed projects to have been completed at the time of the review, providing endline data and unique insights into the potential for change in community perceptions. The final evaluation noted a shift in cultural norms, with women now more willing and able to sell milk products, which was previously considered a social taboo. Additionally, women who participated in the project reported having increased confidence and a greater say in household decisions.

Implementing context-sensitive programming increases the opportunity for positive community-driven social change. For example, the final gender analysis report from the CAHS Iraq project found that participants showed high levels of openness towards the project, including regarding the creation of job opportunities for women in the ecotourism sector, and that men in the community expressed support for increasing women's participation in decision-making processes. The WEP Lebanon project also found that it succeeded to some extent in getting men to acknowledge a dynamic of unequal decision-making at the household level in rural areas. Additionally, the project made some advances in changing perceptions among municipal officials, as reflected in their commitment to GEWE. In the ERRY Yemen project, support focused on women's businesses but also increased access to community services and assets, shifted some social and institutional norms and strengthened women's power and agency.¹³²

While these examples illustrate that well-designed programming can spark community-led shifts in perceptions and attitudes, such changes must be implemented in line with the Do No Harm principle. For instance, it is critical to recognize the "double burden" of paid work and domestic responsibilities that many women already disproportionately carry and to address this through community initiatives that seek to redistribute and reduce this workload. In addition to providing care services, engaging men to shift norms around the stereotyped division of gender roles that are connected to long-held social identities is essential to triggering change in a way that minimizes harm and avoids backlash, including the risk of increased domestic violence or the deterioration of vital social support networks.

q Changing communities' perspectives on women's participation in governance structures is vital, as women's political participation at all levels across the four target countries remains extremely low. The OECD Women in Politics Indicator (2019), which combines data on women parliamentarians and women ministers, stands at 25 percent in Iraq, 15 percent in Jordan, 22 percent in Lebanon, and 0 percent in Yemen.



2.2.2 Addressing the climate-gender-displacement nexus

This section systematically explores the intersection of climate, gender and displacement in the selected projects, drawing on the insights identified in Section 1. It highlights approaches and activities used in the assessed projects that directly respond to each insight, identifying gaps and opportunities for strengthening how projects address the climate-gender-displacement nexus.

Insight 1 Displaced women in rural areas are at high risk of losing critical livelihoods as their labour is concentrated in climate-vulnerable sectors, including agriculture and food production.

The analysis identified the following examples of programming approaches that address this insight:

- **Rehabilitation and maintenance of agricultural lands and water facilities**, including irrigation and conveyance systems to support continued agricultural production and livelihoods (FSRRP Yemen).
- **Promoting environmental sustainability and eco-friendly practices** by training women in sustainable agriculture, drip irrigation, composting, circular economy, reducing waste in agrifood processing, procuring raw material from sustainable local farms, and eco-friendly packaging (WEP Lebanon); the sustainable use of water (ERRY Yemen); and water reuse techniques, standards and regulations (SWICS Jordan).
- **Strengthening livelihood diversification with training and investment** by promoting and increasing women's roles in ecotourism (CAHS Iraq); supporting home-based food processing and handicraft businesses, and investing in technical and vocational education and training for women to work in sustainable value chains (WEP Lebanon); providing women with productive technology and seed funding for microbusinesses (ERRY Yemen); and cash-for-work initiatives (FSRRP Yemen).
- **Targeted social protection** for households whose livelihoods were at risk due to changing weather patterns in the form of cash assistance and livelihood programming (SRSE Iraq) and for women-headed households in remote areas through economic empowerment initiatives (WEP Lebanon).
- **Increasing food security** by providing families already affected by climate change with in-kind support and skills training, including home-based activities to ensure women's involvement (CAHS Iraq).



GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Threats to the agricultural sector are among the most well-known and researched impacts of climate change. All six assessed projects included at least one component that addresses loss of livelihoods in the agricultural sector. This suggests an opportunity to evaluate project outcomes, identify the most effective types of programming, and scale up and adapt these interventions.



© UNDP Yemen Barakah, an entrepreneur from Aden, prepares a seafood dish for her home-based business. The Aden Fishery Harbour Project provided 50 local women with training in seafood processing and entrepreneurship, alongside grants to help launch their businesses.

Insight 2 Climate-driven economic stress is pushing more women into productive work, resulting in an increase in the “double burden” of productive and care work.

The analysis identified the following examples of programming approaches that address this insight:

- **Advising women on how to face barriers to economic participation**, such as housework and limited training opportunities (CAHS Iraq).
- **Providing targeted support for women’s care work responsibilities**, including childcare services for women engaged in cash-for-work and training opportunities (SRSE Iraq).

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

While many of the projects sought to increase women’s participation in income-generating activities, only one of the six assessed projects mentioned providing any support to address the “double burden” of productive and care work. Any project that focuses on increasing women’s participation in the formal economy should do so through strategies to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work so that women can attend training, awareness sessions and community decision-making committees outside the home. Providing childcare, or child-friendly spaces, is critical to improving women’s access to the labour market. This must be accompanied by efforts to address gender norms around care work, including how it is perceived and distributed within households, through community engagement and work with men. Harmful conceptions of masculinity often prevent men from contributing to childcare and domestic responsibilities and prevent women from working outside the home. Tackling some of the root causes of gender inequality by involving men more directly in these discussions using culturally sensitive and appropriate approaches should be explored and encouraged.

Insight 3 Forcibly displaced women in climate-affected areas are at greater risk of GBV such as domestic violence and early marriage, as scarce resources increase economic pressure and household tensions.

The analysis identified the following examples of programming approaches that address this insight:

- **Efforts to limit climate-related resource scarcity** through environmental conservation (CAHS Iraq) and sustainable practices (ERRY Yemen); rehabilitation and maintenance of water and agricultural systems (FSRRP Yemen) and investment in new climate solutions (SWICS Jordan).
- **Conflict resolution and mediation training** to support the peaceful resolution of community tensions, including those related to scarce resources, with a focus on women's inclusion (ERRY Yemen).
- **Bringing together diverse community members around programming and decision-making**, such as resident and displaced women coming together to exchange ideas and discuss priorities (WEP Lebanon). While not directly focused on climate change, such platforms can provide a strong foundation for discussing the gendered impacts of this.
- **GBV training and development of complaint resolution mechanisms** for project staff and community members to identify and respond to GBV (FSRRP Yemen). Although these identification and complaint mechanisms do not focus directly on how climate change impacts GBV, they may influence it and thus can be included in climate change programming. For example, incorporating a GBV-awareness module into technical project training on solar panel repair (CAHS Iraq).
- **Raising awareness among men and women of the context-specific norms and attitudes that underlie GBV** through curricula for couples and community leaders (SRSE Iraq). Although such initiatives do not specifically focus on the impacts of climate change on GBV, the awareness gained in the sessions can support understanding of how climate change affects GBV and be used to combat it.

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

While the projects included numerous GBV components, a systematic and explicit analysis of potential climate-related GBV risks and responses to them was largely lacking. Accordingly, there is an opportunity to supplement foundational GBV programming (such as awareness-raising on attitudes and norms underlying GBV, training on fostering safe disclosure and referrals to GBV response services and systematic mainstreaming of GBV risk mitigation) with climate-specific modules. Topics to address include scarce resource management, conflict-resolution skills for couples and communities and awareness-raising around the stress climate change may put on relationships, ensuring components engage both men and women. For example, if a household-level conflict-resolution component delivered during a women's skills training on resource management is not complemented with a similar session for men, it could place a disproportionate burden on women to improve communication, creating a risk that they could feel responsible for partner violence. Finally, all projects should include zero-tolerance policies for sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment.

Insight 4 Displaced populations' increased vulnerability to water scarcity has gendered impacts on sexual and reproductive health that reduce access to safe and dignified hygiene and menstruation.

The analysis identified the following examples of programming approaches that address this insight:

- **Increasing women's agency around water use issues** by increasing their participation in community water use associations and local governance committees, thereby shifting programme focus from community-level infrastructure to shared health and education priorities (ERRY Yemen).
- **Education and awareness-raising** on sustainable water use (ERRY Yemen) and on water reuse techniques, standards and regulations, specifically targeting women and youth (SWICS Jordan).
- **Rehabilitation and maintenance of water infrastructure**, including water harvesting and watershed management equipment (FSRRP Yemen).
- **Supporting local solutions**, investing in local water innovation start-ups and funding pilots to combat scarcity (SWICS Jordan).



GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

While project components aimed at combating water scarcity can increase water availability for women's specific health needs, none of the six projects explicitly addressed water for women's health. Such programming could include awareness-raising about the importance of water to women's health to normalize appropriate consumption in times of scarcity.



Insight 5 Although many forcibly displaced women depend on the agricultural sector for their livelihoods, they rarely if ever—own land. Persistent gender-based barriers to land ownership limit their control over land and its use and, consequently, their ability to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The analysis identified the following examples of programming approaches that address this insight:

- **Supporting women’s ability to generate income and capital** by fostering women-owned businesses, creating new jobs for women and providing training to help them enter new fields such as renewable energy (WEP Lebanon).
- **Promoting women’s involvement in value chains with opportunities for women’s leadership** by conducting gendered value-chain analyses in different sectors (WEP Lebanon), including ecotourism (CAHS Iraq).



GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

None of the six projects included components to directly support women’s land ownership. This issue is closely tied to traditional gender norms and practices that prevent women from accessing their lawful share of inheritance under applicable legal frameworks, even if this share is smaller than that of men. While direct programming on land ownership was not a part of these projects, there is an opportunity to enhance women’s access to and use of the land through approaches that address this structural barrier to gender equality and increased resilience. Such an assessment could also yield valuable insights to inform complementary or future programming and advocacy aimed at improving women’s equitable access to land ownership.

Insight 6 Forcibly displaced women face barriers in accessing markets, financial services, information, expertise and social capital that limit their capacity to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The analysis identified the following examples of programming approaches that address this insight:

- **Providing women with capital in the form of productive technology**, such as small dairy production equipment, and connecting them to markets (ERRY Yemen).
- **Investing in women-run businesses**, such as local start-ups and climate solutions (SWICS Jordan); providing seed grants for microbusiness opportunities such as cafes, wedding planning and photography (ERRY Yemen); and training women-led business owners on practices that improve their adaptability to climate change, such as climate-smart production processes, crop diversification, and sustainable best agricultural practices (WEP Lebanon).
- **Strengthening women’s access to knowledge and skills** through the provision of technical and vocational education and training in value chains specifically identified as sustainable and women-friendly (WEP Lebanon), and skills training for household-level activities to support food security in at-risk communities (SRSE Iraq).

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the assessed projects include components that invest in women-owned businesses and increase individual women's access to productive skills and knowledge. While several components disbursed small grants and productive capital, opportunities remain to more directly facilitate women's access to credit, loans and broader financial resources. Projects that strengthen women's financial literacy—including understanding of the roles of banks and credit, knowledge of their rights and confidence in applying for loans and other financial opportunities—could further support these efforts. Supporting microfinance organizations or women's self-help groups can also help expand access to credit and savings and create a bridge to formal banking. Given that some women are prevented from accessing the above resources by social attitudes, norms and restrictions on mobility in some contexts, project strategies must be grounded in understandings of gendered economic roles across diverse groups (e.g., rural and urban populations; IDPs, refugees and host communities; women with and without formal education; and people with disabilities). Engaging men based on their role within production processes is also important.





© UNDP Yemen. Young women farmers in Taiz have seen clear improvements through floodwater harvesting and small-scale infrastructure support provided under the ERA Project.

Insight 7 Strongly held traditional gender norms are being challenged in communities of displaced people, where economic stress from climate change and displacement is putting pressure on women to contribute to household income.

The analysis identified the following examples of programming approaches that address this insight:

- **Awareness-raising on context-specific norms and attitudes** towards gender that limit or pose risk to women at the community and household levels (SRSE Iraq).
- **Facilitating discussions on how gender norms may constrain community well-being** during training sessions and community interactions that engage men. Because gender roles can often be performed and perpetuated unconsciously, introducing gender as a topic creates space for communities to make intentional choices about norms and attitudes (WEP Lebanon).

GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The assessed projects show awareness of this dynamic. Rather than imposing conditions, some projects focused on creating spaces where communities can identify and discuss existing gender dynamics, with support from community agents of change who have the knowledge, facilitation skills and tools needed to navigate conflicts that arise. Household-level stresses linked to climate-induced resource scarcity and shifting gender norms can also be addressed through conflict-resolution approaches targeting the household (couple) level. Ultimately, any project aimed at increasing women's income should be grounded in a gender analysis to identify prevailing norms and roles, engage men and women at the household level and conduct separate community consultations with both groups to ensure implementation is effective, safe, supportive and context-sensitive.

Insight 8 Forcibly displaced women are underrepresented in decision-making circles, and their voices and perspectives can often be overlooked in climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

The analysis identified the following examples of programming approaches that address this insight:

- **Awareness-raising around context-specific norms and attitudes towards gender that limit or pose risks to women** at the community and household levels (SRSE Iraq).
- **Creating spaces where women's voices can be heard** by promoting their representation on community committees (ERRY Yemen) and ensuring that women participate alongside men in structured community dialogues (SRSE Iraq).
- **Highlighting and operationalizing the unique skills and knowledge of women** surrounding local resources, experience with sustainable practices, and the ability to transmit messaging and values to their families and communities (SWICS Jordan).
- **Consulting women on future programming** by engaging them in public consultations and enabling them to identify community needs and priorities (FSRRP Yemen).



GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Many of the projects included components to increase women's representation, seek their perspectives and integrate priorities into programming at the project and community levels. There is an opportunity to build upon these efforts by further exploring the diverse opinions among women themselves. Approaches may include ensuring women's participation in community committees as well as creating women-only or women-majority discussion spaces where the diversity of women's experiences can surface. Strategies should also account for managing resistance and ensuring women's continued representation throughout the project implementation and beyond. Similar efforts are needed to understand the perspectives of underrepresented men from disadvantaged groups, in line with the LNOB principal.

2.2.3 Bottlenecks and challenges

Several bottlenecks hinder efforts to address the climate-gender-displacement nexus. Some mirror challenges common in other projects aiming to increase women's participation in the public sphere, while others are specific to climate-responsive programming. The main issues are outlined below.

- **Social norms and beliefs** remain critical to women's participation in the public sphere and their roles in the private sphere. These norms influence gender roles and responsibilities, access to education and training opportunities, decision-making power within and outside the household and women's overall agency. Social norms and beliefs are prevalent not only in communities but also in the institutions (and their workforce) responsible for developing programmes and projects at the local, national and international levels.
- **Issues relating to markets and infrastructure**, including access to and availability of safe, affordable and adequate public transport, childcare, financial resources and economic opportunities.
- **The women most affected by climate change are likely the hardest to reach.** Like



© UNDP Iraq • Claire Thomas Hawija, Iraq – Agricultural land near the town of Hawija in the Kirkuk province of Iraq.

many challenges, climate change disproportionately impacts poor women, displaced women, women farmers, women-headed households and rural women, who are harder to reach and will most likely face limitations in participating in project activities. Reaching these groups requires greater preparation (including identifying project participants, establishing appropriate communication channels with them and exchanging relevant information), and appropriate measures need to be put in place to support their participation. Establishing early warning systems to monitor remote and rural communities can help identify vulnerabilities, as can including metrics to monitor hard-to-reach populations within these systems.

- **An in-depth gender and conflict analysis is required to understand the nuances of the climate-gender-displacement nexus and inform interventions.** Displaced women impacted by climate change cannot be viewed as a uniform group, as their circumstances vary significantly depending on the environments they live in, the reasons for their displacement and the specific climate-related factors affecting them (droughts, water scarcity, floods, etc.). The project review showed that in projects where general stakeholder analyses or community surveys were conducted, specific gender-related effects of climate change were not adequately identified or addressed, leading to missed opportunities for tailored interventions that could address specific gender-differentiated needs. For example, the ERRY project in Yemen provided solar lanterns to community members and organizations, which was reported to have improved project participants' incomes and employment opportunities while also generating savings through reduced energy costs. However, the focus groups conducted with women during the midterm evaluation found that they would rather have gas cylinders for cooking so they could avoid walking 3 km to fetch wood for household cooking.^r
- **While climate change is the defining issue of our time, research and programming on its gendered impacts in the Arab States region are relatively recent and not yet sufficiently understood.** While knowledge of the impacts of climate change in the region is growing, it remains limited. Local and international organizations are only beginning to pay closer attention to the importance of addressing the gender-climate nexus. As a result, evaluation reports and project documentation that could generate lessons learned, identify opportunities and inform new programmes are only just starting to emerge.

^r It was noted that gas cylinders are in limited supply in rural areas and require maintenance and regular refills. While this may have been beyond the scope of the ERRY programme, it highlights the importance of giving greater consideration to the localized needs of women to ensure maximum impact.

2.3 Towards a framework for the climate-gender- displacement nexus

There is clear and growing evidence that climate change, gender and displacement in the Arab States region are closely interconnected and form a nexus that is expected to become increasingly significant as the impacts of climate change intensify in the coming years. The importance of this nexus is reflected in a wide range of data sets, reports and studies from Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen, which reinforce and complement the findings of this research.

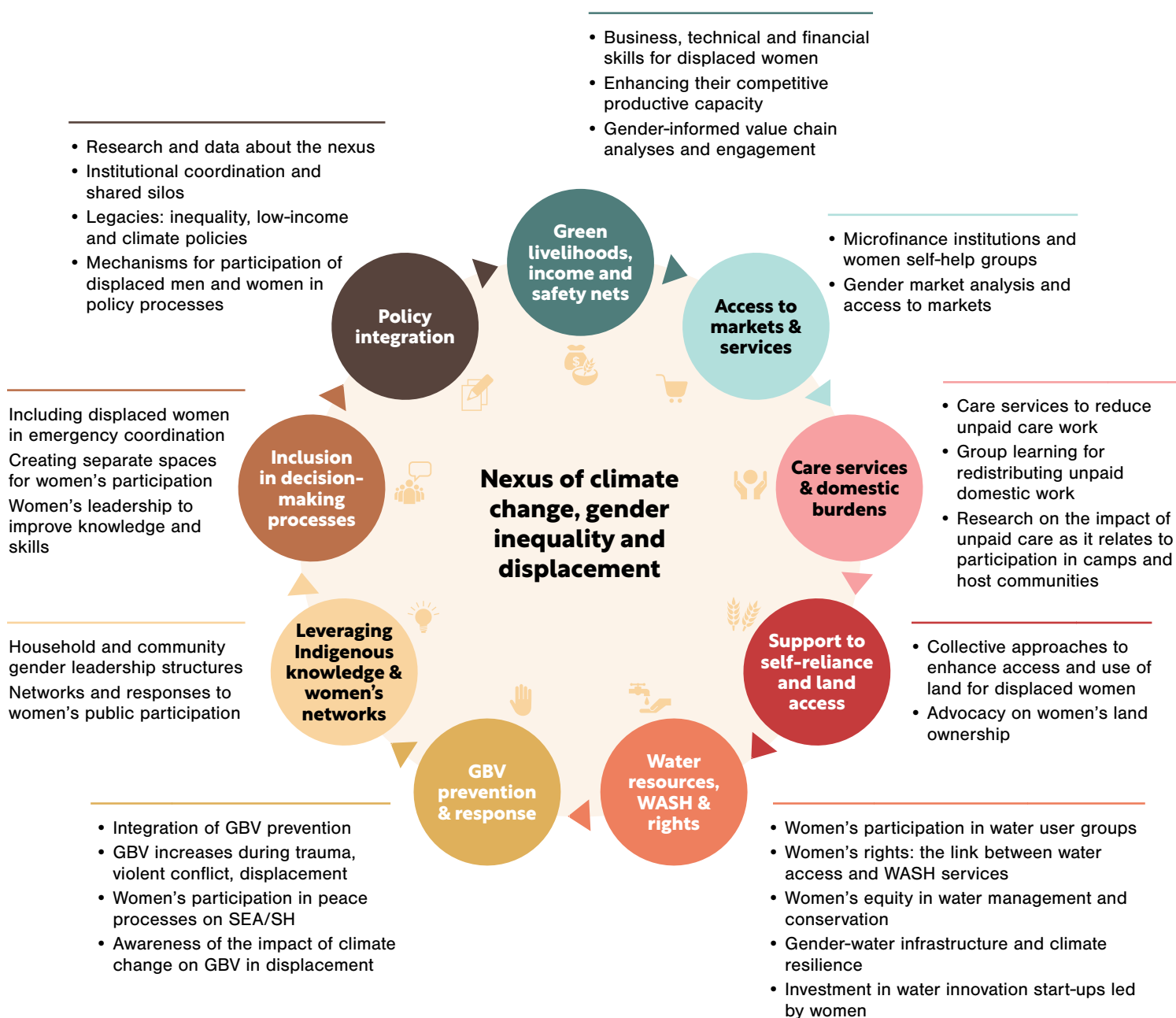
These linkages relate to the compounded impacts of climate change and displacement, which heighten the disadvantages women face and call for targeted responses, as summarized in the report's nine insights. The compounded impacts are reflected in the deterioration of the agricultural sector, on which many rural displaced women depend for their livelihoods, an increased “double burden” of productive and care work, GBV, early marriage and sexual and reproductive health concerns. Furthermore, displaced women face a double disadvantage regarding access to assets, markets, finance and social capital, which constrains their adaptive capacities and limits their participation in decision-making.

The insights into the linkages between climate change, gender and displacement span many domains and could be brought together into a framework to guide policy and programming on the nexus. This suggests ample opportunity for positive change through programming that is specifically tailored to, or designed with, an awareness of this nexus. Furthermore, the assessment found that even projects that do not directly address the climate-gender-displacement nexus often contain components highly relevant to it. In practice, the interconnected nature of climate change, gender inequality and displacement becomes evident through responses related to livelihoods, economic empowerment and agricultural productivity. This means that interventions initially designed with a narrower focus can yield multifaceted outcomes. This finding is promising, as it shows that climate-related projects can bolster their impact by deliberately integrating gender and displacement analysis and adjusting their strategies to achieve direct and measurable outcomes. Additionally, the research shows that similar impacts can be addressed through multiple pathways, suggesting that a wide range of approaches and entry points can help combat the gendered impacts of climate change.

While this study provides initial insights into the climate-gender-displacement nexus, further research is needed to deepen understandings. Gender-disaggregated information on displaced women is often unavailable, and the experiences of some hard-to-reach groups—like displaced people who are not registered locally as IDPs or internationally as refugees—can be lost entirely. Further research is also needed to understand how these connections manifest differently across different local environments, socio-economic classes, ethnocultural groups, rural and urban settings and among people of different ages and abilities. Such exploration will not only improve understanding of the nexus, it will also help support locally tailored solutions that reach those most affected.

Accordingly, the study proposes a preliminary framework for policy analysis of the climate-gender-displacement nexus (figure 1). The framework is a work in progress and will be further developed as more research becomes available.

Figure 1. The climate-gender-displacement nexus: policy analysis and response framework





SECTION 3

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report, the following recommendations should be considered to strengthen programming surrounding the climate-gender-displacement nexus:



As countries prepare, revise, and/or implement their national climate action plans, there is an opportunity for policymakers in the Arab States region to adopt an integrated approach that incorporates gender inequality and displacement considerations. By conducting thorough gender and displacement assessments and incorporating the voices and experiences of stakeholders, including grassroots organizations and groups, NDCs can identify differentiated vulnerabilities and needs, leading to tailored strategies that increase the adaptive capacity of marginalized groups, ensure their active participation and effectively address the complex interplay between climate change, gender dynamics and displacement. NDCs should serve as strategic entry points for scaling up and operationalizing the proposed interventions outlined in this review.



Policymakers at the local, national, and global levels must ensure that gender-responsive climate change considerations are integrated into conflict prevention policies, instruments and frameworks to address the complex issues underlying migration and displacement. Humanitarian responses must also systematically address the distinct gender-differentiated risks that climate change poses to forcibly displaced people, particularly women and its potential to trigger further displacement. These considerations should include provisions that protect displaced women's access to resources, assets, livelihood opportunities, and essential services and address the risks of GBV arising from climate-induced disasters and the slow-onset effects of climate change.



National policy processes must open up spaces for the meaningful participation of forcibly displaced women and men, along with people suffering multiple disadvantages, throughout climate planning and response to climate-related hazards. By embracing this approach, policies can be tailored to address the unique needs, concerns and vulnerabilities of these marginalized groups, ultimately enhancing resilience and upholding the rights and welfare of all affected individuals.



Programme-implementing agencies must adopt a systematic approach to conducting intersectional gender and displacement analyses in climate change projects and programmes, considering differences in needs, opportunities and risks for women of different ages, abilities and backgrounds. This study found that conducting in-depth gender analyses to inform the design and implementation of programmes addressing the gender–climate nexus is not only good practice but also a necessary step for effective programming. Practitioners are encouraged to explore the nuances across the five domains of the gender analysis framework presented in this study by conducting primary research with potential stakeholders and programme participants, including women, men, girls and boys. Such detailed assessments also allow practitioners to identify and design programmes based on participants' unique limitations and capacities, to contribute to combating climate change at the household and community levels, and to inform stand-alone gender-transformative activities and approaches that address historical gender discrimination, norms and behaviours. Gender plans, assessments and analytical tools

should be revisited during and after implementation to ensure ongoing gender sensitivity and track shifts in gender dynamics (see annex 2 for areas of exploration). These assessments can also inform transformative gender equality programming and approaches to address it.



To leverage the disruptive potential of climate change and displacement in triggering social change, implementing agencies should integrate transformative gender equality strategies, tackling issues such as unpaid care work and social norms and engaging men. Displacement and climate impacts provide a unique opportunity to challenge and reshape harmful gender norms. Programmes should equip both men and women with interventions that promote reflection on existing norms and provide practical skills such as emotional regulation and non-violent communication, proactively leveraging climate-induced disruptions and targeting a supportive environment to redefine gender roles more inclusively.



Further quantitative and qualitative research is imperative to thoroughly investigate the gendered impacts of climate change on displaced communities in the target countries and beyond. Expanding primary research will provide a deeper understanding of the challenges, quantitatively assess the extent of these impacts, establish clear causal relationships and inform effective policies and interventions to address the multifaceted dimensions of gender, displacement and climate change.



Effective climate change programming requires nuanced and up-to-date data. National-level institutions and programmes must systematically collect local and national data relevant to climate change disaggregated by gender and displacement status, to fill the most pressing information gaps and promote data sharing. There is also an opportunity for broader data sharing and analysis to support planning for programmes, policies and national strategies.



Cross-disciplinary collaboration and coordination among stakeholders must be strengthened to enable a response across the standard thematic boundaries of climate change, gender inequality, and displacement and operationalize the wider humanitarian, development and peace nexus. Addressing the nexus requires breaking traditional silos among disciplines and enhancing systematic joint analysis and response, exchange and networking.



Flexibility and new funding streams that align with the above approaches are required to strengthen the humanitarian, development and peace nexus. Resources should be allocated to initiatives that demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of these interlinked challenges, ensuring that strategies emphasize local context and participatory decision-making. By supporting projects that holistically address these complexities in an integrated manner, programming can effectively deliver resilient outcomes that address the specific vulnerabilities of marginalized populations and contribute to lasting positive change.

Annexes

Annex 1 - Research participant profiles

Gender	Organization	Country
Women	UNDP	Yemen
Women	UNDP	Yemen
Women	UNDP	Yemen
Women	Oxfam	Iraq
Women	UNDP	Jordan
Women	UNDP	Jordan
Women	Social Inquiry	Iraq
Men	Success and Happiness Organisation	Lebanon
Women	UNDP	Lebanon
Men	UNDP	Iraq

FGD	Group	Location
FGD1	Women (aged 18–30)	Erbil
FGD2	Men (aged 18–30)	Erbil
FGD3	Women (aged 35+)	Erbil
FGD4	Men (aged 35+)	Erbil

Annex 2 - Climate change focus and integration of LNOB and GEWE summary table

The table below explores the extent to which each project responds directly or indirectly to the gendered impacts of climate change, as well as its incorporation of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) principles. While the inclusion of projects that did not explicitly focus on climate change posed some analytical challenges, the selection realistically reflects the current state of programming, in which the climate-gender-displacement nexus is still emerging as a programming priority. Including both climate change–focused and climate change–relevant interventions therefore allowed for a broader gap analysis and the identification of wider opportunities for climate-gender-displacement mainstreaming.

Table 3. Climate change focus and integration of LNOB and GEWE

To what extent did the project specifically address the impacts of climate change and disaster risk reduction on women, and in what ways?	To what extent did the project implement LNOB and GEWE principles, and did it specifically target displaced women?
Iraq—Strengthening Resilience and Socio-economic Inclusion through Employment Creation (SRSE)	
Not specifically focused on climate change but included related activities. The project focuses on recovery from economic shocks resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in conflict-affected communities, with agriculture as one of the focus sectors. Examples of activities targeting women include: • In-kind support and skills training to support food security for families whose agricultural livelihoods were at risk due to changing weather patterns, with activities adapted for implementation at the household level to ensure women's involvement.	Specifically targeted displaced women and followed LNOB/GEWE principles. The project aimed to work with vulnerable groups in selected governorates. Iraqi displaced women were among the project participants. The project conducted multisectoral community-based assessments and gender analyses to better understand community needs and the current situation regarding GBV and social cohesion.
Iraq—Climate Action for Human Security in Iraq's Al-Hawizeh marshlands (CAHS)	
Specifically focused on climate change. Interventions were designed to respond to the impacts of climate change on marshland communities, including women. Examples of activities targeting women include: • Deployment of innovative clean drinking water supply and wastewater treatment systems, ensuring participation of women and youth. • Support for livelihood diversification and ecotourism activities consistent with and in coordination with the Government's natural resource management plans, with a focus on supporting women's role in ecotourism and resource management. • Awareness-raising activities regarding ecosystem protection, climate change, the benefits of resilience to climate-induced displacement pressures and the importance of women's role in the management of natural resources. • Advocacy to increase women's decision-making power in these areas.	Specifically targeted displaced women and followed LNOB/GEWE principles. The project targeted the Al-Hawizeh marsh communities, given the specific ways in which conflict, climate change and reduced upstream headwater flows were creating adverse impacts on returning communities. The project implementation strategy specifically focused on women from these communities, most of whom were previously displaced. The project implemented a gender assessment and action plan to provide an overview of the gender situation in the area's marsh villages and establish an action plan for gender integration across project stages.

To what extent did the project specifically address the impacts of climate change and disaster risk reduction on women, and in what ways?	To what extent did the project implement LNOB and GEWE principles, and did it specifically target displaced women?
Lebanon—Women’s Economic Participation Project (WEP)	
Not specifically focused on climate change but included related activities. The project mainly aimed to improve WEP in all sectors in response to the economic, political and COVID-19 crises. Some activities created linkages with value chains relating to climate change. Examples of activities targeting women include: • Supporting women to establish home-based projects either in agriculture, food production, handicrafts or rural tourism. • Creating value chains in the tourism sector for women to work in. • Training women to work in renewable energy services such as solar energy installation and maintenance, particularly for female-headed households or in remote areas.	Specifically targeted displaced women and followed LNOB/GEWE principles. The project focused on vulnerable host community and refugee women. A gender value-chain analysis was conducted to explore opportunities to create value chains with growth potential in which women play non-traditional roles and have greater possibilities for economic participation and leadership. It analysed existing and new value chains in Lebanon from a gender perspective.
Jordan—Scaling Up Water Innovation for Climate Security in Northern Jordan (SWICS)	
Project specifically focused on climate change. Project interventions focused on responding to the impacts of climate change on women. Examples of activities targeting women include: • Mapping locally developed water innovation start-ups, entrepreneurs and SMEs; supporting training for water innovation start-ups, entrepreneurs and SMEs to refine market-ready solutions; and educating on relevant water reuse regulations, standards and techniques, with specific targeting of women and youth. • Support proof-of-concept pilots for small-scale climate security solutions in communities to enhance resilience to climate impacts, tackle youth unemployment and gender inequality, and strengthen water resource security.	Specifically targeted displaced women and followed LNOB/GEWE principles. The project conducted a gender analysis to assess differences in roles and norms for women, men, girls and boys across project-related locations and sectors and across subgroups, including youth, refugees, host communities, rural communities and persons with disabilities. The analysis examined their ability to access assets, as well as practices and participation, with a focus on water and agricultural activities. It sought to create additional job opportunities for Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities in Mafraq and Jerash.
Yemen—Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY)	
Not specifically focused on climate change, but included related activities. Some interventions addressed the impacts of conflict and natural disasters on women, with links to climate change through water scarcity and the use of solar energy. Examples of activities targeting women: • Water user associations and community development councils formed and/or strengthened with the participation of women to increase local ownership. • Cash-for-work interventions related to the rehabilitation of water and sanitation community infrastructure, awareness-raising on the sustainable use of water and conflict-resolution training to mediate in local conflicts and increase women’s political empowerment. • Solar energy solutions to reduce competition over scarce natural resources and prevent local conflicts.	Specifically targeted displaced women and followed some LNOB/GEWE principles. The project focused on the most marginalized groups, such as women, the unemployed, youth, IDPs and stressed host communities. Some participants were internally displaced Yemeni women, and specific vulnerability assessments were implemented. Despite gender-specific programming being implemented, the midterm evaluation recommended a more systematic approach to conducting or strengthening gender-specific assessments to identify or adapt activities to enhance women’s participation. It also recommended developing a gender strategy outlining targets. As a result, ERRY commissioned a separate assessment of its impact on women. The project was implemented in alignment with the UNDP Country Gender Assessment.

To what extent did the project specifically address the impacts of climate change and disaster risk reduction on women, and in what ways?	To what extent did the project implement LNOB and GEWE principles, and did it specifically target displaced women?
Yemen—Yemen Food Security Response and Resilience Project (FSRRP)	
Not specifically focused on climate change, but included specific components directed to respond to climate change impacts. Some activities targeted women, focusing on agriculture and food insecurity in rural areas. Examples of activities targeting women: • Rehabilitation and maintenance of agricultural lands, on-farm water harvesting facilities, watershed management/ rainwater harvesting structures in mountainous areas, irrigation canals and farm-level conveyance systems. • Rehabilitation of small rural access roads to isolated villages/communities. • Enabling women to access new roles through participation in new productive cash-for-work initiatives and leadership roles (community committees).	Specifically targeted displaced women and followed most LNOB/GEWE principles. The project was aimed at Yemeni households affected by food security crises, with vulnerability assessments conducted. It aimed to include women and youth who lack legal identities. Some participants were internally displaced Yemeni women. Besides following the UNDP Country Gender Assessment guidelines, the project signed agreements with UNFPA, the Sana'a Gender Study Centre and the University of Sana'a to provide organizational and capacity development support for local partners concerning gender, GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse, including conducting assessments to identify gaps and develop guidelines for a gender strategy and referral pathways/standard operating procedures for GBV and sexual exploitation and abuse.

Annex 3 - Areas for further exploration in gender analyses for climate-gender-displacement programming

- Identifying the division of labour between men and women and existing gender roles. Where possible, gender analyses should collect information on the level of involvement of men and women in:
 - employment and income-generating activities
 - household work: cooking, cleaning, collection of water or fuel, maintenance of water tanks, taking care of children, elders or people with disabilities, etc.
 - food production: agriculture, fisheries, other activities related to food security
 - natural resource management: water, forests, agricultural land, marine resources
 - financial resource management: access to cash, banking, credit, physical markets, decision-making for small and large purchases
 - disaster preparedness: the operation and management of early warning systems, preparation and storage of food and water, safeguarding infrastructure
 - community work: involvement in customary institutions, religious or community groups, NGOs, collective work, etc.
- Exploring whether such roles were different prior to displacement and how they changed throughout and after displacement.
- Differentiating the analysis by groups (women, men, boys and girls; age groups; IDPs, refugees and host communities, etc.)
- Exploring how roles and activities are impacted by climate change (e.g. limited water resources, droughts, floods, extreme heat conditions) and how men and women cope with such impacts across different socio-economic groups. In the case of increased scarcity of resources (water, food, fuel, etc.), the analysis should explore:
 - Who is responsible for the allocation of scarce resources in the household?
 - What uses of scarce resources are prioritized? What uses are not prioritized? Are there different allocations for male and female household members?
 - What coping mechanisms has the household adopted in the face of water scarcity?
 - Has there been increased conflict or tension at the household or community level due to resource scarcity?
- Exploring whether climate change impacts are resulting in any shifts in gender roles. If so, how are they impacting men and women across the different socio-economic groups? Where possible, a gender analysis should collect information about the following:
 - Have shifts in gender roles impacted household dynamics? If so, how?
 - Have shifts in gender roles resulted in a higher or lower sense of agency for men or women? If so, how?
 - Have shifts in gender roles resulted in GBV? If so, how?
 - Have shifts in gender roles impacted notions of femininity and masculinity? If so, how?
- Identifying participation in community decision-making, the resources available to support

climate change adaptation and who has access to and control over those resources. This will provide information on who is at greater risk and on the resources needed to strengthen resilience for different groups (men and women across different socio-economic groups).

- To what extent do men and women participate in community decision-making?
 - To what extent do men and women have access to social and economic resources?
 - To what extent do men and women have control over economic resources?
 - How does access and control of different resources affect women's and men's ability to adapt to climate change?
-
- Identify the target area's natural disaster risks and understand how these disasters impact men and women differently across socio-economic groups and who has decision-making power over mitigation, adaptation and response efforts.
 - Has this area experienced any natural disasters (floods, storms, drought, etc.)? If so, how did these disasters impact men and women across socio-economic groups? Who made decisions about how the household would respond? The community?
 - Is this area vulnerable to future natural disasters? If so, who (if anyone) in the community or household is taking steps towards mitigation and/or adaptation?
-
- Identifying laws, policies and institutions related to the above findings that apply differently to men and women across the different socio-economic groups.

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