Jordan ‘Rural Women in Agriculture’ Assessment

- Key Findings Presentation, October 2018
- Livelihoods Working Group
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Key Findings

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Assessment Background

Between January and August 2017, REACH, in collaboration with UN Women, conducted an assessment on rural women and their role in the agriculture sector in four governorates across Jordan: Irbid, Mafraq, Balqa, Karak.

OBJECTIVES

1. Improve understanding of women's participation and leadership in local governance structures and rural community institutions

2. Improve understanding of roles and conditions of women working in the agricultural sector

3. Identify challenges that inhibit women's equal participation and compensation in the agricultural sector

GOAL

Inform programming aimed at removing gendered barriers to rural women's participation in agricultural sector in Jordan.
Assessment Methodology

To meet research objectives, a **mixed-methods, multi-stage approach** was used for this assessment...

### Secondary data review
- January - February 2017
- Past research by UN agencies, government, REACH, non-government organisations (NGOs)

### 13 Key Informant (KI) Interviews
- February - March 2017
- Representatives from government, community, NGOs, community-based organisations (CBOs)

### 24 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
- April 2017
- Three sample groups: women in home-based/ small-scale, women in large-scale, men working in agriculture

### 1,154 Household Surveys
- May - June 2017
- Random GIS sampling
- 99-4 significance overall, 99-5 per zone

### 3 KI Interviews
- July-August 2017
- Focus on legal framework
- Government, CBO, NGO representatives
Overview of Women’s Engagement in the Agriculture Sector
Demographic profile of women who engaged in agriculture in the past 12 months\(^1\)

Women who engaged in agricultural activities in the past 12 months were found to be...

1. From younger age groups (56% aged 18-40 years)
2. With relatively low levels of education (31% primary education, 30% illiterate)
3. Married (79%)
4. With children (73%)

\(^1\) For all findings presented, past 12 months implies 12 months preceding the time the survey was conducted (May-June 2017)
Home-based agriculture found to be the most common type of activity women undertook in the past 12 months

- More common among Jordanian women (97% Jordanians, 3% Syrians)

However, 68% of Syrian women also reported to have engaged in home-based agriculture in Syria i.e. prior to their displacement. Syrian women have background knowledge and could benefit from opportunities to expand and sustain these activities.
### Type of agricultural activity (2)

**Defining characteristics of women’s engagement in home-based agriculture/ paid agricultural labour (as defined by KIs and FGD participants)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature and setting of work</th>
<th>Home-based Agriculture</th>
<th>Paid agricultural Labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural production activities undertaken from or near home, on family-owned or rented land</td>
<td>Usually women who are informally employed and working as labourers in commercial farms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile of women engaged in this type of work</th>
<th>Home-based Agriculture</th>
<th>Paid agricultural Labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More common among Jordanian women, due to their/ their family’s ability to own land</td>
<td>Common for women from poorer economic backgrounds, and also becoming increasingly common among Syrian refugee women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-cultural factors</th>
<th>Home-based Agriculture</th>
<th>Paid agricultural Labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common form of engagement among women because it enables women to work from home, while also focusing on domestic responsibilities</td>
<td>Due to cultural reasons, women’s engagement in agricultural labour is perceived negatively by people in the community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors motivating women to engage in agriculture
Factors motivating women’s participation in the agriculture sector (1)

Most commonly reported factors motivating women to engage in agricultural activities include:

- **Economic factors** (93%), such as income generation, need to produce food for household consumption
- **Personal/familial circumstances** (52%), such as lack of alternatives, whole family working on farms, as a hobby
- Having **background knowledge and experience** in the sector (32%)\(^1\)

Reflective of the economic nature of motivating factors, **women perceived their involvement in agriculture to be ‘essential’ or ‘important’ for their household**

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\(^1\) Background knowledge and experience includes women who have the relevant knowledge and experience due to prior engagement in the sector as well as women who undertake agricultural activities because it is customary and a common way of life for the women of the area.
Motivating factors do vary by type of agricultural activity women are engaging in.

### Home-based agriculture

- **Engagement in home-based agriculture is driven more by personal preference**

  1. Produce food for household consumption (90%)
  2. As a hobby (44%)
  3. To sell products/ generate income (36%)

### Paid agricultural labour

- **Engagement in paid agricultural labour is motivated largely by economic factors**

  1. Generate income and meet household expenses (93%)
  2. Lack of alternatives/ not trained for anything else (44%)
  3. Provide for household needs by taking crops home (23%)
Economic importance of women’s engagement in agricultural activities

Large majority of women perceived their engagement in agriculture to be ‘essential’ or ‘important’ for the household (81% for labour, 79% for home-based)…

- Capacity to contribute to household income → enhanced independence and decision-making role within the household

- However, wages earned as agricultural labour relatively low → reported average of 142 JOD per month across all seasons

Opportunity to enhance personal and household well-being and strengthen rural economy through women’s engagement in agricultural activities
Women’s Engagement in Home-based Agriculture
Women’s involvement in home-based agriculture during the last 12 months

Extent of women’s involvement in home-based agriculture did vary between seasons and areas: spring and winter most active overall

- Home-based agriculture during winter more common in Jordan Valley
- Home-based agriculture during autumn more common in Rainfed Highlands

- Significant time committed by women to this activity: on average, 21 days per month and 4 hours per day
  - No major variations were found between seasons
  - Home-based agriculture an important source of livelihood for women

1 For the purpose of this assessment, rainfed highlands included Rahab district in Mafraq, and rural areas in Irbid, Karak, Balqa governorates. These highlands are characterised by high elevation (600 metres above sea level), mountainous terrain, rainfed agriculture, and fertile red soil.
Women’s role in home-based agriculture

- Women are involved throughout the agricultural production process, playing the fundamental role on a day-to-day basis.
- Men of the household have more supportive roles, and more actively involved in commercial/marketing aspects.
- Women are producing a range of products through their engagement in home-based agriculture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most commonly reported tasks undertaken by women across seasons</th>
<th>Most commonly produced agricultural products by women across seasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Livestock rearing (47% across all four seasons)</td>
<td>Vegetables (42% across all four seasons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Harvesting (39% across all four seasons)</td>
<td>Dairy products (31% across all four seasons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Planting/sowing (31% across all four seasons)</td>
<td>Eggs (24% across all four seasons)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ownership of land used for agriculture

Despite women’s active involvement in home-based agriculture, it was found to be uncommon for women to own the land being used for agricultural production.

How does lack of land ownership affect women’s engagement in agriculture?

- Limits scope of agricultural production
- Limits decision-making capacity vis-à-vis production and marketing/ability to expand agricultural activities
- Limits women’s access to loans to start small-scale agribusinesses

Ownership of land being used by women for home-based agriculture:

- Husband: 58%
- Male family member: 14%
- Land is rented/leased: 16%
- Me personally: 5%
- Don’t know landlord: 4%
- Other: 3%
**Barriers limiting women’s more active participation in home-based agriculture**

### Most frequently reported barriers

- No time (Domestic responsibilities) - 62%
- Health-related reasons - 29%
- No time (Job outside the house) - 26%
- Climate-related reasons - 18%
- Not interested - 17%
- Lack of knowledge and experience - 16%
- No opportunities - 13%
- No barriers - 6%

**Barriers reported were found to vary between:**

1. **Age groups** - health-related barriers more common among women of older age groups
2. **Nationality** - lack of interest and/ or time more common among Jordanians
3. **Agricultural zones** - climatic barriers more common in the Northeast
Women’s Engagement in Paid Agricultural Labour
Women’s involvement in paid agricultural labour (1)

In the past 12 months, women engaged in agricultural labour mostly during spring and/or summer seasons

- Agricultural labour during winter most common in the Jordan Valley (57%)
- Difference with home-based agriculture: spring and winter most active seasons

- Significant time committed by women to this activity: on average, 22 days per month and 6 hours per day
  - Time commitment similar to home-based agriculture
  - No major variations were found between seasons
Women’s involvement in paid agricultural labour (2)

Women were not very likely to move around across seasons for agricultural work but this tendency was found to vary by nationality:

- 58% Syrians reported having moved around across seasons
- 18% Jordanians reported having moved around across seasons
High prevalence of informal employment

Women exposed to bad working conditions

Need for programmatic interventions, higher level advocacy

Working conditions

- Very small minority reported to have been employed through a contract for their work as paid agricultural labour

Women exposed to bad working conditions

- Arbitrary wage determination (daily and hourly rates most reported)
- Low wages (average of 142 JOD per month)
- No access to health insurance, social security

Need for programmatic interventions, higher level advocacy

- Raise awareness about formal employment benefits
- Support women workers to organise formally
- Advocacy for more stringent application of labour laws
Work permits for Syrian women working as agricultural labour

Informal employment as agricultural labour also common among Syrian women: 5% of Syrian respondents reported to have a work permit

- Only 3% reportedly tried to apply for one
- Reasons reported for not applying highlights the need to generate awareness about application processes, as well as about the benefits of having a work permit

Reasons Syrian respondents did not try to apply for a work permit

- Did not think women are eligible: 33%
- Don't think it's useful: 31%
- Don't need it to work in here: 27%
- Too expensive: 23%
- Other: 5%
Involvement of Women in Rural Community Life
Rural women’s involvement in community-based activities

- Women’s active involvement in agriculture does not appear to translate to enhanced community organisation: only 1% reportedly organised in any formal/ informal organisation, union or association

- Most commonly reported reasons for limited participation include:
  
  Lack of awareness¹ (57%): more common among Syrian women, women of older age groups

  Not perceived to be useful (35%): more common among women aged 41-50 years old

  Lack of opportunities (34%)

  No time (16%): more common among Jordanian women, women aged 31-40 years

¹ ‘Lack of awareness’ includes both unawareness of how to organise or take up community-based roles, as well as lack of awareness of whether there are such associations in the area that women could participate in.
Challenges and Support
Challenges faced by women working in agriculture (1)

- Women engaging in agriculture are facing a range of challenges in their day-to-day activities

**Most important challenge faced by women in agriculture**

- Seasonal/ geographic challenges: 39%
- Socio-cultural challenges: 24%
- Financial/ economic challenges: 20%
- Legal/ policy related challenges: 17%
- Insufficient CBO support: 5%
- Other: 5%

- Reported challenges did **vary by nationality and agricultural zone**:
  - **Legal/ policy related challenges** more important for (1) women in Jordan Valley (2) Syrian women engaging in agricultural activities
  - **Seasonal/ geographic challenges** more important in the Northeast
  - **Socio-cultural challenges** more important for Syrian women
Challenges faced by women working in agriculture (2)

Challenges being faced also vary by type of agricultural activity women are engaging in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home-based agriculture</th>
<th>Paid agricultural labour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges related to production</strong> more pressing for home-based activities</td>
<td><strong>Personal and legal/policy issues</strong> more important for agricultural labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Domestic responsibilities on top of work (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasonal/ geographic challenges (42%)</td>
<td>No access to health insurance and social security (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Challenges related to working circumstances (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of financial opportunities (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of land ownership (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reflective of challenges reported:

- **Material and financial support** reported as primary type of support needed to enhance women’s role in **home-based agriculture**
- Meanwhile, **legislative/policy support** reported as primary type of support needed for **paid agricultural labour**

### Primary support needed for women in home-based agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Material support to enhance productivity</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support/loans</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support to CBOs that work with women in agriculture</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses and trainings concerning growing crops</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market regulation</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Primary support needed for women in paid agricultural labour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legislation that protects my rights</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support organising in unions or CBOs</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support obtaining formal employment</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support obtaining health and social protection</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support obtaining higher wages</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION
Conclusions and the Way Forward

Agriculture is an important means of livelihood for rural women in Jordan

→ need for **removing barriers to rural women’s participation** in the sector

→ contribute towards **overall economic empowerment of women** and inclusive socio-economic development in the country

Four potential entry points to enhance women’s role in agriculture and the rural economy can be identified based on findings from this assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Provision of <strong>direct material and financial support</strong> and <strong>strengthen technical capacities</strong> of women engaging in agricultural activities</td>
<td>To enable women to enhance productivity, expand agricultural production, and accrue optimum benefits from agricultural activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>Awareness-raising campaigns</strong> targeting benefits of formal employment, usefulness of community organization, and sustainable water management and land use strategies</td>
<td>To enable women to <strong>empower themselves</strong> to deal with the most important challenges being faced/ barriers limiting their active participation in the sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Higher-level <strong>legislative/ policy support and active advocacy efforts</strong></td>
<td>To support women in <strong>overcoming challenges of legislative nature</strong> (informal employment, land ownership)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <strong>Proper targeting based on variations in experiences</strong> between different demographic groups, different types of activities across the country</td>
<td>To ensure interventions and advocacy efforts are tailored as much as possible to local contexts, and varying primary needs of different demographic groups in different parts of the country are equitably addressed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
QUESTIONS?
Thank You!

For further information regarding the work of REACH and UN Women in Jordan, please contact:

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