

Combating the Gendered Impacts of Climate Change in the MENA Region: Opportunities, Challenges and Trade-Offs

Workshop Report
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1 Acknowledgements

The urgency to discuss the adverse impacts of climate change on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region has never been greater, and yet there is a serious dearth of evidence and research on the region to allow for robust policymaking on climate action. On behalf of NatCen International and the University of Naples “L’Orientale”, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to the speakers and participants for their valuable contributions at the workshop titled "Combatting the Gendered Impacts of Climate Change in the MENA Region: Opportunities, Challenges, and Trade-Offs". The rich insights provided within this report would not have been possible without them. Special thanks are due to the Department of Asia, Africa and Mediterranean of the University of Naples “L’Orientale” for hosting the event and for funding the participation of academics from the region. Last but not least, we would like to express our gratitude to Federica Bucci (PhD student at “L’Orientale”) and Felicity Kersting (Senior Researcher at NatCen International) for their invaluable contributions to the organization of the workshop.

The organizers:

- Sherine El Taraboulsi-McCarthy (NatCen International)
- Ersilia Francesca (University of Naples “L’Orientale”)

2 Introduction

As the world grapples with the existential threat of climate change, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region finds itself at the heart of this global challenge. Climate projections for the region are grim. By 2050, the region will experience a significant temperature rise of 2 to 3 degrees Celsius, along with a 10 – 30% decline in precipitation and a surge in extreme weather events such as flooding, droughts, rising sea levels, and sandstorms (Baruah & Najjar, 2022). These climatic changes that pose significant threats to the region's ecosystems, food security, and livelihoods are not happening in a vacuum. As pointed out by Hadil Al Mowafak in her introductory remarks to the workshop, environmental pressures in the region are deeply intertwined with social, economic, and political challenges which become even more complicated in conflict-affected contexts. Conflicts such as those in Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria and the West Bank and Gaza exacerbate the adverse impacts of climate change and, in turn, the impacts of climate change fuel the conflicts in those same contexts. The intersection between conflict and climate change demands urgent policy attention as well as further strengthening of the data infrastructure on climate variability and its impacts to feed into robust policymaking.

In addition to the complex intersections between climate variability and other socioeconomic and political contextual factors, the MENA region also grapples with deeply entrenched gender inequalities. Data from the World Economic Forum's 2022 assessment reveals that the region holds the unenviable position of the second-largest gender gap globally (WEF Global Gender Gap Report, 2022). The latest Arab Barometer survey exposes the prevalence of traditional gender norms across the 12 surveyed countries in the region. A significant portion of population, for example, believes that "men are better at political leadership than women," with Algeria (76%), Sudan (71%), and others showing strong support for this view (Toukan, 2023). These entrenched beliefs relegate women to secondary roles, limiting their participation in various aspects of life, including within the workforce (ibid). Notably, women constitute over 50% of the agricultural workforce in certain countries (Najjar et al., 2018) and yet, women often remain invisible in official statistics, overshadowed by gender-biased assumptions about their economic activities (Baruah & Najjar, 2023). Women in the region confront restricted access to critical resources such as land ownership, financing, and information (NatCen International, 2023). These limitations curtail their options for income generation and their capacity to navigate the challenges presented by climate change (Wehrey et al., 2023).

While there has been some notable progress on climate mitigation, an understanding of the gendered dimensions of climate change remains limited and this has meant that climate policies in the region have not fully incorporated a gender focus. There is an urgent imperative to develop climate adaptation and mitigation policies that are not only gender-specific but also potentially transformative. These policies actively challenge and reshape traditional gender norms, ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities for women in their climate change adaptation efforts.

In a collaboration between NatCen International, the global arm of the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) in London, UK and the University of Naples "L'Orientale", this report reflects key insights from a workshop entitled "Combatting the Gendered Impacts of Climate Change in the MENA Region: Opportunities, Challenges, and Trade-Offs", held on 5-6 October 2023, at the University of Naples L'Orientale. The workshop addressed the social, economic and political impacts of climate change in the MENA region with a focus on the gendered dimensions of those impacts. Drawing on multidisciplinary contributions from climate experts, civil society leaders, and academics, it highlighted the urgency of addressing the gendered

impacts of climate change in the region, stressed the role of transformative climate finance, and discussed the regional/national responses to the Paris Agreement. This report provides a synthesis of key insights shared during the proceedings of the workshop.

3 Women's Leadership in Climate Action

The impacts of climate change in the region are not gender-neutral and are compounded by varying political and socioeconomic contexts in each country, such as the impacts of conflict and displacement in conflict-affected countries. Following thought-provoking introductory remarks by Hadil Al Mowafak from the Yemen Policy Centre on the intersections between climate change and social, political and economic factors in the region, the first part of the workshop is a deep dive in the various forms and experiences of women's leadership in climate action in the region.

3.1 Community engagement can be central to women's leadership: Community kitchens in Egypt as a case in point

Community kitchens are spaces where a small group of individuals come together regularly to cook affordable and healthy meals to those in need. In Egypt, this tradition goes back to the early twentieth century, which was a time of great socioeconomic changes that paved the way for the establishment of community kitchens to reduce the need for subsistence amongst impoverished communities. Most of these kitchens were supported by charitable organisations and operated by volunteers. The twenty first century witnessed the rise and development of different models of community kitchens in Egypt in response to the declining socioeconomic situation and problems of climate change which threaten the livelihood of vulnerable communities. With Egypt's population expected to grow to 160 million by 2050, the country will face increasing demands for food and fresh water as climate effects (decreased precipitation and rising temperatures) restrict natural resources (Hamzawy, 2023).

In her presentation, drawing from key informant interviews and participants observation, Mounira Soliman discussed how community kitchens addressed these two conditions via three models: the (i) Dawar kitchen, a social enterprise that provides employment for Syrian refugees and Egyptian women; (ii) Nawayya community kitchen which trains rural women to start their food-based businesses; and (iii) Al-Zahraa community kitchen which promotes female empowerment through economic, social, and agricultural local community development. These three models show how community kitchens play an important role in providing food security, offering alternative sources of employment for women, and promoting local economic development. They are also models for mitigating the impacts of climate change by reducing energy consumption, food waste, and promoting sustainability through sourcing local ingredients. These kitchens not only serve a culinary function but also act as economic support systems.

Soliman argued that community kitchens contribute to climate change resistance through sustainable food sourcing, efficient waste management, promoting vegetarian and seasonal menus to reduce carbon footprint, conserving energy, and advocating for change. Despite their many positive contributions, however, community kitchens face challenges related to financing, management, and concerns over cleanliness.

3.2 The media can play an important role in shaping the collective consciousness and awareness of the gendered impacts of climate change

The 1960s witnessed the first televised national campaign in Egypt to optimize water use. Both the song and the protagonist – Sit Saneya – are still widely remembered and the latter has become a pejorative label implying a classist attitude that condemns obesity and stupidity. The advertisement rendered Sit Saneya responsible for and guilty of wasting water in the kitchen, and towards the end of the advertisement she is even accused of being an obstacle to the nation-building process. With a population of less than 30 million at that time, the campaign made a huge effect on the country. Surprisingly, the media recalled this advertisement in 2022 right before COP27 was hosted by Egypt. With the crisis of the Nile Dam looming in the background, the Egyptian Ministry of Water launched another campaign – “every drop counts” – that addresses women and specifically housewives, reminding them not to waste water. Additionally, the publication of the Conceptual Manual for a Gender-Responsive Sustainable Development Plan (GRP) in 2022 mentioned the lack of water and water resources fleetingly, and the only solution offered was to launch awareness campaigns and increase women’s representation in ministries.

In her presentation, Shereen Abouelnaga delved into the complex interplay between gender, water conservation, and climate change consciousness in the context of Egyptian advertising, shedding light on the multi-faceted narratives and their implications. She examined state policies towards women’s (lack of) access to and use of water in three turning points: the 1960s (the first Republic), 2019 (Al-Nahda/Nile Dam), and 2022 (COP27). Through reviewing the television campaigns, awareness campaigns and the official documentary for COP27, she highlighted key issues around accountability, the choice of target audience (women), and the tensions raised by these campaigns and manuals on gender norms.

These advertisements depict women as victims of the water crisis, showcasing their vulnerability in the face of water-related challenges. By contrast, Fouada, a female character from a 1969 film, for example, emerged as a key figure in the Egyptian revolution. In the film, she played a crucial role in breaking the fear barrier by opening a lock that had been closed as a punishment for the villagers. This historical figure demonstrates the impact of individual actions on addressing water-related issues. Throughout her presentation, Abouelnaga highlighted that women in these advertisements are framed as both victims and perpetrators of water wastage. She posed critical questions about the impact of these narratives on the collective consciousness and how the evolving awareness of climate change has shaped these advertising campaigns.

3.3 Socioeconomic challenges are changing the landscape of environmental activism in Tunisia

A remarkable 84% of Tunisians have reported being affected by climate change in their daily lives, indicating a high level of awareness and personal experience of the impacts of climate

change in Tunisia. In her presentation, Renata Pepicelli explained that internal colonisation – the unequal impacts of economic development within a country due to the exploitation of minority groups – had played an important role in Tunisia's uneven economic development. Furthermore, she suggested that this had caused irreversible, permanent damages to the environment, as a result of how the land has been used for capital accumulation. For example, the establishment of a chemical factory in Gabes had led to wide-scale pollution and environmental degradation.

Gender disparities in agriculture also emerged as a significant concern regarding the impacts of climate change in Tunisia. It was noted that women farmers faced greater challenges in coping with climate change and water scarcity due to lower wages and more limited access to land ownership and loans compared with men. Additionally, climate change and water scarcity were seen to substantially affect women's food provisioning practices and food sovereignty. For example, in response to the ongoing water crisis, the Tunisian authorities introduced measures to prioritise the growing of high-income crops and limit or prevent the cultivation of water-intensive crops. This has led to an increased dependence on imported food products for those living in Tunisia and, consequently, a loss of food sovereignty.

While environmental protests are often marginalised within the broader socioeconomic narrative in Tunisia, Pepicelli highlighted the growing role of the environment in contemporary social conflicts and the increasing prominence of environmental protests since the 2011 revolution. For example, the 'Stop Pollution' collective was founded in 2012 to address the industrial pollution in Gabes caused by chemical processing and has since grown into a national movement focusing on environmental issues at the local, national, and global level. While women's presence in climate justice associations and social movements has been growing in recent years, gender disparities remain salient and women are yet to assume prominent leadership roles in these contexts. As the impacts of climate change disproportionately affects women, Pepicelli stressed the continued need for a gender agenda or feminist perspective within climate justice movements in Tunisia to effectively address climate change challenges moving forwards.

4 Climate Financing in the MENA Region: Opportunities and Challenges

Flexible and efficient climate financing is necessary to address the adverse impacts of climate change in the region and to build the resilience of affected communities. Because of the economic diversity of the MENA region which spans from affluent Gulf nations to economically and environmentally disadvantaged countries such as Yemen and Djibouti, a nuanced and multifaceted approach is critical. The second part of the workshop delved into the dynamics of climate financing and its intersection with gender in the region, uncovering the opportunities for advancing women's active participation in the realm of climate action, as well as the significant challenges and barriers that must be overcome to fully unlock the potential of these initiatives.

4.1 It is important to rethink climate finance for the region with a stronger focus on adaptation

In her remarks, Sherine El Taraboulsi-McCarthy pointed out that the region faces an elevated risk of extreme flooding due to a 1 – 2 degree temperature rise, reflecting the urgent need for climate financing. Most climate finance in the region, however, is currently channelled towards mitigation, pointing to the necessity of striking a balance to fund adaptation efforts as well. Funding allocation across the MENA region is biased in general, with Egypt and Morocco receiving most of the funding while others receiving little or none. Additionally, climate finance often focuses on large-scale infrastructure projects rather than community-based initiatives, raising questions about how to make funding efforts more effective. Capacity building and awareness raising are necessary to strengthen the region's ability to address climate change.

Naila Farouky highlighted that with COP28 on the horizon, there is a growing need to explore new financing tools from UN agencies and regional philanthropy, sparking discussions about the role of philanthropy in ensuring long-term funding. The concept of a philanthropy coalition and the role of local knowledge, particularly that of women entrepreneurs, in complementing broader funding efforts were explored. With regards to attracting philanthropists from the region to financing climate action, she pointed out that it is difficult to get people on board to make commitment for several reasons: First, that there are other issues to deal with and hence, the need to connect climate crisis to other issues which donors are focusing on such as education and health. There is a need to make those connections and to incorporate climate into existing priorities. She added that she could not overstate the importance of acting quickly. She added that while donors are interested in possibly exploring climate funding in the next 5-10 years, the world cannot wait for that long.

4.2 Climate finance is essential for refugees and displaced people

Houssam Chahine pointed out that climate financing is essential for refugees and displaced people, as more than two thirds of refugees and asylum seekers originate from highly climate-vulnerable countries. The majority of which are women and children. UNHCR's focus on climate action financing is to provide protection for displaced populations. UNHCR and

humanitarian organisations are, however, struggling to find a way to fundraise in a sustainable way. He pointed out that the narrative is still developing on funding for climate change and that there is still a need to shift the mindset towards finding durable solutions. Chahine also pointed out that governments need to include the most vulnerable people in policies on climate change, including refugees, displaced people, women, and children. Policies currently often do not include those who are displaced. In the MENA region, COP28 is a very important milestone. In Dubai, there is huge potential and it is a forum to work with colleagues to open up space and talk transparently about what the challenges are. Hopefully governments will stand up to resolve policy issues for funders, NGOs, and large financing schemes such as parametric insurance schemes.

4.3 To address climate change effectively in the region, “radical collaboration” is needed

Delila Khaled added that collaboration, specifically “radical collaboration”, is necessary to address climate change effectively. This involves bringing together various stakeholders, combining philanthropic, private, and public financing, and promoting the inclusion of gender-lens frameworks in funding. She pointed out that women entrepreneurs can play a significant role in climate action, and it is crucial to educate the public and investors about the intersections of gender and climate issues.

Participants in the session highlighted that climate policies must consider the most vulnerable populations and avoid greenwashing. The challenge of greenwashing and the importance of utilising all available resources while holding organisations accountable were highlighted. They also pointed out the need to explore the role of cross-religious approaches in addressing climate change, emphasising the involvement of religious leaders and communities in raising awareness and mobilising resources for climate action.

5 Resistance, Resilience and Climate Adaptation: The Role of International Organizations

The nexus between climate change and gender inequality is widely recognised, yet there has been a slow progress in integrating gender into climate policy and implementation by international organizations like UN agencies with a focus on localised climate policies. The third part of the workshop focused on the role of international organizations in climate actions in the MENA region.

5.1 While there is some progress on integrating gender in climate action, scattered efforts have not coalesced into feminist climate justice movements

In her presentation on the role of women as climate leaders, Maha El-Said highlighted the pivotal role women can play in addressing climate change. She discussed the slow progress in gender mainstreaming and the need to shift from viewing women as merely beneficiaries to active partners in climate actions. She further critiqued the state of climate governance in the region, where despite having policies in place, civic engagement and public understanding of climate change remain limited, using Egypt as an illustrative example. While the country has climate policies, it lacks meaningful citizen engagement and maintains a wide discrepancy in gender and climate policies. Despite commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment, most documents have few references to women and gender. Efforts to mainstream gender tend to focus on short-term technical interventions, leaving deeper gender inequalities unaddressed. Maha El-Said also discussed the emergence of climate activism and feminist demands for climate justice in the region. These demands, however, have yet to become central to feminist priorities in the region, as scattered efforts have not coalesced into feminist climate justice movements.

El-Said's recommendations include shifting away from viewing women as climate victims and ensuring that climate solutions align with local contexts. She also calls for the recognition and respect of women's knowledge; urges the inclusion of their voices in climate decision-making processes; and emphasizes the potential for feminist climate justice movements to take root.

5.2 National policies need to integrate gender considerations into adaptation and mitigation efforts

In Haneen Shaheen's presentation on the role of the Paris Agreement in reducing gender-based violence, she delved into the intersection of climate change and gender-based violence, specifically in the contexts of Egypt and Tunisia. The Paris Agreement, established in 2015, aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aims to enhance global social,

economic, and environmental conditions. While not explicitly addressing gender-based violence (GBV), it indirectly recognizes the importance of gender equality and women's rights, raising implications for addressing GBV within climate action.

Haneen's central research question revolves around how the national policies of Egypt and Tunisia address GBV in their climate action plans, considering compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the "gender action plan" guidance provided by the Paris Agreement. She underlined the strong link between gender-based violence and climate change, emphasising the heightened vulnerability of women due to their social, institutional, and legal contexts. Shockingly, women and children face a 14-fold higher risk of death or injury during disasters compared to men.

While the Paris Agreement acknowledges the significance of gender equality and human rights, it does not explicitly tackle GBV. Nevertheless, it implies that GBV is a pertinent issue in climate action and underscores the need for people to be free from all forms of injustice. Gender-based violence in the MENA region is shaped by cultural norms, societal structures, and historical backgrounds. Fundamental aspects include gender roles and concepts of honour and shame, which result in practices like honour killings.

A detailed examination of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) of Egypt and Tunisia in the Paris Agreement reveals differing approaches to addressing gender-based violence. Egypt's NDC briefly mentions gender but lacks specificity regarding how gender considerations will be integrated into adaptation and mitigation efforts. Tunisia's NDC adopts a more robust approach, emphasising social resilience and empowerment. Although gender-based violence is not explicitly mentioned, the document places significant emphasis on addressing gender disparities and violence. Both countries rely on international funding for achieving its climate targets.

5.3 There is a need for specific gender-related measurements to evaluate progress

Carla Pagano focused on how the cooperation policies of international actors like the European Union (EU) have supported Tunisia in developing gender-inclusive climate change policies. Tunisia's commitment to gender and climate change is evidenced by its ratification of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and recent creation of National Action Plans. Although Tunisia did not assent to the 2012 Doha Agreement, it has signed the 1992 Kyoto Protocol. These international agreements are usually gender-neutral, but global commitments and agreements to which Tunisia is a party acknowledge women's pivotal role in sustainable development.

Her presentation assesses gender mainstreaming in the environment and climate change sectors in Tunisia through existing indicators but stresses the need for more precise measurements to evaluate progress. The current emphasis is on financing, as Europe's Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets climate change. However, it lacks specific gender-related measurements, making it difficult to ascertain the extent of funding allocated for gender mainstreaming. The EU has established multifaceted commitments to gender and climate change in its commercial, political, and technical cooperation with Tunisia. While gender is considered in EU collaborations on paper, it was not until 2010 that the EU adopted its initial plan of action on gender equality and women's empowerment in development, with climate

change still not being prioritised. Subsequent gender action plans reinforced the EU's commitment to gender equality, clearly extending it to climate and environmental issues.

Carla Pagano also highlighted the internal process that has led Tunisia to increasingly emphasise the link between gender equality and climate change. During the 2011 revolution and the 13th global social forum, a more gendered environmentalist awareness raised in the country which was endorsed by the 2014 Constitution. However, the 2022 Constitution, marked by very limited consensus, no longer addresses climate change and sections that touch upon gender sparked concerns among civil society organisations about congruence with Sharia law. Tunisia's National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change, supported by UNDP and UN Women and approved in 2022, encompasses five strategic domains with numerous activities and indicators. However, the finer details of the plan remain to date undisclosed.

5.4 It is important to consider power dynamics when thinking about the gendered dimensions of climate action

The discussion centred on critical issues and perspectives regarding gender, climate change, and empowerment. It was noted that the concept of "empowerment" is problematic as it takes a top-down approach, overlooking the knowledge and experiences of women themselves. Reversing power dynamics, respecting women's knowledge, and creating platforms for them to speak were proposed as more appropriate approaches. There was a call to change the language and focus on respecting and learning from the experiences of those impacted by these issues.

The importance of addressing gender and climate issues in political contexts was also highlighted, along with the need to construct gender politics that include both men and women. A re-evaluation of the term "empowerment" was suggested, with a focus on human rights and building capacity. The discussion also touched on the significance of addressing violence experienced by men in the context of climate change, emphasizing that it affects everyone. Education on human rights was put forward as an avenue towards promoting gender equality.

6 Community-Based Resilience to Climate Change: Global Experiences

This section was designed to facilitate knowledge and expertise sharing between the MENA and the Southeast Asia regions, with the focus on community resilience and locally led adaptation.

6.1 Climate adaptation should take into account power dynamics and socio-political realities

In her presentation on locally led adaptation, Anh Vu explored the emerging concept of locally led adaptation (LLA), delving into its issues, challenges, and prospects while also expressing critical reservations about the concept itself. The discussion addressed concerns about the slow progress towards the 2030 SDGs, notably towards gender equality (SDG 5). Challenges include inadequate data for assessing global progress, severe debt burden on numerous UN countries, and the dilemma of choosing between investments in poverty alleviation, climate adaptation, or debt repayment for stability. On the climate front, key Paris Agreement commitments, including temperature limits and the \$100 billion annual funding for climate action in developing nations, are not on track. Less than 10% of global climate finance directly reach communities, with existing adaptation funds prioritizing economic outcomes over human rights and pro-poor international climate finance.

Vu introduced Nitya Rao (2017)'s comprehensive framework on gendered power in policy, which elucidates a spectrum of distinct approaches: gender blind, gender neutral, gender specific and gender transformative. At the forefront is the gender redistributive/transformative approach, encompassing interventions designed to reshape the current distribution of resources and responsibilities, with a keen focus on fostering more equitable gender relations.

Vu critiqued existing adaptation efforts, highlighting their potential maladaptive nature. She contends that these initiatives often focus solely on technical interventions and engineering, side-lining critical social-political considerations, particularly regarding gender and power relations. Drawing from research in the Mekong region, she exposed the detrimental impact of top-down decision-making and a state-engineering mentality on the Delta waterscape, leading to a transformative shift from a traditional to a modernized hydraulic society. Proposing locally led adaptation (LLA) as a viable alternative to community-based adaptation (CBA), she advocates for a locally led process deeply rooted in local realities.

6.2 The neoliberalisation of the economy in South East Asia has exacerbated vulnerability to climate change

In his presentation on the intertwined impacts of “FDI-led” industrialisation and climate change on migration and migrant workers in Southeast Asia, Pietro Masina, described how economic growth centred around foreign direct investments (FDI) in Southeast Asia resulted in climate vulnerabilities including rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and intensified weather patterns. Industrialisation resulted in significant greenhouse gas emissions, particularly with the relocation of production lines from China to Southeast Asia. The legacy of modernisation theory promoted the migration of young labour force from rural to urban areas, seeing it as a solution to poverty and climate challenges. However, Masina argued that this FDI-led development model, once endorsed by the World Bank, has reduced absolute poverty while generating vulnerability, inequality, and relative poverty. Its export-oriented nature exposes the region to external shocks, exemplified during events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to a reduction in global demand.

Contrary to Western experiences, industrial employment in Southeast Asia is often short-term, representing only a temporary escape from poverty. Coping mechanisms involve income diversification, with some family members engaging in unsustainable agriculture while others seeking employment in manufacturing or the informal sector. Although these strategies lift households from absolute poverty, they do not substantially improve living conditions and remain susceptible to external shocks such as climate change, market fluctuations, and changes in consumption patterns. The neoliberalisation of the economy exacerbates vulnerability rather than facilitates effective coping mechanisms. In many cases, young women return to rural areas, not necessarily for agricultural pursuits but often to join the urban informal sector. These dynamics illustrate the intricate interplay between gendered power structures and the environmental and economic impacts of industrialisation in Southeast Asia.

7 Strengthening Data Infrastructure on Women and Climate Change in the MENA Region

The workshop concluded with a roundtable discussion on "Strengthening Data Infrastructure on Women and Climate Change in the MENA Region." The discussion involved all participants and was moderated by Sherine El Taraboulsi-McCarthy and Ersilia Francesca.

- **Data gap and overreliance on Western sources:** The discussion highlighted the significant data gap in gender-responsive climate change data, particularly in the MENA region. It also pointed out the common reliance on Western data sources, emphasising the need to identify specific data gaps in the Global South.
- **Challenges in data access and integrity:** Participants discussed challenges related to data access and integrity, with the example of Egypt. They noted issues such as restrictions and security clearances, which hindered access to up-to-date and trustworthy statistics.
- **Role of Academia:** The importance of academia, especially in the Global South, was emphasised. It was noted that the academia plays a crucial role in critically examining government reports and data from UN agencies.
- **Impact of global capitalist system:** The conversation delved into how the global capitalist economic system affects climate change and gender inequalities. This includes issues related to gender discrimination, gendered labour, land ownership, and the loss of intergenerational knowledge due to neoliberalism and capitalism.
- **Need for 3D quantitative data:** Participants stressed the need for detailed quantitative data, particularly in understanding women's work in agriculture. Additionally, the importance of safeguarding and passing on knowledge, especially in the context of women's roles in environmental care, was highlighted.
- **Data quality and reliability:** Participants acknowledged the importance of sound data as a foundational element for developing and implementing effective climate policies.
- **Data disaggregation and collaboration:** The importance of data disaggregation by various factors, collaboration with governments to fill data gaps, and citizen-generated data were emphasised as valuable resources.
- **Data reliability and the politics of data:** The discussion pointed out that data reliability is not just a technical issue but also a political one influenced by interests and agendas. The conversation called for a shift towards maximising data utilisation for policy development.
- **Challenges of gender-related data collection:** Challenges in collecting gender-related data were noted, especially due to the necessity of interviews and the contextual nature of gender data.

- **Role of researcher positionality:** The importance of considering the positionality of researchers and their contribution to data collection was highlighted.
- **AI and environmental impact:** The potential of using artificial intelligence (AI) for data analysis was discussed. However, concerns were raised about its environmental impact and data bias, favouring the Global North.
- **Assessment and sharing of best practices:** The need for assessing and sharing best practices, with the example of Hawaii's feminist economic recovery plan, was explored.
- **Bringing this workshop forward:** Participants discussed the framework for further engagement in research on climate change in the region. This framework is expected to encompass the various dimensions discussed during the workshop, ensuring that research in this area considers multiple factors to improve data quality and, subsequently, make possible more informed climate policies.

8 Annex

8.1 Participants

Shereen Abouelnaga: Shereen Abouelnaga is Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Cairo University. She has written widely in English and Arabic on cultural and literary topics, with a special focus on gender. She completed her BA, MA and PhD in English Language and Literature at Cairo University.

Hadil Al-Mowafak: Hadil Al-Mowafak is an Associate Fellow at the Yemen Policy Center. Her research focuses on issues related to peacebuilding, security sector reform, and environmental security. Recently, she has authored a number of papers focused on civil society engagement in Yemen's UN-led Peace Process. She holds a BA in Political Science from Stanford University, focusing on international relations, law, human rights, and data science.

Houssam Chahine: Houssam Chahine is the Head of the Climate Action Financing Hub at UNHCR. He has more than 20 years of experience in fundraising, partnership building, stakeholder management, public engagement and advocacy campaigns in the not-for-profit and governmental sectors.

Maha el-Said: Maha el-Said is the Chair of the English Department at the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University. She has more than 22 years of experience teaching at Egyptian Universities with a special interest in American Studies. She is the Founder and Executive Director of Cairo University's Anti-Harassment and Violence Against Women Unit and the Deputy Head of the Board of Trustees of the Egyptian Research and Evaluation Network.

Naila Farouky: Naila Farouky is the CEO and Executive Director of the Arab Foundations Forum (AFF). Since joining AFF, she has helped grow the network in over 10 countries across the region, with a network of members representing the rich ecosystem of philanthropy, non-profit, civil society, and development actors. She has also contributed to academic research and data on the Arab philanthropy sector.

Delila Khaled: Delila Khaled is the Founder and Principal at impaXus. She is an international development expert and social impact entrepreneur with 25 years of experience in more than 20 countries. She specializes in inclusive finance, recycling and waste management, and women's economic empowerment. She also serves on ISWA's Women of Waste Task Force and is a Safer End of Engineered Life Champion for the Royal Academy of Engineering.

Pietro Masina: Pietro Masina is Professor of Asian History at the University of Naples L'Orientale. He is also the Editor-in-Chief of the European Journal of East Asian Studies. His current research focuses on industrialisation processes and working conditions.

Carla Pagano: Carla Pagano is a PhD candidate at the University of Naples “L’Orientale”. She is a gender equality, diversity, and human rights expert and a trainer on violence and harassment at work with over 20 years of experience. She holds two Masters in human and women's rights in Islam and studies of sexual difference.

Alessandro Pastore: Alessandro is Executive Director of Cambridge Ltd, which aims to become the world leader in high-efficiency gas-free refrigeration technology based on magnetic properties of solid-state materials. He is also an Adjunct Professor at Bologna Business School. He holds an MBA from the Collège des Ingénieurs in Paris, and an MSc and PhD in Electronic Engineering from the Polytechnic University of Turin.

Renata Pepicelli: Renata Pepicelli is an Associate Professor at the University of Pisa. She is an international expert on gender studies in the Arab-Islamic context, focusing her research on women's history, the construction of femininity and masculinity patterns in the Mediterranean area, Islamic thought, the condition of youth, Arab Islamism between the 20th and 21st centuries, and diasporic phenomena, including the question of Islam in Europe and Italy.

Haneen Shaheen: Haneen Shaheen is currently completing her Master's in Gender Development studies at Cairo University. She is a Board Member for the Climate Action Network in the Arab World and Programme Manager for UKAID, where she is responsible for the Climate Justice and the Women Peace and Security projects in Egypt.

Valeria Saggiomo: Valeria Saggiomo is a Lecturer at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” on international cooperation for development and a Research Fellow at Harvard University. Her research focuses on the role of civil society in development, particularly the role of migrant and Muslim organizations, and the migration-development nexus more broadly.

Mounira Soliman: Mounira Soliman is full Professor in the Department of English at Cairo University. She was a Visiting Fellow at the John F. Kennedy Institute at Freie Universität in Berlin (2019). Her research interests focus on Popular Culture, Gender and Middle East Studies. She is the joint recipient of the 2021-2022 Research in the Arts Program grant from the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC) and the Arab Council for Social Sciences (ACSS) for her current project on Egyptian culinary literature

Anh Vu: Anh Vu is a Research Director at NatCen International. Her research centres on the connections between environmental change, risks, vulnerabilities and human wellbeing. She also has a wide-ranging practitioner background in policy relevant research and community building, with nearly 20 years of experience working with multilateral and bilateral donors, multi-level governments, and inter/national NGOs.

8.2 Chairs

Sara Borrillo: Sara Borrillo is currently based at the University of Rome “Tor Vergata”. She was the 2021 Laureate/holder of the Gender Chair of the GIS-Institute du Genre at the Sorbonne University Paris 1-Panthéon (IEDES-Institut du développement). She holds a PhD in Middle East Studies from University of Naples “L’Orientale”. She is also a UNDP expert for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.

Sherine El Taraboulsi-McCarthy: Sherine El Taraboulsi-McCarthy is the Director of NatCen International, the global arm of the National Centre for Social Research in London, UK. She is an expert on humanitarian and development policy, conflict, security and evidence uptake, and has in-depth research experience in 13 countries. Her work broadly focuses on two areas: the politics of the interface between the multilateral system and local agency and configurations of power in state-society relations in conflict-affected and fragile contexts. Sherine holds a DPhil from St Cross College and the Department of International Development at the University of Oxford.

Ersilia Francesca: Ersilia Francesca is a Full Professor of Islamic History at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” where she teaches courses on Gender Studies in Islamic Context and on Contemporary History of Economics in Middle East and North Africa. She is member of the board of the PhD program in “Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo” and of the National PhD program in Religious Studies (UNIMORE). She is also Chief Editor of the scientific journal *Studi Maghrebini*.

Antonio Pezzano: Antonio Pezzano is Associate Professor of African Studies at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” and President of the Scientific Committee of the Centre of Contemporary African Studies (CeSAC). He holds a Masters in Political Sciences at the University of Naples “L’Orientale”, a Masters in Tourism Economics and Management from the University of Venice “Ca’ Foscari” and a PhD in African History from the University of Siena. His research and teaching areas of interest are urban governance and informality, local development and local government in sub-Saharan Africa.

Daniela Pioppi: Daniela Pioppi is Associate Professor of Contemporary History of Arab Countries at the University of Naples “L’Orientale”. She holds a PhD in history of extra-European countries at the University of Pisa. Her main research interests are comparative politics of the Middle East and North Africa region with a special emphasis on the recent evolution of Islamist movements/parties. She was previously Senior Fellow at the Mediterranean and Middle East Programme of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI).