



# Workshop Report

## Gender Mainstreaming Workshop: ReWater MENA Project & GENDER Project: COVID-19 and Egypt's Water Crisis- Generating Evidence for Gender- Transformative Innovations

December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021

## Background:

### ReWater MENA project:

ReWater MENA project, is a regional project on water reuse, led by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA), with the aim of addressing the challenges that currently limit opportunities to upscale and accelerate the expansion of wastewater reuse across the MENA region. Through creating national and regional Learning Alliances in three countries (Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon) and drawing on experience in the region with existing wastewater reuse strategies, the project identified promising innovations and validated reuse models to resolve past management bottlenecks that constrain wastewater reuse.

Through a participatory manner, plans for wastewater treatment and reuse are developed for six settlements in the three countries (in Jordan: Wadi Assir and North Jordan Valley, in Lebanon: Zahle and Ablah and in Egypt: Serapium and Kafr El-Sheikh). Strategic plans and roadmaps for scaling up of wastewater treatment and reuse are also produced. Across the MENA region, key stakeholders are engaged, trained, and connected in a network to accelerate the replication of locally viable reuse solutions, to substantially expand safe reuse of treated wastewater in the region and hence reduce water scarcity, increase resilience to climate change, and mitigate the impacts of human displacement on health and livelihoods.

A Gender approach is mainstreamed through all activities of the project to ensure gender equality. Partners and reuse professionals are made aware of and capable of identifying the gendered impacts of particular reuse interventions, building on the research outputs. Women are actively stimulated to participate in the project activities. Gender is an explicit category in research and data collection. Sex and age disaggregated data are collected for the baseline assessments to assess how women and children practice reuse of wastewater, and to identify the gender impacts of particular reuse interventions.

### GENDER project: COVID-19 and Egypt's water crisis- generating evidence for gender-transformative innovations

This research project is conducted by IWMI and ICARDA, in collaboration with the Egyptian Agricultural Research Center and the Arab Water Council and supported by CGIAR GENDER Platform<sup>1</sup>. It is built upon the preliminary findings of ReWater MENA project in Kafr El-Sheikh in Egypt, asking the question, "What are the gendered implications of COVID-19 on wastewater reuse agri-food value chains in Egypt?"

Informed by a feminist political ecology approach, the project analyses how intersectional inequalities by gender, class and other social identities determine poverty, landlessness and [waste]water access, use and control. With this understanding, the project documents the nature and scale of challenges, including social and cultural barriers experienced by marginalized women as wastewater reuse irrigators, producers and entrepreneurs.

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<sup>1</sup> Generating Evidence and New Directions for Equitable Results (GENDER) is CGIAR's new platform designed to put gender equality at the forefront of global agricultural research for development. Through gender research and evidence generated by CGIAR and partners, the Platform aims to deliver new evidence, identifying emerging issues and closing gender data gaps, proposing solutions to reduce gender inequalities within the dynamics of a changing food system.

The research project is divided into 3 specific work packages:

- WP1 The politics of [waste]water use and access in Egypt: analyses how social, political and economic factors in Egypt (the BIG P in Politics) contribute to the currently experienced water crisis, which is further exacerbated by climate impacts. With a wider more robust understanding of the historical context of ‘converging cycles of poverty, inequality and vulnerability’, exploring how promoted technological interventions – like wastewater reuse account for or ignore ground realities of deep-rooted and dynamically evolving inequalities.
- WP2 What is driving women’s engagement in [waste]water irrigation in a patriarchal MENA region? critically analysez the factors driving women’s increasing engagement in [wastewater] irrigated agriculture in Egypt?
- WP3 The gendered dynamics of [waste]water irrigation: analyzes women’s roles in wastewater irrigation in the wider framework of wider change processes (WP1) and changing gender regimes and dynamics in Egypt (WP2).

## Workshop Objectives

The main objectives of this workshop are:

1. Report on the main findings of the GENDER project.
2. Report on Gender mainstreaming in ReWater project activities – including both quantitative and qualitative approaches.
3. Mainstream the Gender approach to the partners of ReWater MENA project
4. Inform phase II of ReWater MENA project.

## Workshop Participants

This workshop was attended by ReWater MENA project partners as follows:

- RSS
- ICARDA
- CEDARE
- LARI
- AWC
- ACWUA

In addition to SIDA representatives, the funder of ReWater MENA project. ReWater project team, GENDER project team and GENDER partners; the Egyptian Agricultural Research Center (ARC) and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), in addition to.

## Expected Workshop Outcomes

1. Participants have an increased understanding of why gender is important, and are more informed on Gender methodologies.
2. Gender capacity development opportunities for implementing partners.
3. Evidence based Gender data shared with participants.
4. Including Gender data in ReWater MENA project outputs; sourcebook.
5. Informing potential phase II of ReWater MENA project on Gender methodologies and potential working areas.

## Agenda

**Wednesday December 1<sup>st</sup> 2021**

<b>Session 1: Introduction &amp; Context</b>		<b>Presenter</b>
10:00-10:05	Welcoming remarks	IWMI Country Representative
10:05-10:10	Introductions and meeting objectives	Dr. Nisreen Lahham, ReWater Project Manager & Coordinator of the GENDER project (IWMI)
10:10-10:15	Gender equality linked to Sida's Policy	Anna Widestam (Sida)
10:15-10:20	CGIAR GENDER Platform and IWMI Gender strategy	Deepa Joshi (IWMI)
<b>Session 2: Reporting on the GENDER project findings</b>		
10:20-10:25	General introduction to project methodology	Deepa Joshi
10:25-10:35	Key findings of Work package (1)	Dr. Everisto Mapedza
10:35-10:45	Key findings of Work package (2)	Bezaiet Dessalegn (ICARDA)
10:45-11:00	Key findings of Work package (3)	Arunima (IWMI) and Amina (IWMI Consultant)
11:00-11:15	Main findings of the project	Dr. Noura Abd El-Wahab (Project Consultant) and Arunima Haku
11:15-11:30	Q&A	Moderated by Nisreen Lahham
<b>Session 3: Reporting on Gender mainstreaming in ReWater project activities</b>		
11:30-11:45	Gender mainstreaming in ReWater project- Qualitative and quantitative approaches	Ms. Hanadi Badr (Project Consultant)
11:45-12:00	How can we inform potential phase II of ReWater MENA project- Open discussion	Moderated by Nisreen Lahham
12:00-12:30	Way Forward: Next steps	Moderated by Nisreen Lahham

**The agenda starts at 10:00 Cairo and Amman Time, 9:00 Stockholm Time and 8:00 Accra Time.**

## Session 1: Introduction & Context

**Dr. Amgad Almahdi; Head of MENA Regional Office, IWMI**, opened the workshop and welcomed the participants to the workshop that shall discuss the impacts of COVID-19 and Egypt's Water Crisis Project, in addition to looking at the Gender Mainstreaming aspects of ReWater MENA project. Dr. Amgad stated: In this workshop we would like to share with you the findings, lessons learned and gaps in the gender space, and what needs to be tackled further which can inform our future plans and the way forward for these projects especially ReWater MENA project that focuses on wastewater reuse in Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. We will be looking for the participants' inputs to inform the discussion and bridge existing gap and find synergies for the way forward.

**This was followed by Dr. Nisreen Lahham; ReWater MENA Project Manager**, who welcomed ReWater MENA project partners and participants. She highlighted that ReWater MENA project is led by IWMI and supported by SIDA in the MENA region, and implemented in Jordan, Egypt and Lebanon. The project is built on three main approaches: awareness of constraints of treated wastewater potentials of the region, building on opportunities and success stories within the region and outside the region and a participatory approach adapted to local contexts on regional and national learning alliances.

The project outputs are as follows:

- MENA Water Reuse Sourcebook
- Local Water Reuse plans
- National Plans for the expansion of Water Reuse
- Stakeholders' capacity building for safe water reuse

In addition, she presented the expected deliverables of the project as follows:

- Document lessons from existing innovations, promising reuse models and past management bottlenecks
- Conceptual designs and feasibility studies for 6 sites in Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon
- Standards revisions, visions, targets, for the 3 countries
- Training workshops and field visits to reuse cases (400 leading practitioners) and 2 regional science-policy dialogues

She added that the Gender mainstreaming approach for promoting gender equality is implemented as follows:

- Build the capacity of partners/ stakeholders on Gender.
- Integrate Gender in partners' activities.
- Develop SMART Gender Indicators- monitor Gender mainstreaming in project.
- Disaggregate data by Sex and age.

Then, she highlighted that towards the end of 2020, CGIAR Gender Platform, announced a call for proposals, on COVID-19, Gender and Water. IWMI and ICARDA submitted together a proposal in light of the findings of ReWater MENA project in Egypt implemented by ICARDA, and this project proposal was listed as the top proposal. The project entitled "COVID-19 and Egypt's Water Crisis: Generating Evidence for Gender-Transformative Innovations". The project has the objective of demonstrating how water reuse is not gender neutral. It presents with evidence these facts, as well as the gender dynamics of wastewater, and it shall disseminate the project's findings through ReWater MENA project. The main research question is: What are the gendered implications of COVID-19 on water reuse and agri-food value chains in Egypt. The project used two methodologies; the feminist approach and waterscape approach.

This was followed by a presentation given by **Ms. Anna Widestan; SIDA's project officer**. In her presentation she highlighted the main pillars of the Swedish Feminist Foreign policy; Rights, Representation, Resources and Reality. In addition to its objectives, that are:

- Full enjoyment of human rights
- Freedom from physical, psychological, and sexual violence
- Participation in preventing and resolving conflicts, and post-conflict peacebuilding
- Political participation and influence in all areas of society
- Economic rights and empowerment
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

In addition, the representative emphasized the objective of SIDA's Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2023, that is Gender mainstreaming is well developed, and the gender equality work is strong even in difficult environments and contexts, and act as an important counterforce to the growing opposition against gender equality and the rights and empowerment of women and girls.

The strategic shifts for the action plan include the following:

- Increased knowledge and capacity to act for gender equality
- Strengthened efforts to counteract growing opposition against gender equality
- Increased focus on gender equality in humanitarian crises and conflict and post- conflict environments.
- Increased focus on gender equality in sustainable economic development and financing

**This was followed by Dr. Deepa Joshi; IWMI Gender and Youth Inclusion Lead at WLE.** She started her speech by highlighting that that preliminary findings of the project started to show as the team has just completed the field work and are in the process of analysing the data. She highlighted that there is no other option except for water reuse in MENA. In this regard, Egypt falls at the heart of two particularly challenged regions, that are North Africa and East Asia. She mentioned that according to Dr. Khaled Abu Zeid, Regional Director of CEDARE, in an interview in Al Ahram Weekly, 18 out of 22 Arab countries are seriously challenged below 1000 cubic meters per capita per year shares of renewable surface and ground water. Out of these 18 countries, 13 are in a severe situation with their per capita share of water resources being about 500 cubic meters. Thus, a country of this sort will have a tough time covering its agriculture needs, raising the spectre of food security and pressure on domestic and industrial usages.

She added that it is also important to look at the history of the region, as it is very important to acknowledge that Power and Politics have a great influence in shaping the water security and insecurity in the region. This has been written about by many researchers including Mark Zeitoun who works at the University of East Anglia in the UK. Because these transboundary water issues are so significant, they seem often to undermine the gender and local dimensions of these challenges which is very visible in the displayed picture as we can all see. She stated: I want to emphasise that there is one hand a content about politics that shapes the water insecurity in different countries in the region and at the same time other local dimensions about politics that also plays a role in who have access to what type of water, etc. This is something that we also want to try to address in this research.

Dr. Joshi stated: What is very interesting is that in the phase of talks about water insecurity and the overall economic crisis and political crisis in the region, many researchers point to the increased role of women in irrigated agriculture including water reuse irrigated agriculture. On the one hand, that could be seen as positive, as women are being able to enter into the domain of food production, from which they don't necessarily have a strategic role in the past. But from the feminist perspective, you begin to question why are women entering into these domains with very challenging livelihood issue and what are women really gaining from these livelihood options. In this regard ICARDA researchers; Dina El Najjari, Bipasha Baruah

and Amen Garhi have also worked on the MENA region and the title of their paper highlight the same gender dynamics of the increasing role of women in irrigation in Egypt. These are the things that we want to look at in the context of the project.

IWMI's Gender and Inclusion Strategy highlights that it is important to move towards a more gender transformative approaches that is informed by a feminist perspective. It recognizes that disparities in power or privilege shapes burdens or risks, opportunities, and challenges at scale. At the local level these inequalities are intersectional and contextual that are crossed out by class, gender, age, ethnicity, etc. We are not talking about generic groups of women being impacted by COVID-19, but we are talking about generic group of women facing challenges because of water reuse, agriculture or finding new opportunities. But how these opportunities and challenges are crosscut by very intersectional inequalities. Also, the IWMI's strategy highlight that when we talk about addressing gender, it is trying to make a transition from addressing the symptoms of inequalities to core systematic issues which requires change at various levels, in societies, policies and institutions.

Dr. Joshi highlighted that interviewed women reported that for water reuse and irrigated agriculture, it is increasingly difficult to sell irrigated products because of mobility restrictions due to COVID. They were going far away to sell their products because of the social norms and cultures which shape people perceptions about water reuse irrigated crops. This is coupled with other issues such as institutions closing, with an increasing presence of men and children in the household and the burdens of agriculture. The inability to sell and gain economically were some of the issues that were beginning to emerge from phase I results. We want to unpack and understand the dynamics of this in the context of Kafr El Sheikh area. This fits well with IWMI's gender strategy and the focus on gender transformative approaches where we understand barriers to be entry level barriers, which are about unequal assets, capabilities, socially defined roles, identities, etc.

There are also structural barriers which tend not to be talked about so much; The fact that around the world there is an increase in feminization in agriculture, including in Egypt, and yet the institutions who are delivering support services are dominantly masculine, and how is this linked to the increasing role of women in irrigated agriculture, also the fact of privileged hierarchy and exclusion at scale and the lack of tools to assess and act on the dimension of power. Moreover, systematic barriers that comprise climate challenges that include archaeological specifications and markets that do not consider the needs and realities of the most marginalized. In addition, to knowledge, technology and economies that assume homogeneity or ignore or further inequalities, as well as distance, disconnect, language and skills sets that disable individuals from transformative changes.

She added that the approach adopted in the study is a Feminist Political Ecology Approach, which is also written in the CGIAR coalition of gender equality research. It is worth noting that CGIAR and the Gender platform that supported this research is driven by a Feminist Approach, which focuses on power relations at both the broader content and the local content. It talks about scale integration and what needs to change and where and how. It is not just focusing on women; it also focuses on the masculinity of institutions and how we deal with it. Finally, about the fact of intersectionality's and complex context inequalities.

## Session 2: Reporting on the GENDER project findings

**Dr. Deepa Joshi; IWMI Gender and Youth Inclusion Lead at WLE** explained the methodology adopted for the research on the gendered impacts of COVID-19 and wastewater irrigated agriculture. She highlighted that the study had three work packages:

**WP1:** That looks at the wider perspective for the narratives about water reuse strategies: science, technology, solutions, access, use, challenges and opportunities at the policy level (used secondary and primary research).

**WP2:** That looks at irrigation and demographic landscape of water reuse agriculture in Kafr El Sheikh.

**WP3:** That looks at everyday experience of water reuse irrigation amongst marginalized women and men to understand the gender dynamics.

**Dr. Everisto Mapedza; IWMI Lead Gender Specialist,** presented a brief overview of the preliminary findings of WP1, entitled: The Politics of Water Reuse and Access in Egypt. Dr. Mapedza stated: It is looking at the issue of the decision-making power. What we tried to highlight in this research is to do a study up (gaze) with a Feminist Political ecology /economy lens at the state and how its framing of water scarcity plays out in gender and reuse water irrigation in the case study area. Irrigation and water issues are not just technical, these are social, economic and political issues. This allows us to unravel webs of politics and power at national and sub-national level and locate decisions affecting the local. So here we are looking at the Big Politics (big P) in water reuse governance how policies are made at the national level and how this is translated into practice: Who participates? Who decides? For Whom?

He explained why it was important to understand these politics and how it is translated to the local level. This is because it was important to understand how policies cascade from local and national level and even regional level. In addition, it informs policy and implementation within the water reuse sector. It offers an opportunity to identify Gender Transformative Solutions opportunities and recommend inclusive policy and governance solutions.

Dr. Mapedza revealed that the methods used for WP1 are literature review by looking at discourse narrative, laws and ideational power, studying up and conducting 15 Key in-depth interviews from Government, NGOs', Development Partners at the local, national and regional levels. He presented the main preliminary findings of WP1, emphasizing that Policy and Practice in Egypt disconnect. Egypt has big number of policies, from the 1950's to the 1960's usage of drainage water began, which is increasing now due to water scarcity and climate change. Law (48/1982) prohibits illegal dumping on untreated water into the drains. We also see decrees on crop types that mismatch with what is grown on the ground. We also have code 501/2015, which speaks to the need to treated wastewater before being used and mixed with fresh water before using it in irrigation. Because of water scarcity, farmers are still using drainage water that is not mixed with fresh water. The issue of the virtual water option is part of the policies within Egypt.

The interviews revealed that farmers do not comply with the code and directly use the drainage water. In addition, the cooperatives coordinate with the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation and can issue fines for framers if they don't comply with the agriculture cycle. Thus, the study of interactions between these different levels is extremely difficult as it involves a flux of information which is not accessible and is sometimes informal. He highlighted the issue of water quality and health concerns, where rewater treatment plants coverage are 90% urban and 12% rural. In this regard, one respondent revealed that farmers do not grow fruits and vegetables due to the bad quality of the drainage water, as drainage water is polluted. Another respondent highlighted that he does not buy fruits and vegetables planted in his village. And another one highlighted that there will be resistance from society to accept eating or buying products knowingly, but in many cases, people buy them unknowingly. Thus, despite having regulations on water quality, this is not enforced on the ground.

For gender inclusion opportunities, he revealed that there is a ministerial decree for membership of Water Users Associations to have 2 females and 5 males, however this is not operational on the ground as females do not elect themselves in most cases. We also witness dichotomies between urban and rural areas. Gender relations are better in urban areas compared to rural areas. In this regard, a respondent revealed that most of the projects includes gender as mandatory which I do not really feel comfortable with. Another respondent highlighted that it is not completely socially acceptable for women to work in Upper Egypt, this is due to the social norms in this region in Egypt, so it is rarely that you will find women leaders or in a senior position.



**Ms. Bezalet Dessaegn, Team Leader at ICARDA** presented the findings of WP2. She highlighted that WP2 is trying to look at what is driving reuse in agriculture in the MENA region in general and in Kafr El Sheikh in particular from a gender perspective. The main objective is to examine the differential challenges and opportunities that indirect reuse presents to men and women. This is to understand how different groups of the community reuse water for agriculture and why. It is also in recognition that technological or other solutions do not fit all, thus we need a gendered targeted comprehensive (multi-level) and transformative solution that can effectively address the challenges faced by the whole community. The how part is that we have to specifically focus on understanding how intersectional inequalities are produced, sustained, and feedback into existing socio-economic systems. In addition to sex, the study further disaggregated the community by land ownership (economic differences), and geographic location (access to quantity and quality of water) to capture intersectional nuances.

She presented the preliminary findings, in relation to the cross sections and different categories of societies. She highlighted that the common things that the study found irrespective of the geographic location, whether they are located at the head, middle or tail, irrespective of gender and irrespective of them owning land or not, are decline in productivity, high cost of production (fertilizers, pesticides, and land), marketability and profits. In addition to gender roles, what men do, and what women do both at the domestic and community level. There was also clear differentiation between where they sell their products and where they buy and from where they buy their produce.

People are ok with selling their stuff away from where they are producing it to get a better price, but they know that the quality of the produce is not good, and they make sure that they buy produce that is grown with cleaner water. In addition, women are making half the wage rate compared to men per day. Women are also not allowed to work outside a certain perimeter of the village. Involvement of CBOs was the same across the board, as women are not active members or active influencers in CBOs'. Outsourcing domestic work is not something encouraged across the board. Moreover, the system was resilient to the effects of COVID-19, they were able to absorb the shock because they were able to produce what they need locally, and they were able to take care of their children who had to stay at home. The system works but it works with a hidden cost that we should all be looking at. There is also no interest for raising the farmers children as farmers, that was highlighted also as another common theme that came out repeatedly.

In terms of intersectional inequalities, there were differences in access to quality and quantity of water across different locations, where the head is better than the tail because the tail is closer to the sea and because of lack of sufficient water, the soil is also not good and sandy. Cost of production was also different among different locations and among landowners and renters because renters receive certain portions of the land based on the agreement they make with owners, or they must pay rent. Women headed households' cost of production is also higher as they must hire more labour. In terms of the need to supplement income, the ones who were renting at the middle and tail including women headed households have all to supplement their income by focusing on cash crops like cotton and rice and even at the tail although they don't have good quality water, they get engaged in planting fruits and vegetables to get cash. In addition, they breed livestock, as they need to supplement their income.

Looking onward, in summary farmers are quite aware about the conditions that they are in, and they are questioning the sustainability of agricultural livelihood strategy. They do not see based on the quality of the water that they have, and it is also getting worse, and the limited profits they make, they are discouraged from encouraging their children to become farmers, which is something serious to consider. **For Phase II, it is important to look at ways** to respond to these different needs and not put a blanket response as treating women as one group because there are differences, even intra differences between same group of women depending on what they have and where they are, the geographic location also matters in terms of what they can and cannot do. So, the question of how we make the reuse safe for them, how to make the

local institutions inclusive and also effective, and how do we promote income diversification as women cannot depend on the land and their livestock alone.

**Ms. Arunima Haku, IWMI Consultant at WLE** presented the findings of WP3. She highlighted that there is correlation between class and location, and gender effects on who can use what type of water. This happens through the positionality and is dependent on class, agency, and privilege. WP3 focused on different case studies, that zoomed in marginalized farmers. Case study 1 zoomed in a 61-year male landowner farmer. He thought that domestic work is seen as inferior and unskilled. In addition, reproductive work is not given much credit, which is an observation that we found in all conducted interviews. The second thing is related to the family social standard the more precarious they are the more women are free to work outside the household. Conversations with farmers also revealed that having freedom to do farming is a dichotomy, on one hand they are free to pursue other work, but results reveal hyper exploitation.

Culturally it is taken for granted that women are meant to do certain types of things, for example social reproduction. They are not allowed to hire external help because the whole idea of domestic work is something that they need to do as a duty. While, domestic work contributes to the new generation of the labour force, care work exceeds the intangible emotional nonquantifiable characteristics that define it, because it produces material outputs. They rare kettles and produce dairy products, when COVID-9 happened they were not able to get some inputs such as fertilizers or pesticides, so they started to rare Kettle at that time. She clarified that what stood from the case studies is that women leisure time decreased because now they are focused not just producing in their field but having to do more work at home because school children are not going to school. There is also very gendered difference between what type of children help at the household work.

We can safely say with the data that we have that most women expressed that they have very tiring and very long hours of work in their farms. To do both effectively, they have to decrease their leisure activities. In some women, they generally perceive these caretakers as men are the bread winners, so we can see this as a masculinity that plays a central role, as men and women are performing certain roles in the preview of the setup of femininity and masculinity. This is also reiterated in the hierarchical structures that allows exploitation of men. Regarding the impact of COVID-19, the noticed in most interviews that to get more labour, many women and many households would go to their neighbours and ask for their help, where the community is coming up to support all. On the face it looks very positive as it shows a very resilient system, but all this resilience comes at the back of care work that is provided by women, girl children and boy children in some cases. There is a certain cost associated with the seemingly no effect on COVID-19. We need also to bear in mind the impact of food inflation, as there was also a month-on-month inflation in food prices that happened in Egypt even before COVID-19.

This was followed by presenting the key findings of the project by **Ms. Arunima Haku** and **Dr. Noura Abdelwahab, Project Gender Consultants**. Ms. Haku presented the gendered food systems diagram that highlights the structural gender inequalities that affect agricultural value chains, the food environment and consumer behaviour. But parallely, there are things like women agency, access and control over resources, gender social norms and policies and governance which are individual, systemic, formal, and informal factors are also things that affect the value chains, food environment and consumer behaviour.

In terms of Kafr El Sheikh, the study revealed that seasonality is one of the biophysical drivers of gendered inequalities. Location (upstream versus downstream) is also a factor that influences how people use and reuse water. Intersectionality was also visible in gender and class in the last presentation. There are also factors that have outcomes such as women empowerment, economic and livelihood outcomes, and environmental outcomes. At the same time, there was a mix of individual systemic, individual, formal and informal observations were coming out in terms of what are the freedom that women enjoyed and the constraints that men also faced because of the performed masculinity that they have to pursue every day,

thus we can say that we have bounded social and physical mobility due to COVID and due to social norms. Moreover, domestic, and productive burdens increased which is related to women in the household. Research also suggests lack of land titles or lack of control of other resources in general in Kafr El Sheikh. Moreover, there is a dependence on male relatives for performing in the market and getting needed agriculture inputs such as fertilizers and pesticides. Finally, there is lack of representation in policy making.

**Dr. Noura Abdelwahab** presented the main findings on value chains identified within the context of Kafr El Sheikh and the strong linkages, weak linkages and existing gaps in the food value chain. As confirmed, in WP1 policy and practice disconnect, where there exist many gaps between policy processes, research and education, support structures, intermediaries, farmers and the demand side. These gaps get wider when it comes to gender. There is a big gap between women landowners and intermediaries in terms of access to inputs from the extension services or by proceeding to private shops to buy their inputs. There are also weak linkages between the support structures from donors, infrastructure, finance, credit and savings institutions and women farmers. These highlights that a lot needs to be tackled in the future at the policy level, institutional level, and the project level.

To sum up, we have seen that women suffer from desperate livelihood conditions, thus, livelihood components have to be included in various interventions including water interventions. There is also a need to adopt gender transformative approaches at the institutional, strategic programs and project levels. Membership in Water Users Associations needs to be accessible to women farmers. Land titles and resource access needs to be available to women. Finally, there is a need to raise awareness on the importance of changing social perceptions and gender norms.

### Questions and Answers

**Ms. Anna Widestan, SIDA's project officer** highlighted that it has been very interesting to listen, and she is looking forward to following this project and to continue to have a dialogue. She added that the concept of Do NO Harm is important for SIDA, as they don't want to push an agenda that could be too sensitive, and it is always important to have this in mind when looking to work together towards a more equitable society.

**Dr. Nisreen Lahham** highlighted that it is a very valid point to be context sensitive to the culture and to people who live in targeted areas and not imposing something to them and to engage them in activities in a sensitive way. Even when approaching women, we were very careful to approach them in a friendly way and not just imposing certain issues and certain approaches on them.

**Mr. Mohamed Tawfik**, IWMI intern, posed a comment based on literature, that sometimes the role that women play in the rural community is not explicitly represented in formal institutional setups like WUAs or similar entities, which seems that they are marginalized, but in fact they control behind the scenes and not in the front lines. This is sometimes very decisive in the day-to-day decision-making process and practices concerning water accessibility and access to land which is also an important issue regarding this research. Water is one component and also land is a very important component in terms of access, ownership and similar issues.

**Dr. Sayed Abdel Hafiz, Advisor at SWERI, and responsible for organizing Kafr El Sheikh field work**, thanked IWMI's gender team for conducting this important study, and mentioned that we need to do more research on the role of women in Egypt through conducting more surveys that tackle raised concerns. There is also a need to link main outcomes of this study with main measures for Egypt's agricultural and gender strategy.

**Dr. Tarek El Samman, Arab Water Council**, highlighted that there are options to use treated wastewater in the MENA region. If we make capacity building and awareness for women to use treated wastewater, we need to tackle two issues: first, does COVID-19 have an impact on wastewater, and is it safe to be used

after treatment. Second, is the agriculture production in the market safe or not. Thus, we need to transfer the confidence to women that treated wastewater is safe. There is also a need to have incentives to encourage farmers who use treated wastewater and decrease the prices in the market for agriculture production irrigated with treated wastewater to encourage consumers to buy it.

**Dr. Nisreen Lahham** highlighted that the social acceptance is very important to promote and outreach for people, and to inform them about the health impacts, and is the treated wastewater is safe or not. The Rewater MENA project is in the harvesting phase, it is currently translating all scientific finding to communication products for the public to inform them on how important this issue is.

**Ms. Bezalet Dessalegn** highlighted that the study focused on Drain#7 which includes agriculture drains, treated wastewater coming from Sakha Station, and depending on the location of the land, drain water could also include effluents from industries and effluents from households' waste. It is not about perceptions of users and convincing them that it is safe, because they see, and this was one of the questions that were asked regarding individuals understanding of the quality of water in the drain, and all interviewees across the three locations irrespective of class and gender, break it down as mentioned earlier. They all know what is inside, they know the quality, they tell us that their animals refuse to drink drain water. They say the plant roots die and the productivity is low. So, this is beyond perception, people know the fact of the quality of water they are dealing with. But I totally agree with Dr. Tarek that the perception of treated wastewater in its own needs to be changed. But the solution for this study is to find some options to make this water safer to use.

**Dr. Everisto Mapedza** commented on Dr. Tarek's intervention and responded to Mohamed Tawfik's comments. One of the key things that we need to look at especially from WP1 is how we have policies that stipulates the industrial waste to be monitored and treated before it is discharged. He added that policies and regulations exist, but the conducted reviews even by government ministries, they all note that some of the industries, they only switch to the treatment when they are being monitored and then most of the time, they are off. So, they are discharging effluents which are not being treated to drains. This is one of the areas where we see the law of the government and how to enforce some of the rules and regulations that are in place. To respond to Mohamed's comments, it is not only about membership in WUAs', but is what they do in the frontline. One of the points that needs to be looked at is what we are recommending in terms of these regulations that are not being implemented on the ground. The second aspect that we want to look at is that we are not trying to push an external perception in terms of gender. Instead, we are trying to look at the vision of local women, and ideas of gender transformative approaches.

**Dr. Deepa Joshi** added that the challenge of water reuse is not just in Egypt. Its culture, notions, and individual perceptions are similar globally. She agrees with Dr. Tarek that there is a need for outreach to address these issues. In the research people feel because they are poor and marginalized, they have to use water reuse for irrigation. These issues could be tackled through outreach, but there is also the real problem of providing the confidence and some guarantees that it is treated wastewater and that it is safe. These two approaches need to be taken forward simultaneously. We need to make water reuse, but we need to ensure that the investments are there and that there is evidence that this water is safe.

**Dr. Hanadi Badr, Rewater MENA Project Consultant**, commented on water quality and gender perspective, as through Rewater MENA project conducted field work in Jordan, it was revealed that women have more concerns with water quality in relation to health, while men focus on the relation between water quality and marketing issues. This implies that gender shapes the acceptance of water quality. More research is needed to understand the gender aspects of water reuse in terms of quality, quantity, availability, and accountability of water.

### Session 3: Reporting on Gender mainstreaming in ReWater project activities

**Dr. Hanadi Bader, ReWater MENA Gender Project Consultant** presented the objectives of mainstreaming gender in ReWater MENA project using qualitative and quantitative approaches. The objectives are to develop key gender sensitive indicators, improve the capacity on integrating gender and draw lessons to improve gender mainstreaming. The research approach depended on extensive desk work to develop smart gender sensitive indicators, conducting virtual and bilateral physical meetings, questionnaires, interactive FGDs and partners' communication and command chain were developed to integrate and coordinate communication.

For quantitative methods, three gender assessment questionnaires were developed, gender baseline survey was conducted in Lebanon and gender pilot survey was conducted in two pilot communities in Jordan. Qualitative methods depended on conducting rapid gender assessment to collect essential information from selected key stakeholders. In addition, three FGDs were conducted, one for women, one for men and a third mixed group of men and women. The guiding questions of the FGDs were carefully designed to collect required data. This was complimented by side chats with partners; staff and community members to clarify some responses.

As for capacity building activities, two gender trainings were held, one for LARI in Lebanon and another one for RSS in Jordan. In addition, a meeting was conducted with ACWUA to discuss the value, importance, and challenges for mainstreaming gender throughout ACWUA activities in relation to the project. Finally, Dr. Hanadi presented examples of developed output smart gender indicators for partners such as percentage of women/men that participated in the preparation of national water reuse strategies and percentages of women/men that attended the national learning alliances on water reuse.

Then **Dr. Nisreen Lahham, asked Dr. Javier Mateo-Sagasta, ReWater MENA Project Leader** to give an overview on the source book that the project is developing, data gaps and how we can utilize data findings from the gender project into this source book. Mr. Javier highlighted that water reuse in MENA is changing reality, and the project is working to generate data and evidence. For gender, the project seeks to generate data and evidence to motivate the needed change that covers inclusion, changing perceptions of both women and men. Thus, it is important within the remaining period of ReWater MENA or in the next phase to try to understand the current engagement and inclusion of women in wastewater treatment in MENA and how it compares to other regions, as the engagement may be different for different components of the value chain. Maybe the engagement of women is low in wastewater treatment plants but is high at the farm level.

He added that it is also interesting to understand, are there barriers for women to be part of the reuse story? and is the inclusion chosen by women or it is imposed by circumstances? for instance we see more women framers because men are migrating, thus sometimes women are left with no more choices. He revealed that the project is interested in understanding what the water reuse sector is missing with the low engagement and inclusion of women, and this is an important message that we need to convey to policy makers. On the other hand, we need to identify what women are missing with their low engagement in the sector and generate evidence for that, and how to overcome gender barriers.

The project is trying to find answers to these questions in the form of boxes or sections within the book which has been prepared. The sourcebook has 3 volumes. The first volume is about the state of water reuse in the MENA region with different chapters. It collects data about regulation and policies of reuse, as well as data on institutions and economy of reuse, cost recovery and the state of reuse. The second volume highlights success stories that incorporate gender questions. It highlights cases that have environmental benefits for safe water reuse that have been operational. Volume three highlights the guidelines and how to do things. It has a chapter on how to include women and mainstream gender in the project components. In the first two volumes we are addressing how to change water reuse perceptions and how women and men perceive water reuse.

**Dr. Lahham** asked **Dr. Deepa Joshi**, **Ms. Bezaiet Dessalegn** and **Dr. Everisto Mapedza** to reflect on what **Mr. Mateo-Sagasta** has mentioned. **Dr. Mapedza** highlighted that these raised points are good specially for the gender mainstreaming in chapter 5, where he contributed together with Ms. Dessalegn to that chapter. They used SIDA's agenda and processes of analysing data with the intention to engage policy makers and make it clear to them why gender matters in wastewater reuse. He added that looking at the second phase of ReWater MENA project, we want to be ambitious in terms of transformative approaches and engaging local communities to say where they do want to go.

### **How can we inform potential phase II of ReWater MENA project with Gender Transformative Approach?**

**Dr. Lahham** opened the discussion by posing a question on how we can benefit from the gender project in refining the methodology for Phase II of ReWater MENA project, and how to use this methodology in other countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, etc. **Ms. Dessalegn** highlighted that during this phase of the project, the focus has been more on the farm level and understanding gender interactions and the role of norms in water reuse, thus the project focused on how and why they use it, challenges in using it, and what can be done to improve the effectiveness of the reuse in terms of water quality, technology, adoption processes, institutional set up and the policy levels at the big P and the small p. It is also important to ask about the role of women in wastewater at the higher level in terms of treatment of plants, and education in terms of management positions. Thus, in the second phase it would be a good question to be tackled and link the two together.

**Dr. Mateo-Sagasta** highlighted that it would be very interesting to brainstorm and think about what communication stories could have merged from the research that the Gender project has done at the farm level, something that would allow the project to raise the voice and identify where there have been exclusions of one of the parties, that could be women, or to document anything that is working well.

**Dr. Noura Abdelwahab** revealed that based on the findings, Phase II of ReWater MENA Project can consider having a livelihood component because it was witnessed during the study that women are deprived. Thus, they need some sort of support through having income generation activities that would help them to become more empowered and have access to resources that would strengthen their voice and choice. There is also a need to mainstream gender at the policy level namely through mainstreaming gender in water reuse strategies and conduct awareness raising campaigns at targeted locations for the project.

**Dr. Deepa Joshi** highlighted that the study looked at the community level issues, with the focus to link this to other levels, such as institutions and policies, and key stakeholders in main hierarchy institutions perceptions for water reuse. Fundamentally, our research shows that a lot of marginalized poor women use treated wastewater for irrigation that plays a key role in their livelihoods. In addition, more and more women are pushed into this work as farmers irrigators because of wider economic changes that are happening. Several factors shape the overall outcome of all this hard work and the production of vegetables that does not necessarily result in improved nutrition and food security for these households and might not result in reliable income gains because of the social acceptance of the water quality or real challenges of mixing up treated water and untreated water and issues with access to markets and the overall perspective that determines food irrigated crops. She added, that so far, the policy focus had been in recognizing that using treated wastewater is really important and is necessary for the region because of the immense water scarcity. However, this narrative needs to be connected with what is happening on the ground for those who are using this water and how can some of the challenges and risks be addressed to ensure that policies promoting treated wastewater results in real food security, nutrition, and livelihood gains for the most marginalized.

**Eng. Mona Agizy, CEDARE**, highlighted that the findings of the workshop are very important for small farmers as they don't have access to markets and information and women are feeling the crunch of all the problems and that it is very good to communicate these issues. Since CEDARE is developing the strategy for water reuse for Egypt, CEDARE would appreciate that consultants would prepare a two-page policy paper on how to empower the farmers and women and how the government can support them in moving forward. There are several successful projects for empowering women such as the Egyptian Network for Integrated Development that works in the poorest governorates and get connected with women and identify problems women are having and provide them with needed support and training to make products that they can sell to empower them and give them more freedom of choice and voice. In addition, she highlighted that Egypt has three mega projects for treating agriculture drainage water which has wastewater in it and it has been treated and used to irrigate new agriculture land. Moreover, Egypt is expanding its wastewater treatment and the connection of the villages to treated wastewater.

**Ms. Yara El Nagdi, Arab Water Council** highlighted that she agrees with Dr. Mapedza for the need to have gender transformative approaches in phase II for ReWater MENA project. She also stressed on the need to scale the available information and statistics for activities at the decision-making level. She added that the gender research is very similar to what the Arab Water Council is doing under the DG Climate Facility project and taking this bottom-up approach starting from the farm level information collection and scaling it up to higher levels to ensure that gender is mainstreamed at all levels would be a very good approach. We have witnessed that the women participation of the agriculture sector is very high, yet they are not compensated, and they don't know how to reach the decision makers to convey their needs regarding agriculture irrigation and wastewater management.

**Dr. Lahham** closed the workshop and thanked all participants for their active engagement.