



CIHEAM'S CONTRIBUTION TO WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Created in 1962, the **CIHEAM** (International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies) is a Mediterranean Organisation that works for improving sustainable agriculture and fisheries, for ensuring food and nutrition security and for developing rural and coastal territories. The CIHEAM gathers 13 Member States from both shores of the Mediterranean (Albania, Algeria, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain, Tunisia and Turkey) and works with several international and regional institutions. CIHEAM's actions rely on a bottom-up collaboration and are problem solving oriented, connected to the peculiar needs of the countries. With its Member States, public and private partners and academics the CIHEAM strive to meet the 4 following challenges:

-  Struggling against "triple waste" (Knowledge-Natural Resources-Food)
-  Boosting Sustainable Agriculture and Food
-  Investing in new generations and fragile territories
-  Preventing risks and managing tensions

Gender Equality, Participation and Empowerment of Women

In line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, the **CIHEAM Action Plan for the Mediterranean (CAPMED 2025)** gives prominence to issues of capacity building and empowerment of women in agriculture, fisheries and more generally in rural and coastal Mediterranean areas. Identified as a priority, gender equality and women empowerment are crosscutting themes that invite us to reflect upon several components of the Mediterranean agriculture and rural development. Whether in the struggle against the waste of natural and human resources, in the formulation of poverty alleviation policies, the support of entrepreneurship and in decision-making processes, the participation of rural women should be fostered and greater investment should be made in building their capacities aiming at their empowerment.

The CIHEAM supports women by implementing programmes, promoting social, technical and economic innovations and by encouraging a wider involvement of women in research. The Organisation also supports the participation of women in its research networks and encourages young girls to choose scientific studies in the fields of food security and nutrition, natural resources management and energy, rural and coastal development, climate change adaptation and mitigations strategies, animal and plant health.

*"Given the pressing challenges faced by the Mediterranean region, it is time to give a new impetus to gender equality and to strengthen the role of women and girls in rural areas.
Cosimo Lacirignola, SG of the CIHEAM"*

KEY DATA ON RURAL WOMEN IN CIHEAM'S MEMBER COUNTRIES

DISCRIMINATION

In many Mediterranean countries, although the law guarantees the same rights to **own, use and control land** to women and men, there are still some customary, traditional or religious practices that discriminate against women. It is also the case for **secure access to non-land assets** as well as to **financial services**. They are also penalised when it comes to **inheritance and parental authority**.



Because female labour is in most cases not paid and undeclared, the **global labour force** (aged more than 15 years old) is only made up of **35,3% women**, and in Southern Mediterranean, **25%**.



Women perform **66%** of the world's **work** and produce **50%** of the **food**, yet only **earn 10%** of its income and own a mere **1%** of the **land**. (OECD, 2012)

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Only **15.5%** of **agricultural exploitations** are held by **women**. In CIHEAM's southern member countries, the percentage drops up to **5,4%**.

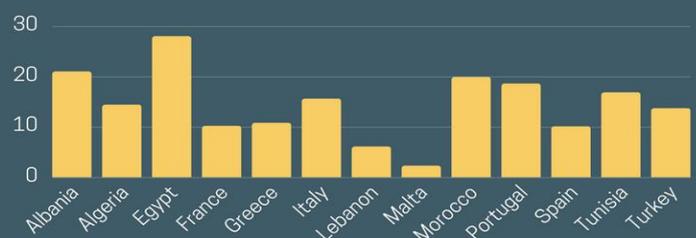
If women benefited from the **same access** as men to **productive resources**, the FAO estimates that the **increase** of agricultural production in developing countries would be between **2.5** and **4%**. **Malnutrition** would consequently diminish by up to **17%** in the world by **2050**.

POPULATION



In CIHEAM's member countries, the rural population represents around **30%** of the **global population**, among which **15%** are women and **13%** are young women of less than 30 years old.

FEMALE RURAL POPULATION



Percentage of rural women in CIHEAM's Member Countries (2014)

One-third of the Mediterranean population lives in rural areas and one in ten jobs is related to agriculture. The development of rural areas, mainly achieved through agriculture, is a reservoir of jobs and provides income for people. The agricultural activities, from “the field to the fork”, livestock but also fisheries are essential drivers of the economic growth in the Mediterranean. They are also instruments for a territorial well-balanced development where women have a crucial role to play, provided that their potential is acknowledged and unlocked and that the struggle against gender inequality takes centre stage in public and private policy.

Global and regional studies show that women are essential to food and nutrition security mechanisms as they represent an important part of the agricultural labour force especially in the poorest areas. Women are also significant bearers of knowledge, best practices and innovations in the sustainable use of natural resources, including in climate change adaptation and the conservation of agrobiodiversity. Moreover, as men of working age are moving out of rural areas, because of territorial imbalances and poverty, women consequently become the main financial pillar of their household and community, contributing to maintain local socio-economic activities.

Women must deal with compounded difficulties, inequalities and discriminations

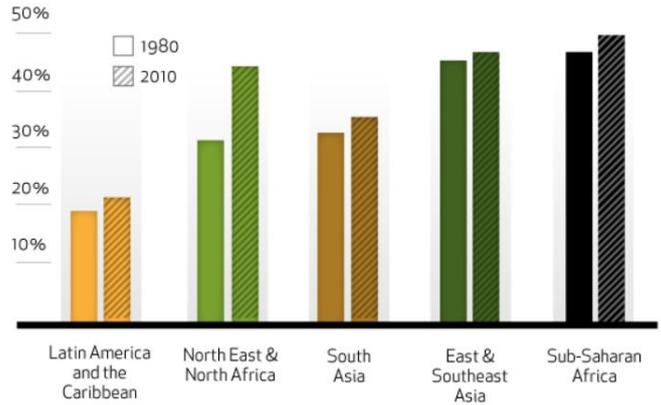
Although women participation in the economic, social and political spheres remains unequal at global level, it is more significant in some areas of the Mediterranean countries. Very often, women must deal with compounded difficulties, inequalities and discriminations. Unskilled jobs, less paid (if paid at all), less access to education and capacity building, less access to financial services, to the use of fertilisers and main resources such as water, seeds, mechanical equipment or new technologies—Moreover, depending on the country, women may also be victims of gender-related discrimination ranging from sociocultural pressure – fostering the isolation of women relegated to the domestic space – to legalised discrimination, namely with regards to inheritance and access to land.

Women are a key element for the resilience of territories

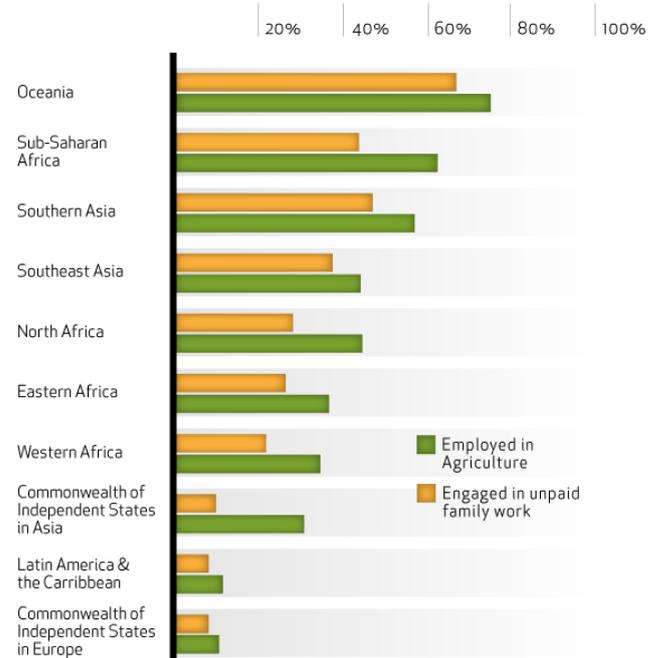
Women in rural areas experience the effects of territorial marginalisation with limited access to early childhood services, training, transport, socio-medical, cultural facilities and are confronted more than elsewhere with the lack of job opportunities. Particularly affected by the effects of climate change on agriculture, women are also the primary “shock absorbers” during food crises. The underrepresentation of women in rural organisations and institutions is an aggravating factor as they remain poorly informed about their rights and this prevents them from having an equal say in decision-making processes.

Although rural women are the object of compounded inequalities and discriminations and bear a “double penalty,” they remain a key element for the stabilisation of territories. They play a major role in the resilience of rural societies and provide different means to meet Mediterranean challenges such as food security and the preservation of rural ecosystems.

FEMALE SHARE OF POPULATION ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE IN AGRICULTURE (%) Source: FAOSTAT



WOMEN EMPLOYED IN AGRICULTURE & ENGAGED IN UNPAID FAMILY WORK, 2007 (%) Source: UN, FAO



What we do?

[Developing the Handcrafts Skills and Enhancing the Economic Status of Women in Upper Egypt \(WEE\):](#)

WEE aims at improving the social and economic status of rural women of the poor communities in the Governorates of Fayoum, Sohag, Assiut and Aswan, by triggering and sustaining their capacity to produce and sell food and non-food items, while taking care of their children and families.

[Enhancing Gender Mainstreaming in sustainable rural development and food Security Action \(GeMaiSa\):](#)

The project aims to build the necessary pre-conditions to enhance women participation and promote their role in the framework of cooperation programmes in the main sectors related to food security and rural development. A specific component is developed in Tunisia through the assessment of strategic potential partnerships for women empowerment with consequent capacity building.

[Sharing Experiences with the Ministry of Agriculture of Kenya for inclusive sustainable development \(SEMAKENYA\)](#)

Overall objective of the project is contributing to improve food security and living standards of populations of Kenya, with particular reference to territories affected by climate change effects. **Specific purpose** is to strengthen a team of heads of MoALF, technicians and trainers of related institutions, with respect to their capacities of answering food security needs and sustainable rural development needs, in particular in the countries of Turkana and West Pokot, favouring a sustainable and resilient agricultural development for populations exposed to climate change effects and affected by income reduction and food insecurity, such as women, youth and people with disabilities.

[Inclusive and Sustainable Value Chain Development in Oromia](#)

The program aims to improve and reinforce 3 value chains (horticulture, durum wheat and processing tomato) through capacity and institutional building and introduction of improved agricultural practices, reinforce and qualify the role of women in agricultural value chains and improve nutrition and dietary diversity of sensitive target population, namely women and children. CIHEAM Bari is the implementing agency for horticulture value chain and for the two cross-cutting components of Gender and Nutrition. This program is built on a pilot intervention in 2014, which supplied inputs for wheat farming to 450 farms and provided veterinary support to 3,000 animal breeders in Azaz district in Aleppo.

[European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development \(ENPARD\)](#)

ENPARD is a political initiative launched by the European Union in 2011 aiming to strengthen the partnership between the EU and the neighbourhood countries in terms of agricultural and rural policies. This mutual commitment affirms the socio-economic aspect of agriculture and rural areas in ensuring a balanced and sustainable development of these countries and stability in the region. Many of its actions are directed toward women and young people.

[Creation of jobs in South Tunisia to support agriculture and handicraft: solidarity economy and professionalisation \(Emploi-Sud\)](#)

Coordinated by the CIHEAM-IAMM, the "Emploi Sud Tunisie" Project is aimed at enhancing the creation of jobs in the fields of agriculture and handicraft in the Medenine Governorate. It fosters the integration of young people, either graduated or not, within the regional economy and responds to the needs of farmers and cooperatives in terms of skills and service gaps.

[Social Innovation in Marginalised Rural Areas \(SIMRA\)](#)

SIMRA is a project funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme. It seeks to advance understanding of social innovation and innovative governance in agriculture, forestry and rural development, and how to boost them, particularly in marginalised rural areas across Europe, with a focus on the Mediterranean region (including non-EU) where there is limited evidence of outcomes and supporting conditions.

[Agriculture Support to the Aleppo and Idlib Governorates in Syria](#)

The project intends to assist Syrian rural communities by supplying agriculture inputs, establishing and organizing units for technical assistance, developing training modules for basic agriculture operation and interacting with the emergency programmes.

In particular the program is increasing the capacity of the Syrians Local Council Administrations (LCAs), Technicians and Women's Associations and is providing services and inputs to the rural communities in the program areas. All interventions are based on both demand from farmers and on the requests of LCAs. Through Technical Assistance, delivery of inputs and services in revolving funds the program aims to increase the resilience of the Rural Communities and supports the stabilisation process in the involved areas. These efforts are done in collaboration with the LCAs and the local associations and encourage the reconciliation between the populations with different ethnicity and religion, increasing hereby dialogues, agricultural works and economical exchanges.



Publications, Networks & Policy Dialogue

PUBLICATIONS:

Women in Agriculture, summer 2010, CIHEAM, Watch Letter n°14

Mainstreaming Gender Dimensions in Water Management for Food Security and Food Safety. Bari: CIHEAM, 2007, 238p. (Options Méditerranéennes: Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens, n°77).

Women Status in the Mediterranean: Their Rights and Sustainable Development. Bari: CIHEAM, 2009, 102p. (Options Méditerranéennes: Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens, n°87).

Adinolfi, F. & Capitanio, F. (2009), Innovation vs opposition: the role of women in the family farms regeneration process: an Italian experience, New Medit, 8(2), pp.33-30.

Özekici B., Kantar M. (2006), Women, agriculture and irrigation in Turkey and GEWAMED project. In : Sagardoy J.A. (ed.), Hamdy A. (ed.), Trisorio-Liuzzi G. (ed.), Lamaddalena N. (ed.), Quagliariello R. (ed.), Bogliotti C. (ed.), Guelloubi R. (ed.). *Institutional coordination and streamlining partners activities in the framework of GEWAMED project*. Bari : CIHEAM, 2006. p. 153-157. (Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 68)

Saccone C. Women and science. In : Ambrosi L. (ed.), Trisorio-Liuzzi G. (ed.), Quagliariello R. (ed.), Santelli Beccegato L. (ed.), Di Benedetta C. (ed.), Losurdo F. (ed.). *Women status in the Mediterranean: their rights and sustainable development*. Bari : CIHEAM, 2009. p. 19-22. (Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 87)

Saglamer G. Women academics in science and technology with special reference to Turkey. In : Ambrosi L. (ed.), Trisorio-Liuzzi G. (ed.), Quagliariello R. (ed.), Santelli Beccegato L. (ed.), Di Benedetta C. (ed.), Losurdo F. (ed.). *Women status in the Mediterranean: their rights and sustainable development*. Bari : CIHEAM, 2009. p. 45-61. (Options Méditerranéennes : Série A. Séminaires Méditerranéens; n. 87).

Quagliariello, R. & Ciannamea, C. (2016), Building Resilience of Mediterranean Rural Communities Through the Empowerment of Women, Watch Letter n°36.

Iakovidou et al. (2012), Women entrepreneurs in rural Greece: do they come from the same “neck of the woods”? Locals, daughters-in-law and urban-newcomers, New Medit, 11(2), pp. 58-64.

Seghirate, Y. (2017), Mediterranean Women in Rural and Agricultural Communities: Double Jeopardy, Multiple Opportunities, Strategic Sectors, Economics & Territory, IEMed, Mediterranean Yearbook, pp. 243-246.

Women in Rural Development and Agriculture, Challenges and Opportunities, Spring 2018, Watch Letter n°40

GEMNET NEWSLETTER



In line with CIHEAM Strategic Agenda, the G.EM.NET NETWORK (Gender empowerment for a sustainable rural development) has the main purpose of disseminate information, exchange experiences and keep the institutional dialogue with the Mediterranean Countries at a local, national, regional level on the themes of women's empowerment and gender equality related to sustainable rural development. G.EM.NET Newsletter it's released every 4 months.

POLICY DIALOGUE AND EVENTS:

Expo Milano 2015: CONFERENCE ON MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN AND AGRICULTURE

UfM Ministerial Conference on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society

European Development Days 2018



CIHEAM

Sharing Knowledge, Feeding the Future

More details about the CAPMED 2025
www.ciheam.org



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