



Transition and Recovery Division (TRD)

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE IN IRAQ AN ASSESSMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The agriculture sector in Iraq employs 9.5 per cent of the country's workforce and contributes 5.9 per cent to the gross domestic product (GPD).¹ Like many other sectors in Iraq, the occupation of the Islamic State in Iraqi and Levant (ISIL) heavily impacted agriculture resulting in the destruction and loss of equipment and machinery as well as land mine contamination. The conflict also impacted on the livelihoods of the returnees. Based on a household survey conducted by IOM in 14 districts of high return, the percentage of households engaged in farming activities declined from 18 per cent before the conflict to 13 per cent in 2022. The unstable livelihoods from agriculture resulted in many households in exhausting assets or work as daily labours.²



Female employment in the agricultural sector has been steadily declining since 2000 when it was estimated at 25 per cent to 15 per cent recorded as of 2019 (compared to a male employment of 19 per cent).³ According to a study conducted in the rural areas in the South, Basra, Missan, and Thi-Qar governorates, 38 per cent of women in the rural areas are employed by the government, and 23 per cent of women are engaged in agriculture.⁴ While women experience major social restrictions for accessing work in Iraq, working at a farm is considered socially acceptable. There is inherent privacy in running a family farm, which may address concerns about women's exposure to unrelated men.⁵

The impacts of conflict on gender dynamics is a well-known occurrence across the globe, where also in Iraq with the relative absence of men on the farms created a need for women to go more to the market to buy, sell and negotiate, which has paved the way for more female agency at this level.⁶ An anthropological study conducted in the Marshes in

1 World Bank, Country Climate and Development Report Iraq, November 2022.

2 IOM, The Impact of Conflict, Climate, and the Economy on Agriculture in Districts of Return in Iraq, 2023, https://iraqdtm.iom.int/files/DurableSolutions/20233302537377_IOM_THE_IMPACT_OF_CONFLICT_CLIMATE_March_2023.pdf

3 World Bank, Employment in Agriculture, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.AGR.EMPL.FE.ZS?contextual=ag-employment-by-gender&end=2019&locations=IQ&start=1991&view=chart>

4 The report will be published soon under "Employment in the South of Iraq Challenging Prospects for Women and Youth"

5 UNDP

6 Oxfam

2016 noted a major shift – almost opposite to the changes outlined earlier - where **“most Marsh Arab women now commonly stay at home and leave the financial support of the family completely to the men”** whereas previously – before the Marshes’ desiccation period – were gathering reeds, producing handicrafts, helping care for water buffalo, working in the fields, and selling in the market.⁷ There appear to be two primary reasons for this shift, the spread of conservatism to the Marshes and insecurity.⁸ However, sources of earning a livelihood are very limited for men as well, and many are unable to secure jobs and women’s ability to assist the family economy is not being utilized.⁹

Farms in Iraq are typically managed by the entire family, with women involved in household chores and farm work, similar to other sectors in the country. This is even more pronounced among female headed households as the story of Rabab exemplifies, who **“wakes up at 4 AM to prepare breakfast for herself and two daughters, then goes to their farm to pick up okra. Then she takes care of the livestock and milks the cows, she does that by her hands, as she does not have a milking machine. She collects milk and makes dairy products. Afterward she prepares lunch for her husband and 4 sons who are on their way back from the city.”**¹⁰

Women in agriculture are also rarely in control of the resources and the financial transactions in agriculture (setting the price, going to the market to buy and sell, managing the financial aspects of the business). Men, as breadwinners and heads of household, make a variety of decisions affecting the household. Also, the male head of household may make unilateral decisions that impact a woman’s entire life, including her participation in the job market. While the New Labour Law from 2015 improved – with still some major flaws persisting – women’s work in agriculture remains unregulated with limited social and other types of protection. Women are also not entitled to payment since it is considered a family business.

While laws provide women and men equal rights in owning or managing land or other property, cultural and religious norms impede women’s property rights, especially in rural areas.¹¹ Land is usually owned by men. Displacement contributes to women facing challenges in reclaiming property especially if there are no documents supporting their relationship with the missing or deceased landowner.¹²

Traditional expectations discourage women from pursuing education, particularly when it conflicts with their dedication to the agricultural family business. Overall, while other constraints impact the low educational attainment, women’s illiteracy rate is as high as 27.3 per cent in rural areas of Iraq, where only 1.8 per cent continue to higher education.¹³

1.1 EMPOWERING RURAL WOMEN: SOME GLOBAL EVIDENCE

The findings on a women economic empowerment revision conducted in 2016 considered as proven interventions that give women secure land rights but added the qualifier **“with complementary interventions addressing additional constraints defined by the context of women’s work in agriculture.”**¹⁴ The latter include time constraints, agricultural information, increased yields leading into increased sales and profits. Current evidence revisions – mainly coming from Africa and India - suggest high agreement and high evidence that women’s land rights have a high impact over bargaining power and decision-making on consumption and on human capital investment and intergenerational transfers.¹⁵

7 Nadia Al-Mudaffar Fawzi, Kelly P. Goodwin, Bayan A. Mahdi, Michelle L. Stevens, Effects of Mesopotamian Marsh (Iraq) desiccation on the cultural knowledge and livelihood of Marsh Arab women, 2016, Ecosystem Health and Sustainability, <https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ehs2.1207>

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 <https://www.mawazin.net/Details.aspx?jimare=202657>

11 <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/iraq>

12 https://shakirycharity.org/index_A.php?id=149&news_id=1124; <https://www.land-links.org/country-profile/iraq/#land>

13 <https://www.mawazin.net/Details.aspx?jimare=202657>

14 http://www.womeneconroadmap.org/sites/default/files/CGD-Roadmap-Update_v4.pdf

15 Ruth Meinzen, Women’s Land Rights: Lessons from Recent Reviews presentation, 2021, <https://olc.worldbank.org/content/gender-learning-2021-how-support-women-farmers-evidence-and-operational-examples>

Medium evidence is suggested on natural resource management, government services and institutions, empowerment and domestic violence, resilience and HIV, consumption and food security with low evidence suggested for land rights' impacts on reducing poverty.¹⁶ However, major gaps persist, with the revision pointing to a general lack of nuance in terms of understanding women's land rights (for intervention's effectiveness in strengthening them).¹⁷

The Roadmap on Women Economic Empowerment rated the 'suite of integrated services for farming' (i.e., farmer groups, financial services, mobile phone access, agricultural technologies, extension and training) as 'promising' for poor women farmers.¹⁸ New evidence demonstrating the limitations of standalone interventions supported this rating. Changing this rating to 'proven and being proven' awaits additional evidence on positive economic outcomes from these bundled services along with their cost-effectiveness, at least as revision of evidence from the updated report from 2016.¹⁹

Evidence also confirmed that rural electrification is 'proven' to be beneficial in encouraging women's entrepreneurial activities, provided that gender inequalities in the family and local economy are kept at bay. Electrification has shown to reduce time in collecting alternative energy sources (wood, gas), the ability to use electrical appliances at home and for home-based businesses and leading to a lengthened workday. However, gender biases in rural economies can limit the positive effects of electrification, the same revision suggests.²⁰



Standalone financial literacy training is 'unproven' to improve the economic outcomes of poor and very poor women. For the training to make a difference, it appears that it needs to be reinforced by motivational interventions, such as monetary incentives or personalized counseling. As such, the update of the Roadmap from 2016 left these bundled interventions unrated because the evidence base was still limited.²¹ Overall, individual savings accounts are considered proven for all women and have positive economic outcomes across different countries and situations with the exception

16 Ruth Meinzen, Women's Land Rights: Lessons from Recent Reviews presentation, 2021, <https://olc.worldbank.org/content/gender-learning-2021-how-support-women-farmers-evidence-and-operational-examples>

17 R. Meinzen

18 Roadmap 2013

19 Roadmap Update

20 Roadmap Update

21 Roadmap Update

of very poor women, for which savings need to be bundled with other interventions to be effective.²² This helps women in labelling and protecting the money for specific business purposes (women appear to be under pressure to spend on non-business items in comparison to men). Women also want saving accounts because they are considered more risk averse in comparison to men (women prefer to save money for emergencies and use savings rather than borrow or in general women experience more risk, especially related to health and child-bearing).²³ Women's access to individual secure (private) savings accounts help foster economic self-reliance and overcome a lack of control over financial resources, especially for those who have less decision-making authority in the household or are less empowered.²⁴ However, rural women in particular might not benefit from savings, especially if distance to financial institutions is prohibitive.

Overall, a lot of evidence and lessons learned emerged in the past years, very specific to women empowerment in agriculture. An RCT in Mozambique reported major impacts of personal initiatives training – that targets the development of an entrepreneurial mindset – as doubling the shares of women running profitable off-farm businesses, generating important additional source of income to the households and in enhancing effectiveness of agricultural extension leading to large increases in areas cultivated and adoption of fertilizers, improved agricultural practices, cash crops and generating greater value of harvest and the harvest sold.²⁵ This helped in transitioning out of subsistence farming into market oriented farming and off-farm businesses.²⁶

A recent RCT conducted in Uganda - that encouraged husbands to transfer out grower contracts to their wife's name or to register sugarcane blocks in their wife's name and that overall worked with couples – registered positive economic impacts, an improved personal welfare, and improved life satisfaction (among both, men and women).²⁷ A recent evaluation in Cote D'Ivoire, which also included wives of rubber producers into programming, who joined during the agricultural skills training and action plan sessions of the training - and a short gender sensitization training on top - led to an overall improved management and women taking on more typically male roles in production. While impacts on women's empowerment remained low, the latter was not ruled out, since it might just require more time to materialize.²⁸ Nonetheless, the latter is interesting precisely because of its relatively small adjustments to the usual trainings delivered to men leading to major improvements in overall efficiency.

An assessment from 2020 conducted in the Western Balkans highlighted the importance of better exploring the role of women in agriculture at intra-household level, which is often absent from planning. Many rural women contribute as producers of high value products to the income of family farms; services need to be better targeted to assist them in that capacity the report recommends.²⁹

22 Roadmap Update

23 Roadmap

24 Roadmap

25 Joao Montalvao, Empowering Women Farmers: Evidence from A randomized Controlled Trial in Mozambique presentation, Gender Learning 2021 - How to Support Women Farmers: Evidence and Operational Examples, World Bank, 2021, <https://olc.worldbank.org/content/gender-learning-2021-how-support-women-farmers-evidence-and-operational-examples>

26 Joao Montalvao, Empowering Women Farmers: Evidence from A randomized Controlled Trial in Mozambique presentation, Gender Learning 2021 - How to Support Women Farmers: Evidence and Operational Examples, World Bank, 2021, <https://olc.worldbank.org/content/gender-learning-2021-how-support-women-farmers-evidence-and-operational-examples>

27 WB, Presentation RCT from Uganda for Let Her Grow Webinar, <https://olc.worldbank.org/system/files/Uganda%20sugarcane%20IE%20-%20presentaton%20to%20UFG%20Let%20Her%20Grow%20webinar%20-%202020June%202022.pdf>

28 WB, Let Her Grow Webinar, <https://olc.worldbank.org/content/let-her-grow-promoting-women's-economic-empowerment-rural-areas-and-their-engagement-high-0>

29 WB, <https://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/991791596061313808/Gender-Inclusion-in-Productive-Investments-in-the-Western-Balkans-2020.pdf>

1.2 SUPPORTING IRAQI FEMALE FARMERS

A number of projects and programmes were identified in Iraq, targeting specifically rural women. For example, FAO, UN Women, UNFPA and UNESCO – from 2015 - aimed to create a network of female agricultural workers in some of the country's most marginalized rural communities who will reach out and train other women to help boost their productivity and income, among other things.³⁰ The International Labour Organization (ILO) organized a capacity building training programme to foster skills, entrepreneurship and decent employment in the field of agriculture in Basra. The training is part of efforts to promote workers' skills development, encourage the participation of women in agriculture work; and improve working conditions through the application of International Labour Standards and national labour legislation.³¹

Women also receive in-kind support or grants of different sizes. For example, notable is the support from Oxfam, who concludes that due to cultural norms, women are more suited to be engaged in businesses that are home-based for example, such as backyard farming; rearing cattle and chickens that do not require grazing; dairy production; and home-based businesses, particularly where in-kind provision is possible.³² This project was done with the engagement of men and boys-adolescent and thus in a way it decreased the possibility of recurrence of gender-based violence. The program included cash-for-work and activities such as, cleaning of schools, childcare, and cooking for male workers. The result of the program turned out to be positive as most of the women could grow a sense of pride for earning money and contributing to the family expenses.



IOM' Value Chain Analysis (VCA) for KRI pointed to many women (including from female-headed households) working in livestock breeding. They are involved in milking, cleaning the stockyards, foddering and watering, which could provide further opportunities for improving women's access to livelihoods.³³ A VCA conducted by IOM in Salah al-Din and Diyala governorates identified good opportunities for job creation for women in milk collection centres – as dairy businesses are often run by women - poultry farms (these appear to be run by men mostly), along tomato processing.³⁴

30 <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-iraq-women-funding-idUSKCN0PO2MX20150714>

31 ILO supports rural women in Basra to develop their skills in the date sector, 7 March 2022: https://www.ilo.org/beirut/media-centre/fs/WCMS_838878/lang--en/index.htm

32 <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/handle/10546/620115?show=full>

33 <https://edf.iom.int/en/iraq/publications/in-search-of-economic-opportunities-for-agribusiness-in-iraq-kri>

34 <https://edf.iom.int/en/iraq/publications/in-search-of-economic-opportunities-for-agribusinesses-in-iraq-sad-diyala>

The VCA conducted in Ninewa pointed to women sometimes working in livestock breeding (and fattening of lambs), grain cooking and cleaning used in grain groats processing in the barley value chain, orchards (especially figs and dried figs), tahini processing as having potential for increasing income generation among women.³⁵

Considering the contribution of agriculture to GDP and the employment of almost a tenth of the entire workforce in agriculture, the impact of climate change on agriculture is particularly concerning. Despite the World Bank recent analysis of climate change impacts shows negative impacts in all sectoral outputs, whether directly or indirectly, crop production would drop significantly, by 15,9 per cent.³⁶ Drops in other sectors due to climate change as per World Bank estimates are: food would drop by 6.1 per cent (less than crop production due to imports), industry by 5.5 per cent, forestry by 3.1 per cent, services by 3.4 per cent, and energy by 2.3 per cent.³⁷

Within agriculture, according to the same study, the projected negative impact of water scarcity on jobs is larger than the impact on production, especially for unskilled jobs, the same report found.³⁸ Estimates indicate that under a 20 per cent reduction in water availability and temperature impacts on crop yields, the demand for unskilled labour in the agriculture sector would be 11.5 per cent lower in the medium term than in the base year, and the demand for unskilled labour in other sectors will also fall, by an estimated 4.9 per cent.³⁹ In fact, any major permanent reduction in agricultural activities diminishes the demand for both unskilled and skilled labour.⁴⁰ Lower agricultural output will affect downstream industries such as food processing and services like food retailers, restaurants and hotels, and associated construction and transport. Because water is a direct input to production in many industries and service sectors, reduced access to water will negatively affect sector output, which in turn can increase poverty rates, unless climate smart transformation of the agri-food sector takes place, the same report continues.⁴¹ Worker productivity also faces direct risks from climate change through exposure to higher temperatures, especially affecting workers working outside, including in agriculture.⁴² Given that jobs in these sectors are rarely formal or salaried and compensation is mostly tied to output, reduced labour productivity translates into lost earnings.⁴³

In a recent study conducted by IOM in Basra, Missan, and Thi-Qar governorates, shows that the role of agriculture is diminishing due to the climate changes in the region. Farmers and livestock owners who rely on this business only as a source of income are limited. Many rely on other sectors to meet their financial needs. Among the 22 per cent, who are involved in farming, only 8 per cent rely solely on farming revenues. This has resulted in many rural households abandoning agricultural activities; compared to five years ago (2018), the percentage of households involved in farming dropped from 34 to 22 per cent. The report indicates that one of the main reasons behind this trend is that households face challenges in sustaining productions and yields. Compared to five years ago, 86 per cent of households engaged in farming reported a decrease in the harvest, for livestock, 72 per cent decreased the herd, and for fishing of fish farming, 90 per cent reported that the situation is negatively impacting them.⁴⁴

There is limited high-quality scientific evidence on the gender-specific impacts of climate change in agriculture. But two key factors are likely to drive the differences in how male and female farmers experience climate impacts, a recent review of evidence suggests: 1) the gender division of labour in agriculture, which has implications for the crops and livestock men and women raise and their farming activities and 2) the gender barriers to migration and employment options outside of agriculture leading to the “feminization of agriculture” now occurring in many parts of the developing

35 <https://edf.iom.int/en/iraq/publications/in-search-of-economic-opportunities-for-agribusinesses-in-iraq>

36 Ibid.

37 World Bank, Country Climate and Development Report Iraq.

38 World Bank

39 World Bank

40 World Bank

41 World Bank

42 World Bank

43 World Bank

44 <https://iraqrecovery.iom.int/Southern%20Profiles/>

world, a trend that makes women particularly vulnerable to climate change-induced declines in farm productivity.⁴⁵ The same review also points to important gender differences in the ability of small-holder farmers to successfully adapt to climate change due to well-known gender gaps in access to and agency over land, labour, financial and physical capital and information (with women less likely to use CIS services due to poorer access to mobile phones).⁴⁶

A recent study pointed out that impact of external stress on households (referring to agriculture), and in particular for women, is one that requires further emphasis and response in Iraq.⁴⁷ Women are among the groups most affected by the impacts of drought, the same study found. They usually have the double responsibility of caring for the household and working in the fields; women felt that they would have to be the ones to find solutions if incomes were low and provide for their families' needs; and if men migrate to other areas for work, women will be in most cases solely responsible for meeting their families' needs, the study determined.⁴⁸ Another recent assessment conducted in Sinjar concluded that **the lack of water particularly affects women, for whom agriculture was the main activity before the drought where tending livestock or working the land was part of their activities, either by taking part in the family business in an unpaid way or through daily jobs. The reduction in agricultural activities therefore reduces the need for labour and employment opportunities, especially for women.**⁴⁹ The World Bank concluded that whereas much of Iraq's population will feel the effects of water scarcity and higher temperatures in one way or another, agriculture sector (along construction) workers, and those employed in agriculture value chains will bear the brunt; despite the low quality of agriculture and construction jobs, agricultural production is essential to supporting household food consumption needs and livelihoods among the poor and among less educated rural women.⁵⁰

A variety of approaches were tested and delivered positive results for reducing the impacts of climate change on female farmers across the globe such as including messaging on climate over radio to make it more accessible to women, supplying energy-efficient smoking kilns for drying fish, which is usually done by women in a variety of contexts across Asia, investments in irrigation technologies that shorten the time women spend irrigating their fields from half a day to 15 minutes.⁵¹ Also, identifying climate–agriculture–gender inequality hotspots, where climate hazards converge with large concentrations of women participating in food systems and significant structural gender inequalities, enables allocating scarce resources to most-at-risk populations.⁵²

45 Bill and Melinda Gates

46 Bill and Melinda Gates

47 Oxfam

48 Oxfam

49 Solidarites, <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/diagnostic-report-access-water-and-natural-resource-management-context-climate-change-sinjar-and-tel-afar-districts-ninewa-iraq-november-2022>

50 World Bank

51 https://www.gatesgenderequalitytoolbox.org/wp-content/uploads/BMGF_GACC_Final.pdf

52 <https://www.cgjar.org/news-events/news/evidence-explainer-identifying-climate-agriculture-gender-inequality-hotspots-can-help-target-investments-and-make-women-drivers-of-climate-resilience/>

2. METHODOLOGY

The study took mainly a quantitative research approach. The assessment explored challenges that women experience in agriculture at different levels, including intra-household, community, and societal and/or sectoral challenges in order to better outline the recommendations. The assessment targeted the following groups:

- 1) Female farmers with income derived from agriculture or livestock (micro-enterprises and SMEs);
- 2) Male farmers with income derived from agriculture or livestock (SMEs);
- 3) Female paid agricultural workers.

The assessment took a sequenced approach where a consultation with IOM livelihoods staff informed the surveys' questionnaires.

2.1 SAMPLING

A survey was administered to women running farms (52) and male-owned farms (with women working, as unpaid or paid workers on their premises, 51 in total). The study included agricultural and livestock businesses (or combined) along smaller and larger, namely micro-enterprises and SMEs. In addition, women, who work as daily waged agricultural workers were also surveyed, again working in different types of agricultural and livestock businesses.

Table 1: Sampling farm owners (men and women)

Location	Number
Anbar (Falluja, Garma, Ramadi)	20
Basra (Abu Khaseeb, Zubair, Haritha)	19
Kirkuk (Hawija, Markaz Kirkuk, Dabes)	21
Ninewa	23
Salah Al-Din (Balad, Tikrit)	20
Total	103

Table 2: Sampling paid agricultural workers (administered to women only)

Location	Number
Anbar (Falluja and Ramadi)	16
Basra (Zuabair, Qurna, Haritha)	16
Kirkuk (Hawija and Dabes)	15
Ninewa (Hamdaniya, Baaj, Sinjar, Tilkaif)	10
Salah Al-Din (Balad and Tikrit)	15
Total	72

2.2 LIMITATIONS

The survey is based on quantitative data collection only, which limits the opportunity for data triangulation. Nonetheless, both surveys include a number of open-ended questions to complement and provide further insights into the findings from the quantitative data.

The survey is not representative of female farmers or female agricultural workers in Iraq, at national or governorate level. In order to reduce the sample, KRI was also excluded, presumably also the focus of interventions, including livelihoods, is usually on Federal Iraq. Unpaid family workers were not surveyed for the present exercise as it is assumed they experience similar challenges to the paid workers.

Paid agricultural workers in Ninewa were difficult to locate so the final sample was lower compared to other targeted locations.



3. FINDINGS FARM OWNERS

3.1 FARM OWNERS BACKGROUND AND BUSINESS STATUS

The educational levels among farmers are low as a quarter of respondents reported being illiterate and 13 per cent as having some knowledge in reading and writing.

Table 3: Education among farmers

Educational attainment	Number	Percentage
Illiterate	25	25%
Some reading and writing	13	13%
Primary education	43	42%
Secondary education	15	15%
Tertiary education (university, diploma)	6	6%
Total	102	100%

Forty-four per cent of respondents reported working in agriculture only, 37 per cent only in livestock, and 19 per cent in both agriculture and livestock. A slightly higher number of women seem to be involved in livestock, but the latter could be due to sampling limitations.

Table 4: Type of farms surveyed

Type	Livestock		Agriculture		Livestock and Agriculture	
Women	32	55%	26	40%	6	30%
Men	26	45%	39	60%	14	70%
Total	58	100%	65	100%	20	100%
Average	37%		44%		19%	

In agriculture in specific, and based on reports by female farmers, these seem to be cultivating vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, pepper, onion, green beans, okra, eggplants, potatoes, henna; wheat, barley, alfalfa corn; and fruits such as watermelon, dates, citruses, pomegranates, berries, and figs. In livestock, women mentioned buffaloes, sheep, goat, cattle, fish, poultry breeding and dairy production.

The average number of paid employees is 2.4 though many did not have any (almost 50%) as such farms also were not easy to find in the respective areas, especially with female ownership. Almost all had women supporting work in the farm as unpaid family workers with only three who had external female paid workers working on the farm.

In terms of **livestock ownership**, respondents were asked on the number of animals owned, and a smaller average ownership was found among female farmers among all types of animals (except for goats) reported, again pointing to smaller farms among women. Overall, **land is owned by men mostly** with female ownership at 17 per cent (despite the 50 per cent female-led farms in the sample). A small number rents the land of which all are women and one man signed a lease agreement.

Table 5: Land ownership among the surveyed farmers

Legal land ownership	Number	Percentage
Man	76	74%
Woman	17	17%
Rented	4	4%
Don't know	6	6%
Total	103	100%

Also, the dunams of land available for cultivation are substantially lower among women (perhaps a reflection of a higher women's involvement in livestock, at least in the sample, which requires less land).

Table 6: Average dunams (=1/4 of hectare) of cultivable land among male and female farmers

Gender	Average dunams
Female	14
Male	35

The **demand** on farm products seems overall good with an average of 7,3 out of 10 points where 1 is very low and 10 is very high. Interestingly, women on average reported a slightly higher demand, 7.6 compared to 7.1 points reported by men.

Almost all surveyed participants reported **generating income** from farming (87 per cent) with 45 per cent reporting a single source of income based solely on farming activities with the remaining mentioning more than one source of income. In consideration of the recent climate change events particularly affecting agriculture in Iraq – further discussed below - a high number of households are particularly vulnerable, considering the low diversification. Also, about a quarter are involved in daily-wage jobs or receive governmental assistance such as pensions, widow support or similar with other less mentioned examples.

Table 7: All sources of household income among the farmers surveyed

Type of livelihood	Number	Percentage
Farming	90	87%
Daily-wage jobs	26	25%
Governmental support in the form of pensions, widow support and similar	23	22%
Work in private sector not related to agriculture/livestock	10	9%
Work for the government including security forces	7	7%
Relatives-community support	2	2%

Twenty per cent have **at least one family member migrating elsewhere for work**, who mainly works as daily worker (8), in the private sector (8), for the government (including security forces) often as guard and similar jobs. About half migrate within the same governorate and the other half to another governorate in Iraq (only 1 migrates abroad). These are mainly men.

About half of the respondents have **debts**, evenly split between male and female respondents. Excluding very high debts from the average, the common debt is above USD 4,000. On average, female farmers report lower debt levels, under

USD 3,200 compared to the 4,100 reported by men (once again, outliers are excluded from the calculation). The latter is not exclusive to farmers and debts have been reported across a number of assessments conducted by IOM, from Labour Market Assessments (LMAs) to various context analyses (for example, for piloting IOM's Graduation Approach).

Respondents were asked about the **main challenges** they experience for working in agriculture. Similar to findings in other assessments conducted by IOM, the main challenges include lack of government support, droughts, reduced/lack of water, summer heat, soil salinity, high prices of fodder and agricultural inputs (fertilizers, insecticides, etc.), limited or lack of power supply (especially for water pumps), unregulated imports of fruits and vegetables, fuel needs for generators, high prices of equipment (greenhouses, sprinklers) and agricultural machinery, among the most mentioned. Four women explicitly raised gender-related challenges. Two female respondents mentioned the double burden of working at home and on the farm; the limitations of not having a dedicated work-space/shop; in selling/promoting their products; and working under high temperatures as being especially challenging for women (compared to men).

More than a third of female farmers reported experiencing **challenges for conducting business as women**, which they think are not experienced by men. These include issues related to customs and traditions, difficulties for travelling and the need of a chaperon, lack of acceptance by the community, restricted freedom of movement and transportation limitations, men's lack of involvement in certain activities and a lack of machinery (such as for milking cows), a more 'challenging' communication between men and women or women's inability to do 'hard talks like men' likely referring to bargaining and negotiation power during sales, and a lower physical strength compared to men. Two respondents clearly exemplified how women can be at a loss due to being women:

"Yes, there are challenges sometimes. For example, sometimes I need to market a certain type of fruit, and I cannot store it. My brother who drives it to the market is not present. He then has to sell it at a very low price for fear of damage or loss of the entire profit, and the reason is the lack of storage places."⁵³

"We, the women here in rural areas, suffer from tribal customs and traditions that prevent women from having many activities. As I mentioned earlier, here you will find some farms owned by women and they do not have a man to help them. She is either divorced or a widow, and during the harvest season she is forced to sell the crop at a reduced price. This is very much for someone else, and this person is the one who transports the produce and sells it in the central fruit and vegetable market. Thus, she loses, and the winner is the man, and this affects a lot of farms owned by women here."⁵⁴

Updated knowledge on agriculture is required by almost 30 per cent of respondents, including in improved irrigation techniques, cultivation in general, new types of seed planting, animal breeding and disease prevention, greenhouse cultivation, and about new technologies in agriculture.

Interest in saving accounts is low, mostly due to the inability to save, aside some distrust in banks, difficulties for accessing a bank, and lack of knowledge on banking. Twenty-six per cent (of which 7 per cent are women and 19 per cent are men) also belong to a network or group, for example to get information on the market, which is low considering the importance of networks, especially for women.

⁵³ Female farmer, Salah Al-Din

⁵⁴ Female paid agriculture workers, Salah Al-Din

3.2 DIVISION OF LABOUR AND DECISION-MAKING

Among the 65 businesses working in agriculture (or agriculture and livestock, 63% of all businesses surveyed) were asked about the division of labour within the farm and were asked to provide explanations on the reasons for not involving women in a particular activity. Regarding **land preparation**, such as ploughing, almost half of the respondents mentioned women were involved while 42 per cent mentioned women were not involved (and a small number mentioned it was not applicable in their case). Most reported that land preparation is difficult for women and explained that women are busy with household chores with some mentioned the need for using machinery, which is performed by men.



Seventy-three per cent (43 respondents) reported women are involved in **planting** and 15 per cent mentioned women were not (with a small number mentioning it was not applicable). Women are not involved in planting especially when machinery is required for completing the task. One respondent mentioned the farm was far from the city and not safe for women to travel there alone.

Seventy-seven per cent (50 respondents) reported that women are involved in **watering crops/orchards** with 15 per cent mentioning women were not involved. The main reason for not involving women is the need for watering at night in some cases, an activity not appropriate for women, especially if the fields are located far from home. Some also questioned women's knowledge or ability in watering and irrigation.

Eighty-nine per cent (58 respondents) mentioned that women are involved in **harvesting** with 9 per cent mentioning women were not involved in it. Women are not involved when harvesting is done by machine, which is also often rented and requires workers to operate the machinery (which usually are only men).

Thirty-five per cent (23 respondents) mentioned that women are involved in some type of produce **processing** while the remaining are not involved in any processing. This also seems a data filling mistake as likely it is mostly irrelevant for the types of farms surveyed, which are not involved in further processing produce as women usually are involved in processing, including dairy, jams, and other type of food in Iraq.

Fifty-eight businesses (also) involved in livestock, or 56 per cent of all the businesses surveyed, were also asked about the division of labour. Almost all respondents mentioned that women are involved in **cleaning the barn and taking care of the animals** with only two who mentioned a man actually performing such work though without further

clarifications. The vast majority also mentioned that women are involved in **shepherding/herding of animals** where 4 reported that men are responsible for shepherding, including externally hired workers. The majority of the respondents also mentioned that women are involved in **meat processing** with a small number who think that women are not engaged in it. Regarding **agricultural machinery** (such as tractors), the latter appears to be exclusively operated by men, based on the responses provided.

In regard to **marketing and selling**, the **opinion on women's involvement are divided**, including among different governorates. Forty-one per cent of respondents mentioned women are involved in marketing (including in male-run businesses, which are 9 in this case). Fifty-one per cent mentioned women were not involved. The reasons why women are not involved in marketing is mainly due to the latter being a 'man's responsibility'; women lacking experience; customs and traditions preventing women from interacting with other men with some who specified that only men interact with wholesalers (as these tend to be mostly men). Travelling is also an issue for women as some clarified when selling requires travel, men would be involved. It could be therefore assumed that women are indeed involved in marketing, especially when unavoidable, such as in the case of female-headed households for example, and that certain conditions might apply for women's ability to be active in the market, which seems to point a greater access to local rather than regional or wholesalers' market and selling from home (or sellers collecting from homes).

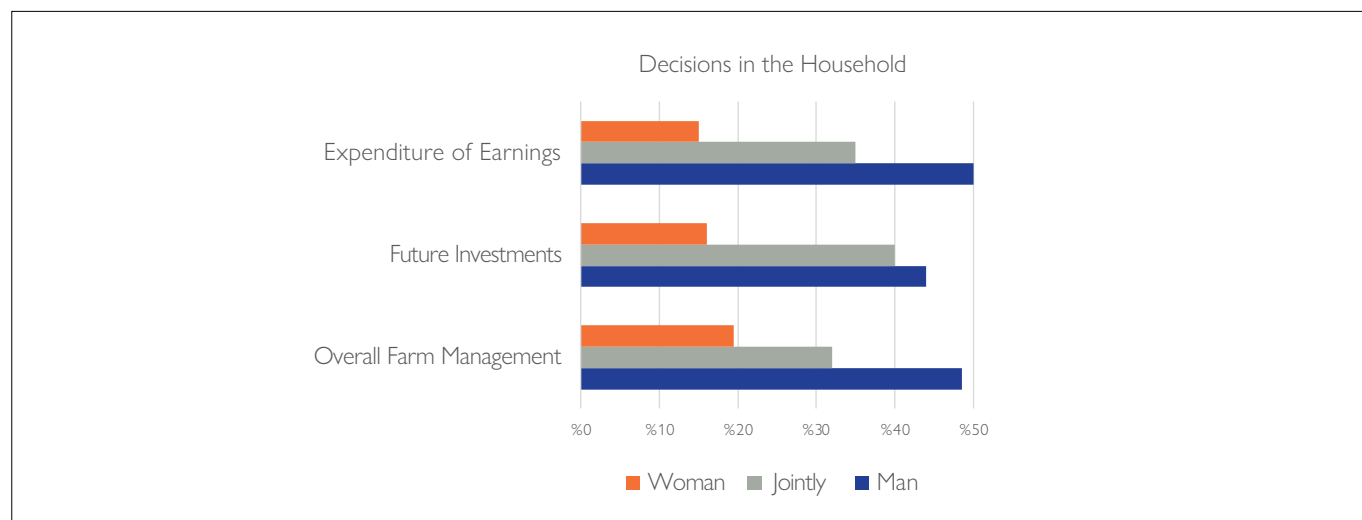
Women were also asked whether they **experience any challenges for working in the market** and think men do not experience them. Fifty-six per cent (29 respondents) do not agree and 12 per cent indicated it was not applicable in their case. Seventeen per cent of the women surveyed think that women experience some challenges for working in the market that men do not, including customs and traditions, transportation issues, interactions with the opposite sex, and harassment:

"Women here are limited by the laws of the tribe and clan, they cannot carry out many activities, and they are obliged to follow these laws. The simplest example of this is our products from the farm. If I deliver them to the central market, there is no one who would buy them from me, because they consider this contrary to customs and traditions."⁵⁵

Female respondents were asked whether women experience **challenges at home** for working in agriculture. Thirty-eight per cent (or 20 female respondents) mentioned the double burden of working in the farm and balancing house chores, including taking care and teaching children. Some stressed that men do not help them.

A small number of women also reported experiencing **challenges dealing with governmental institutions** again raising social norms concerns, which, at closer reading, even prevents them from trying to access governmental institutions (which are far away, some commented). In fact, the majority, or 28 respondents, do not have any experience in interacting with governmental institutions.

Chart 1: Decision-making within the household in regard to overall farm management, future investments in the farm, and expenditure of earnings



Respondents were asked to explain how decisions on spending earnings, overall farm management, and future investments are made within the household, whether by men, women, or jointly. Overall, women's sole decision appears to be low in consideration that about 50 per cent of the respondents are female-led farms; even in farms led by women, decisions are taken jointly or even exclusively by men only in some cases.

3.3 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON FARMING

Eighty-two per cent of respondents mentioned a reduction of available water (including wells, tap water, irrigation canals, rivers, etc.). Respondents reported experiencing adverse climatic events with only six per cent of respondents who mentioned they were not affected by any. Drought affected more than 80 per cent of the farmers surveyed followed by increased temperature, increased water salinity and sandstorms, reported by over 40 per cent of respondents. Cold weather destroying crops in winter was also reported by 10 per cent of respondents along biodiversity loss, reported by 8 per cent. See the table below for details.

Table 8: Experiences of adverse climatic and environmental events

Climatic events	Number	Percentage
Drought	88	85%
Increased temperature	50	48%
Increased water salinity	49	47%
Dust or sandstorms	44	43%
Soil degradation/desertification	38	37%
Other (especially hail and cold weather that destroyed the product)	10	10%
Biodiversity loss	8	8%

Fifty-three per cent do not use any water saving/improved irrigation techniques (such as sprinklers instead of flooding for example) where only 17 per cent mentioned using it (and 10% reported as not applying to them). Respondents reported major impacts on their farming activities due to climate change with reduction of yields (mentioned by 42 respondents) and the number of livestock owned (14 respondents) among the most mentioned. Aside the lower profits, increased expenses due to increased prices of fodder (10 respondents) were reported and a number of other expenses arising such as costs for digging new wells, the need for water pumps for the wells,

generators and fuel for the water pumps, or even instances when buying water was required. Reduction of the types of crops cultivated was also mentioned (9 respondents), an increase in livestock diseases (9 respondents), halting of farming, for a period of time or even a complete halt of farming in some instances (5 respondents), a reduced size of cultivated land (5 respondents), the presence of pests (4 respondents), a reduced quality of produce (4 respondents), loss of trees followed by less mentioned examples such as issues related to access and reduction of grazing areas and changing type of crops such as focusing on vegetable cultivation.

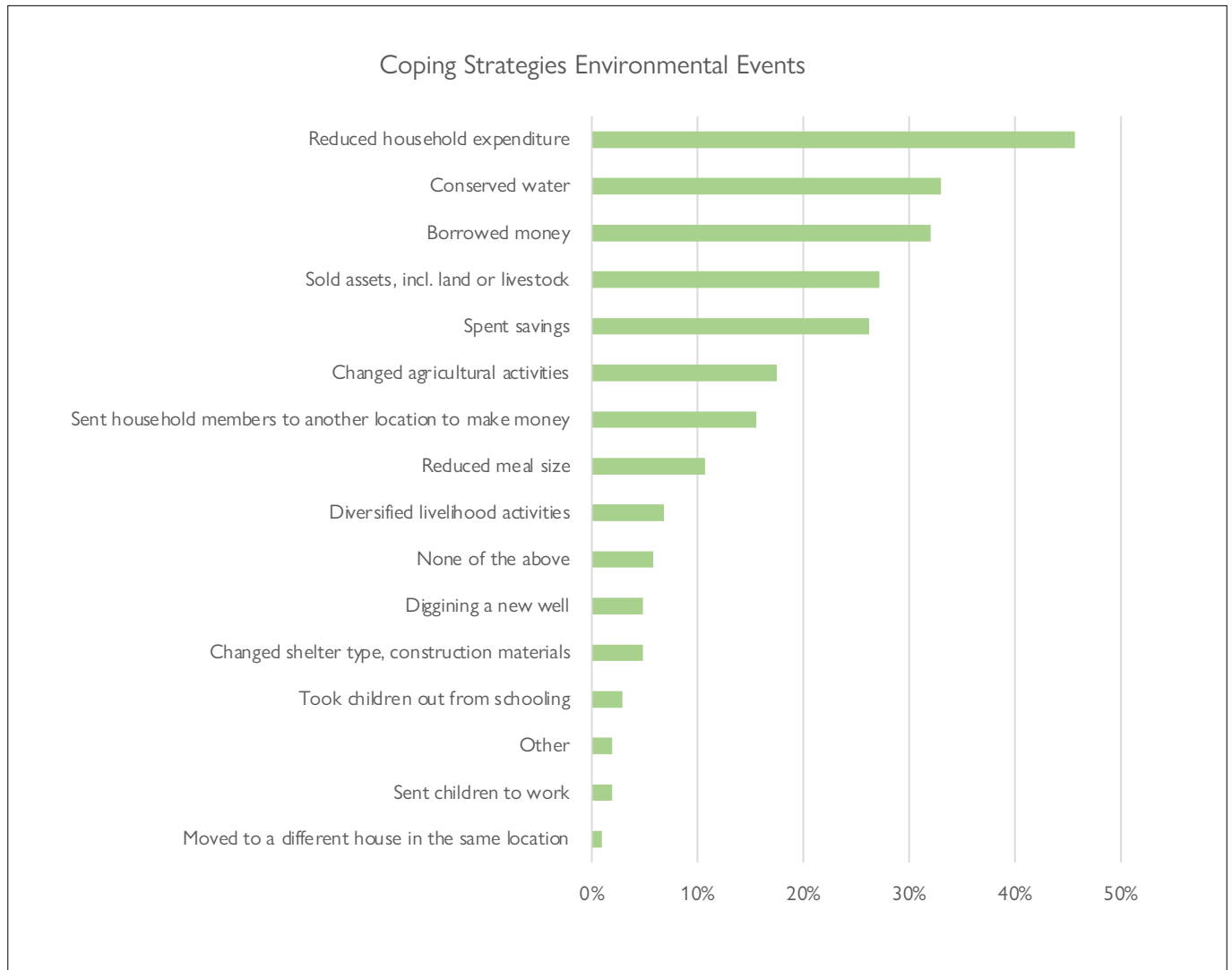
Table 9: Impact of climate change on farming activities

Impact of climate change on farming	Number of mentions (N=103)
Decreased yields	42
Animal number reduction/selling of livestock	14
Increase in fodder prices	10
Decrease in diversity of crops cultivated	9
Animal diseases (for example due to water salinity)/death	9
Complete halt/periods of inactivity	7
Reduced land size for cultivation	5
Lower quality of produce/product	4
Pests	4
Loss of trees	4
Digging new wells and costs associated with it, including filtering systems	3
Grazing in more distant areas, shrinking of grazing areas	3
Change of crops/activities – vegetables cultivation, livestock	2
Generators for pumps cause costs due to fuel	2

Respondents were also asked about **the impact of climate change on the household**. The vast majority mentioned a reduction of income (mostly pointing to a dramatic reduction), where some had to borrow money (and incurred into debt); family members turning to daily waged jobs, for example in construction and agriculture along fishing in some locations; lower disposable income for expenditures; and health issues due to sandstorms such as asthma and allergies.

Respondents were also asked about the **strategies they have adopted for dealing with environmental events** (in a multiple response question). Reduced household expenditure was the most common, reported by 46 per cent of respondents, followed by saving water, borrowing money (32 per cent), followed by selling of assets (27 per cent), spending of savings (26 per cent), changing of agricultural activities (17 per cent), and other. Also, 29 per cent have **considered abandoning agriculture** due to these climatic events while the remaining have not considered abandoning it. See the chart below for details.

Chart 2: Coping strategies adopted by farmers to deal with environmental events



Respondents were asked who in their opinion is more affected by **climatic changes, men or women**. Sixty-one per cent mentioned both men and women are equally affected with the remaining almost evenly split between men (reported by 14 respondents) as being more affected, and women (reported by 16 respondents) as bearing the brunt of climate change. The rationale for a greater impact of climate change on men include: a men is responsible for livelihoods and due to the effects of climate change on livelihoods men are more impacted than women; men's requirement to find another source of livelihood to provide for the household; men need to migrate and travel to find a job; since the number of men involved in agriculture is higher than women, they are also more impacted than women. Women, on the other hand, are more impacted by climate change compared to men due to social norms respondents think, which prevent them from finding another source of income (unlike men, who can become daily waged workers, for example); women need to work harder due to climate change – and with less resources – along their caring work; women do most of the work on the farm so they are more impacted; women as being more susceptible to health issues arising from climate change; and women need to take care of the family with lower resources available to them.

4. FINDINGS PAID AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

Women reported their households mostly sustain themselves with farming activities – likely referring to daily waged jobs as paid agricultural worker in this case - governmental support and relatives or community support. Fifteen per cent also rely on the support of relatives and community members. Sixty-five per cent rely on only one source of income, which refers to their work as paid agricultural workers, which makes their households particularly vulnerable.

Table 10: All sources of household income among the paid agricultural workers

Type of livelihood	Number	Percentage
Farming	66	92%
Governmental support in the form of pensions, widow support and similar	13	18%
Relatives-community support	11	15%
Work in private sector not related to agriculture/livestock	4	5.5%
Work for the government including security forces	3	4.1%

Fourteen per cent of women reported their family **members migrating for work elsewhere**, to another district in the same governorate and to another governorate in Iraq. These are all male family members. Household debts are high, reported by 64 per cent of paid agricultural workers with an average of USD 2,656 ranging from USD 150 to above USD 10,000 (excluding an outlier of USD 22,000).



Almost half of the paid agricultural workers, work in agriculture only, 43 per cent in livestock and a small number, who work in both (4 respondents). Women mentioned raising and managing livestock, such as sheep, buffalo, cattle, and goats along working in dairy production. Female workers are involved in cultivating various crops, including wheat, barley, potatoes, eggplant, okra, tomatoes, corn, cucumber, pepper, along fruits (some specified watermelon), and sesame. They also are involved in food processing, for example in jam production.

Twenty-three per cent mentioned working as **daily waged workers with other family members** – which is common in Iraq - whereas the majority work by themselves (meaning without their family). The women working with the family, mentioned being remunerated by their family for their work. Seventy-four per cent mentioned coming from household that do not own any land. The number of dependents is high among the women surveyed, 6.3 persons on average.

Women on average earn USD 12 per day. Excluding outliers, women earn up to USD 20 per day. However, in the agricultural sector it is also common that workers work on the land with the business owner and share the profits at the end of the season. However, this was not common among the respondents.⁵⁶ Women work 9.3 hours per day on average, where the majority (56 per cent) work for more than 8 hours a day with an average of 7.3 months per year (where about half work up to 6 months per year).

Women were asked about the specific tasks they usually perform at their workplace. The latter were sub-divided by livestock and agricultural activities. Women working in livestock (or both livestock and agriculture) reported feeding the animals and taking care of livestock in general, breeding/raising livestock, milking, cleaning the barn/sheds/halls, processing dairy, including cheese, yoghurt and butter preparation, and a small number reported selling dairy, which – as explained by surveyors – involves distributing the product among buyers rather than selling it in the market.

Table 11: Activities among female paid agricultural workers in livestock

Activity	Number of mentions (N=35)
Feeding animals/taking care of animals	21
Preparation of dairy products, yoghurt, cheese, butter	13
Milking	9
Breeding/raising	9
Cleaning the barn/sheds/chicken halls	6
Selling dairy	4

For **agricultural activities**, women are involved in land preparation (one mentioned ploughing in specific), planting (barley, wheat, different types of vegetables and fruit, trees, alfalfa), watering and irrigation, harvesting, and different types of activities centered on preparations for selling such as putting fruits into boxes, wheat into sacks or by weighting dates. Less mentioned are spraying pesticides, applications of fertilizer, pruning, and processing (such as jams or pressing dates).

⁵⁶ As per discussion with IOM field staff, in Sinjar it is common to share profits in agriculture between the owner and the workers (though nowadays, with limited return, business owner hire guards and try to hire workers for the planting and harvesting season). In the case of poultry, families are preferred, especially to keep diseases at bay. In Sinjar hiring of shepherds is a new phenomenon, as in the past external (entire families) would also take care of animals, like sheep or goat and split profits after sale. In Basra and Kirkuk, sharing profits is less common and farmers hire workers instead.

Table 12: Activities among female paid agricultural workers in agriculture

Activity	Number of mentions (N=39)
Preparing the land for cultivation (ploughing)	7
Planting (barley, wheat, different types of vegetables, fruit trees, alfalfa, etc.)	18
Spraying pesticides	2
Fertilizing the soil	3
Watering-irrigation (also dismantling irrigation systems at the end of the season)	13
Trees pruning	1
Cleaning weeds/spoiled fruits from trees	4
Harvesting/collecting vegetables, fruits, corn, alfalfa, wheat, barley	26
Preparing for sale (for example put fruits into boxes, weighting dates, packing wheat)	9
Processing, for example jams, dates	5
Selling	1

Women were asked whether **women are paid the same salary for the same amount of work and hours worked** where 60 per cent agree whereas 33 per cent do not believe so. However, the latter mostly misunderstood the question and mentioned that men are paid more than women for different reasons, mainly because men work longer hours, do physically strenuous work, perform work that women cannot do (likely referring to heavy physical work), men go to the market, and overall have more experience in agriculture than women. Overall, female agriculture workers did not seem to express any feelings of discrimination.

Women have **limited autonomy** in deciding whether to work or not and on spending their earnings, reported by only 21 and 19 per cent, respectively. For almost a third of women, male family members decide on how to spend their income.

Table 13: Decisions regarding work and spending of earnings among paid agricultural workers

Decisions	Whether women work	On spending income from work performed by women
Women themselves	21%	19%
Jointly with family members	61%	50%
Male family members	18%	31%

Women mentioned experiencing a number of **challenges as paid agricultural workers** with hardship due to heavy work, especially in the heat along health risks such as skin diseases (not specified) among the most mentioned. Balancing work and home duties is also difficult for the women surveyed, especially leaving children alone at home and in general, due to the double burden of work and household chores experienced by women. Also, water scarcity and some other climate-change related events were mentioned by women followed by low wages and low job opportunities along other less mentioned examples.

Table 14: Major challenges reported by female paid agricultural workers

Challenges	Number of mentions (N=72)
Health risks (especially skin-related) and physical challenges (hard work, tiredness, fatigue, heat) also due to lack of machinery	31
Balancing work and personal life, especially leaving children or other dependents alone at home	12
None	11
Water scarcity mainly but also, drought, water salinity	9
Low wages	5
Less job opportunities in rural areas, especially due to climate change	4
Snakes and scorpion presence	3
Customs and traditions	2
Agriculture neglected sector	1
Ensuring quality of products such as dairy	1
Long working hours	1

Almost a third of women (32 per cent) feel they experience **challenges for working in agriculture that men do not** and provided a number of reasons for this: balancing between work and personal life; hard physical work (men performing better in this case); a lack of (alternative) job opportunities for women; limited transportation options; and the inability to work at night. The rest of the women did not think they experience challenges specific to women.

Women were also asked whether they experience any **challenges with transportation** in specific where 14 per cent reported requiring the business owner to pick them up or relatives to support them with transportation or requiring to organize their own transportation. The vast majority reported no challenges with transportation, which might be also due to the fact that they work in proximity of their homes.

Women mostly **feel very safe or safe at the workplace** with 11 per cent of women, indicating to sometimes feel safe whereas some other times less safe, especially due to the fact that they work outside or due to the presence of landmines or unexploded ordnance.

Seventy-nine per cent **feel very comfortable or comfortable at the workplace** with the remaining mostly reporting mixed feelings, mainly due to fatigue and exhaustion due to the heavy physical work, for working outside and exposure to heat and sun along a lack of privacy, presence of insects and reptiles, health issues, and working with strangers, especially men.

Women were asked about the **impacts of climate change on their work** where 60 per cent thought they were negatively affected – though many were referring to the impacts on the farms hiring them - especially due to fewer jobs and an increased competition due to lower yields and productivity in general, including in livestock; a decrease in wages, a decrease in days worked, and increased efforts at work (for example, sources of water located farther). One respondent explained:

“There is a lack of job opportunities in the agricultural field, as well as low wages due to the presence of many female workers. Competition for obtaining work has increased, which led to a decrease in daily wages.”⁵⁷

Women reported as **impacts of climate change on households**, especially due to lower disposable income,

57 Female paid agricultural worker from Hawija, Kirkuk governorate.

difficulties in meeting the most essential family needs, borrowing money to meet needs, and health issues (due to sandstorms) with only a small number mentioning their household was not impacted by climate change.

Women were also asked who is **more impacted by climate, men or women**. While 40 per cent thought both were equally impacted, the remaining mostly think that women are more negatively impacted. Men – reported by only 4 female respondents - are more affected by climate change because they are more numerous than women in the agricultural sector. Eight female respondents think otherwise - and unanimously - that men have more options for livelihoods than women, who are mostly bound to agriculture and livestock (mentioned by 7 respondents) and due to women's reliance on fruit and vegetables mostly that experience a reduction in water availability (mentioned by 1 respondent), which make women more affected by climate-related events.

Paid agricultural workers would mostly prefer to be self-employed with 18 per cent, who would prefer employment and 18 per cent, who think both employment and self-employment are acceptable. Seven per cent would prefer to not work at all. Therefore, working as paid agricultural workers is clearly not matching with women's preferences and also the small number who mentioned preferring employment only, could have referred to better job opportunities.

Table 15: Employment preferences among paid agricultural workers

Ideal work arrangement	Number	Percentage
Prefers not to work	5	7%
Self-employment, for example a small business	41	57%
Employment only	13	18%
Either self-employment or employment	13	18%
Total	72	100%

Women hear about work opportunities from family members mostly (reported by 79 per cent) followed by 62 per cent, who mentioned neighbors, and 24 per cent hear from other community members. It seems the government and the mukhtar do not play any role in finding work opportunities in agriculture (only 3 mentioned the mukhtar offering any information on work opportunities in this field).

The majority of women would like to cultivate their own land or have their own livestock rather than working as agricultural workers, as mentioned when asked about how to improve their livelihoods. With financial assistance, women could rent land, buy agricultural equipment, purchase livestock, and in general start their own business in agriculture (and in some cases tailoring). Some women also mentioned the importance of stable job opportunities with reasonable remuneration for their work.

Women mostly do not require any vocational training except for four women, who mentioned modern techniques in agriculture, dairy production (also advanced methods), and sheep breeding also reflecting that when working in other's farms, the latter might be of less interest.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The report highlights several challenges faced by women in Iraq working in agriculture. These challenges include low educational levels, limited access to land and resources, climate change impacts and gender-specific obstacles. Women's involvement in marketing and selling is variable, but they often face societal norms and limitations in conducting business outside their households. Despite these difficulties, women contribute significantly to agriculture and livestock activities and are involved in activities in often difficult conditions, especially due to summer heat. Paid agricultural work does not fit women's preferences and many would prefer to work on their own farm or rent land when possible. Many paid agricultural workers do not own any land and rely on one source of income, pointing to also very vulnerable households.



5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Advocate for policies that promote women's land ownership.
- Programming should consider the high level of debts among beneficiaries —and how these could be spaced out – through support with stipends and similar. Rejections of livelihoods support due to fear of potential resource diversion for repaying debts should be excluded from business selection criteria.
- Agricultural businesses are often family-run businesses. Working with families is therefore recommended. Small tweaks to programmes should be considered and measured to determine the effects, for example, by having both men and women in any training delivered to beneficiaries or business planning involved, rather than focus on women (or men) only.
- Promote the adoption of climate-smart agriculture practices and water-saving techniques, such as improved irrigation methods and drought-resistant crop varieties.
- Encourage and provide opportunities for women to access education and training programs related to agriculture, livestock management, greenhouse cultivation, and new farming technologies.
- As a proven method for women's economic empowerment, opening of saving accounts is recommended wherever

feasible, especially if the relevant institutions are accessible to women.

- Improve rural infrastructure, including electricity supply, transportation, storage facilities, and irrigation systems. Enhanced infrastructure can reduce post-harvest losses and increase the efficiency of getting products to the market. Electricity provision is evidenced to be especially needed, as it can be instrumental in supporting female farmers, working at home, in livelihood diversification or in embracing a different type of livelihood due to a prolonged working day.
- The smaller the farm owned by women, the more intense is the support usually required such as 'integrated services for farming' (i.e., farmer groups, financial services, agricultural technologies, extension and training) and, as a variety of recent assessments determined, mentoring of female farmers.
- Based on a recent behaviour change assessment conducted by IOM,⁵⁸ attention should be paid to modelling a language that is explicitly consistent with success, and encourage beneficiaries to use this in both training and at work; in codifying and sharing the experience of 'relatable' successful role models; in introducing a 'Growth Mindset' to the programme; find ways to help beneficiaries 'feel' success, no matter how small; and share powerful information with families to build support for the programme and beneficiaries.
- Supporting women means focusing on value chains they tend to participate in and therefore conducting relevant value chain analysis is recommended, where findings from the current report and IOM's VCA point to livestock as having a high female participation.
- Considering women's major role in planting, watering, and harvesting, programming should consider how to facilitate this specific task performed by women, by supporting the purchase of relevant equipment and machinery (as opposed to focusing only on machinery, which is usually operated by men). The same applies to livestock where overall women appear to be heavily involved in all aspects of the work.
- Marketing and selling requires major attention in the absence of male family members or relatives (even relatives represent an 'unreliable' support) and should be actively considered during the business planning phase. Encourage female farmers to form cooperatives or associations. Working together in groups can help them pool resources, share knowledge, and negotiate better market opportunities.
- Establish connections between female farmers and local markets, retailers, and restaurants, especially when women are not able to rely on a male family member the latter should be considered of paramount importance. Engage with middlemen or organizations that can help bridge the gap between producers and consumers.
- Support women in cultivating their own or rented land through grants and input provision. This will also allow them to balance work and private life.
- In consideration of the limited alternative opportunities in rural areas, embracing other types of livelihoods should be encouraged and supported when agriculture becomes less feasible due to climatic and other events.
- Advocate for the improvement of the status of agricultural workers in Iraq, which to date still requires ministerial regulation.

⁵⁸ John McIntosh, Nudging women's economic empowerment in Iraq, IOM, under publication.



WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE IN IRAQ AN ASSESSMENT



**SUOMI
FINLAND**

