



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 special needs of the countries. With its Member States, public and private partners and academics the CIHEAM strive to meet the 4 following challenges:

-  Combating all form of 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

Rural women play a key role in the development of rural and agricultural areas. They account for 43% of the world's agricultural workforce, a percentage that reaches 70% in some countries. Women are responsible for the majority of agricultural work, controlling most of the non-monetary economy (subsistence agriculture, childcare and child education, household responsibilities, water and energy supply). They are major contributors to food and nutritional security, to generating income and to improving the livelihoods and general welfare of households, particularly those with low incomes. Rural women are increasingly leading their own businesses, although their entrepreneurial potential remains largely unknown and underutilized. In terms of their role in the management of natural resources and their responsibilities in the provision of energy in their homes, they are leading actors in the fight against climate change.

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.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

CIHEAM-UfM Workshop “Empowering women in rural and agricultural areas”

The CIHEAM was associated to the UfM Secretariat 4th High-Level Conference on Women’s Empowerment entitled, “**Women Build Inclusive Societies in the Mediterranean**” held in Lisbon on 10-11 October and co-organized the workshop “Empowering women in rural and agricultural areas”. The workshop invited the panellists and the participants to exchange, present their experiences and to provide recommendations for the conference. The discussions took place around three major questions:

- How to overcome barriers to harness the full potential of women in rural and agricultural areas?
- What are the key lessons from policies, programs or initiatives to better integrate the gender dimension into agriculture and rural development?
- How can the 2030 Agenda be used to advance women empowerment agenda in rural and agricultural areas?

Presentations and outputs of the workshop are available on [CIHEAM’s website](#)

More about the UfM Secretariat 4th High-Level Conference on Women’s Empowerment: <https://ufmsecretariat.org/fr/event/ufm-conferences-women4mediterranean/>

WIKIGENDER Discussion organized by the OECD Development Center, the UfM and the CIHEAM

In the context of growing recognition of rural Women’s role to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Wikigender, the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) organised an online discussion on the topic “Strengthening the role of women in rural and agricultural areas in the Mediterranean region: obstacles and opportunities ” from 17 to 21 September 2018. Over 50 insightful and expert comments were posted which identified the challenges facing rural women; Policy recommendations towards achieving the SDGs; and examples of good practices to unlock rural women’s empowerment.

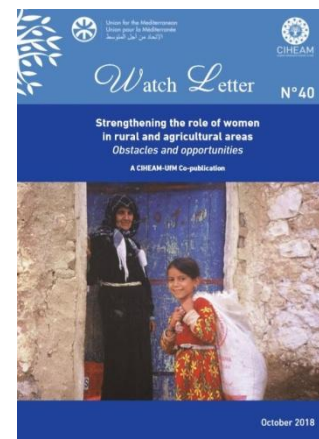
Key outcomes

The online discussion stressed four main challenges to rural women’s empowerment:

- Legal restrictions on rural women’s access to land ownership, as well as weak legal provisions and women’s lack of legal literacy;
- Lack of educational and training opportunities;
- Persistent customary laws and discriminatory practices denying women’s legal rights to land assets;
- Burden of unpaid care and domestic work that restrict rural women’s empowerment opportunities.

CIHEAM Watch Letter n° 40

Furthermore, the joint publication of the CIHEAM-UfM ‘[Strengthening the Role of Women in Rural and Agricultural Areas – Obstacles and Opportunities](#)’ was presented during the conference which focuses on women in rural areas, who, unless empowered to become more resilient, will continue to bear the brunt of climate change and inequalities that hinder our collective prosperity and development.



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

WHAT WE DO



[Olio del Libano III](#)

The project aims to promote new and better forms of organization, to protect and inform consumers, to support producers, to support producers, and to support young people and women. the olive and olive oil chain, to be strengthened by the existing farmers and cooperatives that are intended to pursue a virtuous quality-oriented olive oil strategy, to integrate the MoA laboratory with the necessary technologies, and to create opportunities to build support for the policies to add value and promote African oil, at the national and international level.

[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

[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.

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.

[Rural empowerment of Kurdistan region through sustainable development of the olive oil value chain](#)

The project objective is to enforce the institutional support and producers capacities within the Kurdish virgin olive oil value chain. Project targets at the whole Kurdistan Region, focusing the olive oil developed area in the territories of Dohuk, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah and Garman Governates.

[OROMIA-ETHIOPIA 2](#)

The main objectives of this project are to improve and reinforce horticulture value chain through capacity and institutional building and introduction of improved agricultural practices. The aim is to reinforce and qualify the role of women in agriculture value chains and finally to improve nutrition and dietary diversity of vulnerable target population, namely women and children.

[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

[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.

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.

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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 Beccagato 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](#)).

Seghirate, Y. (2017), **Mediterranean Women in Rural and Agricultural Communities: Double Jeopardy, Multiple Opportunities**, [IEMed, Mediterranean Yearbook](#), pp. 243-246.



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

[UFM WOMEN4MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE 2018 – WOMEN BUILD INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES. LISBON, PORTUGAL \(10-11 OCTOBER 2018\)](#)

The CIHEAM and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) co-organized the workshop " Empowering women in rural and agriculture areas" during the conference “Women4Mediterranean Conference 2018 – Women build inclusive societies” Lisbon, Portugal, the 10- 11 October 2018

MEDFORUM 2018

. Le 2ème Forum méditerranéen des jeunes chercheurs et doctorants méditerranéens qui s’est tenu il y a quelques jours à l’Institut CIHEAM-Bari, et dont la FAO a été partenaire, avait notamment pour thème principal le renforcement du rôle des femmes (Medforum2018)

[European Development Days 2018](#)



Women, Food and Rural development: A Mediterranean Opportunity!

CIHEAM promoted Mediterranean Women at the European Development Days 2018