

# Women & Water

Countries in the **MENA region** are the **most water scarce** in the world.

**113.51 mm\***  
rainfall/year in Jordan

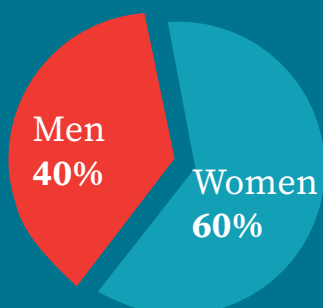
**816.12 mm\***  
rainfall/year in Portugal

**80-90%\*\***

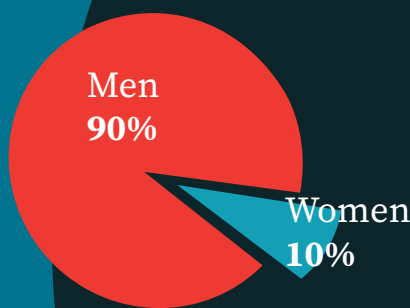
withdrawn water in **MENA countries** is used for **agricultural purposes**



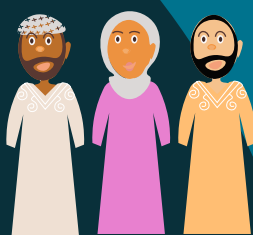
In many **MENA countries**, women make up the **majority** of the agricultural labor force but only a **small percentage** of farm owners and policy makers.



**Agricultural Labor Force\*\***

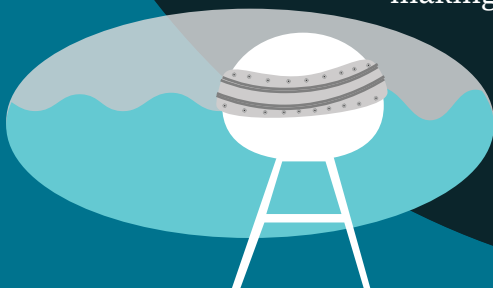


**Farm Owners (WUAs) and Agricultural Policy Makers (WAs)\*\*\***

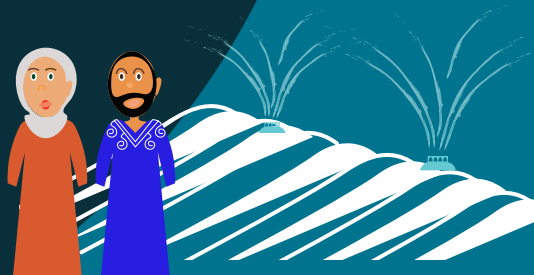


**Water Usage Associations (WUA)** control and manage water allocation decisions in some MENA countries, including Jordan, but membership and participation in WUAs is linked to land ownership. Even when women participate in WUAs, this has not translated into their power to influence decision making.

**Public Water Agencies (WA)** control and manage large hydraulic works and work with WUAs to make water allocation decisions. Not surprisingly, women's participation in WAs is low.



**Try this:** Establishing Gender Focal Points and gender units within WUAs and WAs with the task of promoting awareness of how gender-based disparities affect consumers, farmers and the community, and ensuring that gender units have the funding, knowledge, skills and tools they need to reduce those disparities.



receive irrigation water, and when water is scarce, even women landowners find it **difficult** to claim and receive their water entitlements. **Negating access to irrigation water means the inability to farm land.**

**Try this:** Forming women's groups to defend their irrigation rights is one possible way to confront the problem. Technical solutions like **on-demand irrigation delivery** and **automation of water delivery** can also contribute to solving or reducing the problem.

\* Data on annual rainfall is an average from 1921-2016 from the World Bank's Climate Change Knowledge Portal. Portugal was chosen because of its proximity and relative size to Jordan.

\*\* Data on water withdrawal levels and women's participation in the agricultural labor force has been adapted from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations 2011 report, "The State of Food and Agriculture".

\*\*\* Data on women's participation as farm owners and as policy makers has been adapted from Jordan's 2007 Agricultural Census and from a 2013 UN Chronicle article, "Women and Agricultural Water Resource Management".



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