

EMPOWERING WOMEN'S GROUPS TO ACCESS AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION & TRAINING THROUGH PEER-TO-PEER TRAINING AND SOCIAL CAPITAL BUILDING IN JORDAN

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Outline

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- Opportunities for genderizing agricultural extension services (AES)
- Case study
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- Research objectives
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- Methodology
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- Findings
- Role of women's groups in AES delivery – lessons learned
- Conclusions

Background

- Women play a critical role in agriculture and food security in Jordan
 - But this role remains largely invisible
- Women lack systematic access to productive inputs, credit and agricultural extension services (AES)
- Extension services in Jordan are focused on commercial crops
 - Lack of gender-sensitive extension services
 - Lack of culturally-acceptable spaces => lack of entry points
 - Limited interaction of women with male extension agents

Constraints to Women's Participation

- “Spaced based patriarchy” – limited advancement of women in public spheres
- Prevalence of norms and traditions restricting women from working outside the family farms
- Lack of culturally acceptable spaces
- Time and mobility pressures due to women's multiple roles
- Reliance on husbands and male relatives for information and decisions

Opportunities for Genderizing AES

- Working with women in “safe” spaces
 - Home => a safe space
 - Women’s cooperative => a safe space
- Offering training topics of interest to women
- Providing transportation to the training location
- Enabling peer-to-peer mentoring and support network
- Integrating gender-sensitive approaches into AES



Case Study

- Three cooperatives in Al-Mowagar District (arid area)
 - Ngera Cooperative for Social and Charitable Causes
 - Mawakeb Al-Nour Women's Cooperative for Charitable Causes
 - Al-Khudair Women's Cooperative for Social Development
- Cooperatives are supported by various foundations in the country
- Cooperatives provide: kindergarten, trainings, & specialized services
- Training program was funded by Middle Eastern Partnership Initiative (MEPI)
 - Focused on peer-to-peer mentoring and five skill sets

MEPI Training Program



Various activities during the MEPI training program

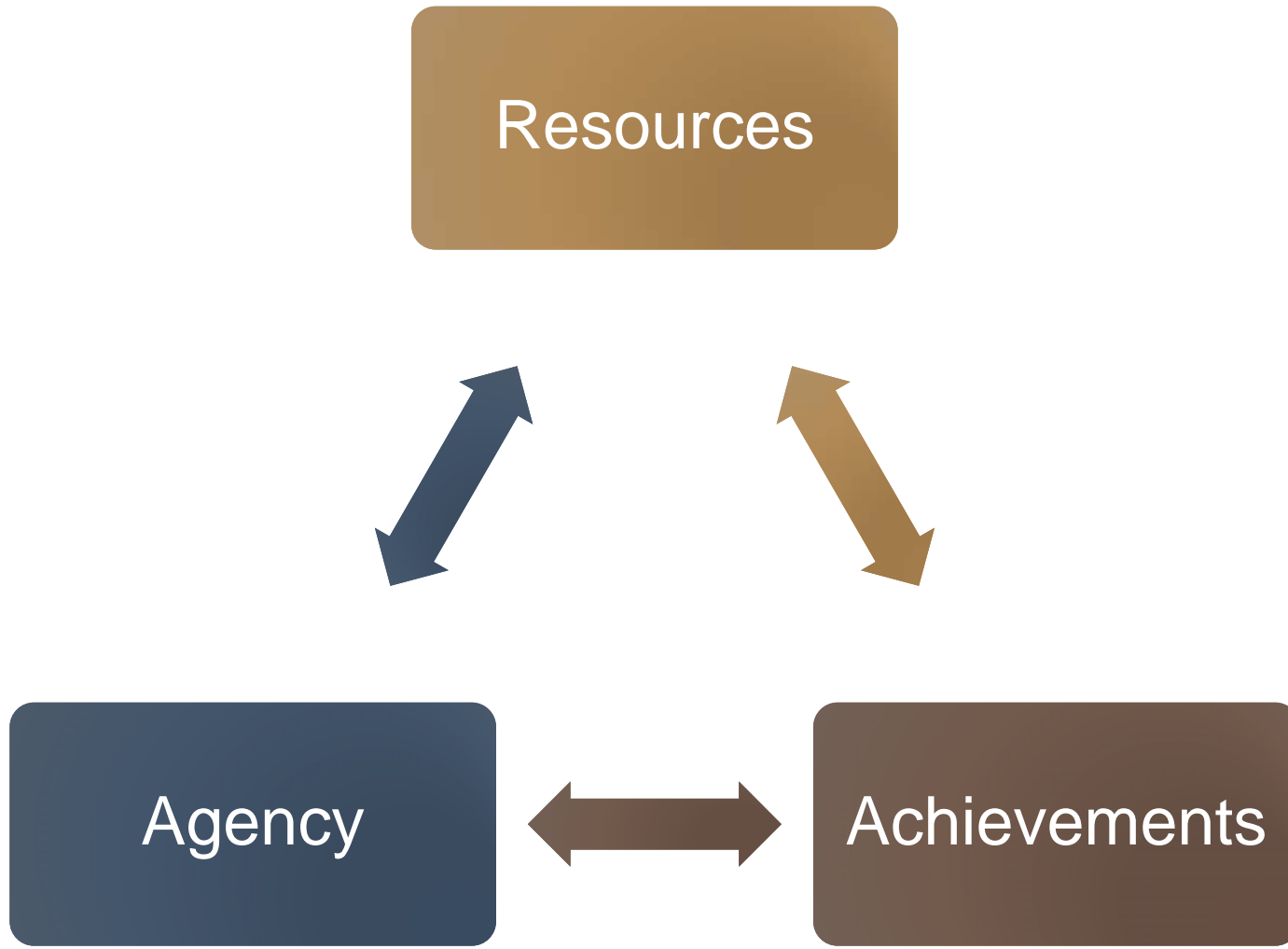


Research Objectives

- Can developing social capital empower women's groups to overcome gender constraints in Jordan?
- What methods can be used in Jordan, and perhaps elsewhere in the Middle East, that might build social capital and expand women's networks?



Empowerment Framework

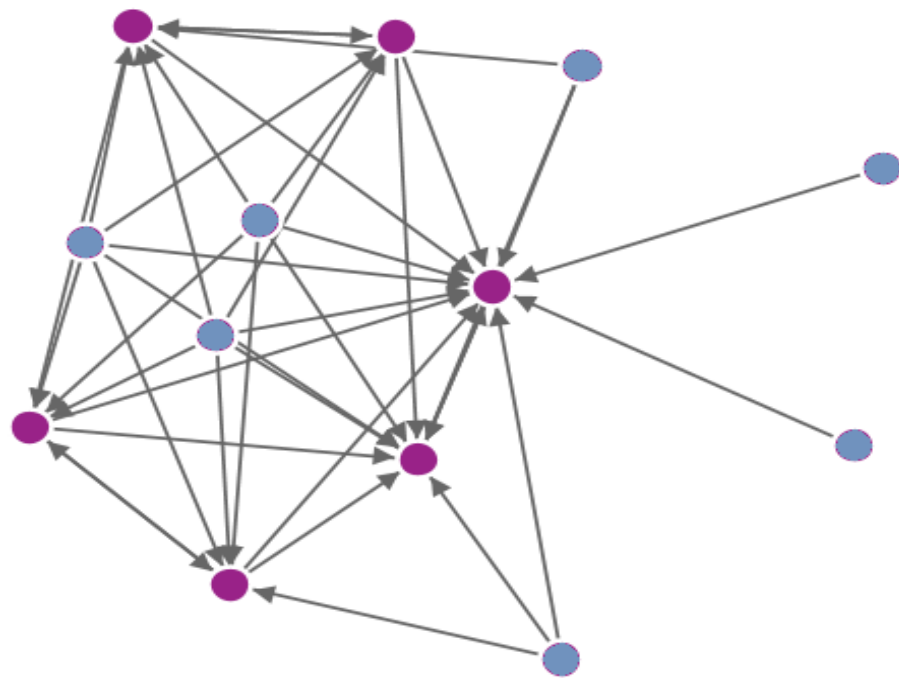


Methodology

- Participant and non-participant groups
- Quantitative
 - Baseline survey
- Qualitative
 - Focus group discussions
- Direct observations
- Social network analysis

Social Network Analysis (SNA)

- SNA surveys captured the depth of existing relationships and tracked changes:
 - Feeling of commonality
 - Frequency of communication
 - Types of communication and interactions



Sociogram of Mawakeb Cooperative
Purple: MEPI Participants
Blue: Non-participants from the same cooperative

Various activities during the MEPI training program



Findings: Peer-to-Peer Training

- Participatory training fostered collaborative learning environment to enhance social capital and network building
 - Learning by doing approach
 - Group discussions
 - Public speaking and presentations
 - Sharing opinions
 - Problem-solving
 - Critical thinking
- Peer-to-peer training provided realization of women's potential capabilities

"After my college graduation I felt like I was nothing, but with the cooperative training I became more confident and I found out that I have many skills"

Findings: Social Network Building

- Enhanced women's perceptions on valuing the importance of belonging to a cooperative or a community-based organization
 - Greater buy-in and commitment to cooperative objectives
 - Greater care & commitment to fellow cooperative members
 - Greater sense of commitment and influence in community-at-large issues
- Facilitated the creation of new networks and connections within and outside the cooperative

Various activities during the MEPI training program



Findings: Social Capital & Confidence Building

- Increased comfort and abilities to share views and ideas in group/public settings
- Enhanced sense of purpose for collective action
- Enhanced ability to conceptualize community development projects and secure funding
- Enhanced abilities to leverage existing and new resources for collaborative projects between cooperatives
- New leadership opportunities, engagement and commitment
- Enhanced ability for decision-making within cooperative and households

Role of Women's Groups in AES Delivery – Lessons Learned

- Women's groups (cooperatives or community-based organizations) provide culturally-acceptable and safe spaces
- Women's groups provide women access to community affairs
- Women's groups enhance women's social capital and networks
- Women's groups are good entry points for extension interventions
- Strengthening women's groups through AES is key to building sustainable communities

Conclusions

- Participatory training provides a positive environment for participants' self-growth and confidence building
- Personal motivation along with knowledge acquisition enhances social capital building
- Social capital is treated by women as a resource to strengthen relationships and expand networks
- Cooperatives are regarded as locally owned people-centered enterprises
- Women perceive cooperatives as avenues to access AES
- Participation of women in AES leads to genderizing AES activities in Jordan



*Graduation ceremony at the Jordan's National Center for Agricultural Research and Extension, Amman/Jordan
June, 2014*

Thank you

Questions

