

Gender and Food Security

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The subject of gender and food security is addressed within the socio-cultural context of the Arab countries. The analysis is made against a backdrop of the current challenges facing food security such as the rising food prices, rising unemployment and poverty rates, climate change, water scarcity and environmental degradation. The recognition that the purpose of agriculture is not just to grow crops and livestock for food and raw materials, but to grow healthy and well nourished people leaves out the breast feeding period where the mother is the first guarantor of food security for a new born. The paper reviews the many roles that women assume and assesses how they integrate the strategic approaches conceived for improving food security in their capacity as both actors and beneficiaries. Constraints as well as key factors for success are discussed. Both enhancing factors and enabling measures are identified, and research and policy implications presented.

Key words: Gender, food security, Arab countries, food crisis, poverty, unemployment, climate change, water scarcity, first 1000 days of life, enabling measures, policy.