



## **Cultivating a more enabling environment:**

### **Strengthening women's resilience in climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected communities**

#### **Introduction and Context**

Around the world, climate crises and conflicts are on the rise, and it is women and girls who are disproportionately impacted. The most climate-vulnerable communities are also some of the most affected by conflict and economic insecurity; communities that have contributed the least to the climate crisis. This confluence of risk and vulnerability threatens the lives and livelihoods of communities – and especially women - caught in the middle.

Climate justice, gender equality, and peace are deeply interconnected. Climate change disproportionately affects women in conflict-affected settings living in extreme poverty (defined as living on less than \$2.15 a day). At Women for Women International, we work with women to build their resilience in conflict-affected settings by strengthening their ability to earn and save money, improve their health and well-being, claim and exercise decision-making power, and sustainably access meaningful support networks.

However, extreme poverty, rising inequality, and exposure to protracted conflict compounded with climatic changes and environmental degradation can contribute to displacement, economic shocks, and communal violence over resources and hinder women's efforts at building and sustaining resilience.

Women make up 80% of climate refugees globally.<sup>1</sup> Even as the climate crisis is already rendering homes and land uninhabitable or inhospitable across the world, the options for families to move in conflict-affected settings are even more limited and dangerous, leaving women in an ever more precarious situation.

According to the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and girls, "climate change is the most consequential threat multiplier for women and girls."<sup>2</sup> As the climate crisis intensifies in the coming decades, more people will be forced to leave their homes because of environmental events like desertification and rising sea levels.<sup>3</sup>

In the contexts where Women for Women International works, climate change is adding increasing pressure on families to migrate in settings where insecurity is already impacted their livelihoods. For example, in communities where pastoralists and farmers face drought and unpredictable rainfall patterns,<sup>4</sup> this is worsening existing food insecurity and conflict over resources.

In many ways, the gendered impacts of climate-vulnerabilities and crises mirror the vulnerabilities women face in situations of conflict. Increased conflict amplifies women's risks of poverty, food insecurity, gender-based violence (GBV), and decreased agency. Similarly, climate change adversely impacts women's economic opportunities, decision making power, health and well-being, and access to support networks, which worsens prospects for communities across conflict-affected areas as they navigate climate resilience, risk mitigation, and adaptation measures.

In addition to the layered ways in which climate change can fuel or exacerbate conflict, militarization more broadly contributes to the climate crisis and environmental degradation. Militaries are the single largest institutional emitters of greenhouse gases.<sup>5</sup> Their presence in conflict-affected settings can also disrupt the local environment through poor waste management practices or by enforcing resource extraction interests of a foreign entity, as examples.<sup>6</sup> While defense sectors do set climate goals and targets for reducing impact, those goals are quickly sidelined in favor of military objectives and there is no evidence that these targets can or will be met.

In addition to the direct impact of militaries on the environment and climate change, governments continue to increase their military spending. Between 2013 and 2021, military spending by the world's richest countries increased by 21.3 percent to \$9.45 trillion.<sup>7</sup> Further, massive expenditure on military and defense – particularly the recent increases in response to Russia's escalated invasion of Ukraine in 2022 - diverts from those countries' comparatively underfunded climate mitigation and adaptation commitments.

For women already struggling to survive in contexts that are climate-vulnerable, conflict-affected and gender-unequal, we must consider the impacts of human-made natural disasters, rising temperatures and environmental degradation on their daily realities.

## The intersection of gender, conflict, and the environment: what is the missing link?

In his 2019 Report on Women, Peace and Security, the UN Secretary-General declared an "urgent need for better analysis and concrete, immediate actions to address the linkages between climate change and conflict from a gender perspective."<sup>8</sup> Understanding these intersecting impacts was deemed key to both avoid exacerbating existing vulnerabilities but also to identify new entry points for strengthening climate resilience and adaptation, advancing gender equality, and building and sustaining peace.

### Across climate and conflict-related crises:

- **There is significant overlap between fragile and conflict affected states and the most climate vulnerable states in the world;**<sup>9</sup>
- **Women are uniquely and disproportionately vulnerable to the effects of climate change and conflict;**<sup>10</sup>
- **Women are excluded from decision-making and leadership on solutions despite their unique perspective on impacts and commitment to a holistic approach to addressing challenges. This exclusion widens the gaps in conflict and gender-responsive programming and decision-making spaces regarding land, agriculture, and climate action.**

However, even as the interconnectedness of these challenges become evident and grow worse, the necessary synergistic and urgent action to address them has been lacking.

To address this, climate adaptation and mitigation strategies and financing must center climate justice and use a gender-responsive and human rights approach to mitigation and adaptation, and to fortify women's resilience against the worsening impacts of food insecurity, poverty, migration, water scarcity, and increasing violence.

In parallel, a gender-climate lens should be applied to the implementation of the broader sustainable development and women, peace and security (WPS) agendas. These existing frameworks offer valuable tools to ensure more integrated approaches to achieving climate justice, gender equality and peace. But we are not currently leveraging them as we should be. For example, as of 2022, only about one in four Women Peace and Security National Action Plans made a direct reference to climate.<sup>11</sup>

## About this report

The overlapping and interconnected impact of conflict and climate crises on women's resilience signal that there must be stronger multi-sectoral collaboration across the fields of environment, conflict, and gender. Women for Women International has undertaken initial research to inform our own programmatic approaches as well as develop policy recommendations focused on improving women's resilience. This is in recognition of the need to better elevate and integrate the priorities and perspectives of women living in climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected communities into conversations about climate resilience and adaptation.

This report provides an overview of women's experiences of climate and environmental impacts in the conflict-affected – and often under-represented and marginalized – communities where we work. This evidence contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the intersection of gender, conflict, and environment in settings that are climate vulnerable, fragile and conflict-affected, and with high rates of gender inequality. We propose recommendations for action to build women's and communities' resilience while also transforming the enabling environments that can contribute to or mitigate these growing crises.

## Defining key terms

- **CLIMATE VULNERABILITY:**  
The susceptibility to, or inability to cope with, the negative impacts of climate change.
- **CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION:**  
Mitigation addresses the root source of climate change, including prevention and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and removing these gases from the atmosphere. Mitigation can limit future changes to our climate but will not reverse existing changes.
- **CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION:**  
Adaptation includes changes to behaviors, practices, systems, relationships and technologies that reduces vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change. It is the process of withstanding and adjusting to the existing and future impacts of climate change.

- **CLIMATE JUSTICE:**  
Responses to climate change that address the disproportionate impact of climate change on marginalized groups, including women and girls, people affected by conflict, low-income communities and countries, people of color and indigenous peoples.
- **CLIMATE RESILIENCE:**  
The capacity of a system or a community to absorb, adapt, transform and respond to climate events, trends or shocks while continuing to function effectively and maintain essential components in a sustainable way.

## Resilience in women's own words

**Problem-solving with patience and persistence, and seeking social support when necessary**  
**Afghanistan**

**Acceptance of one's situation, problem-solving, and seeking social support**  
**DRC**

**Acceptance of one's situation, as well as patience, strength, and adaptability in addressing the situation**  
**Iraq**

**Overcoming challenges through strength, persistence, patience, and positive thinking**  
**Nigeria**

**Persistent problem-solving and seeking social support**  
**Rwanda**

**Problem-solving with strength, adaptability, and seeking social support**  
**South Sudan**





## Meeting women where they are

### How Women for Women International is adapting to strengthen women's climate resilience

In addition to providing evidence-based recommendations to leaders, funders, and the peacebuilding and environmental protection movements, Women for Women International is advancing its own strategy for strengthening women's climate resilience in our programs.

Through Women for Women International's Stronger Women, Stronger Nations and Change Agent programs, we invest in women through training and resource provisions to strengthen their economic and social resilience as well as their leadership and advocacy skills in the face of seemingly insurmountable hardships and barriers.

Acknowledging that the burden of addressing climate change cannot fall on those least responsible for and most vulnerable to its effects, we seek to use all opportunities to help marginalized women in conflict-affected settings to protect their environment and improve their health and livelihoods wherever possible. The curricula for these training programs include context-specific information on environmental protection including practical applications, such as avoidance of grass-burning techniques in farming in the DRC to enhance fertility of land and reduce pollution.

Women for Women International already considers climate change and its impacts into its community market assessment and analysis processes so that women may adapt their livelihoods with greater agility to improve and maintain food security, reduce their exposure to intimate partner violence, and secure their income-streams in the face of crisis. To ensure a long-term approach toward individual resilience and climate resilience, we are now revising our vocational training tracks to ensure that they are designed in alignment with current and expected climate shocks and their impacts, thereby increasing their environmental resilience long term. We will revise these tracks in partnership with local experts and through additional primary and secondary community-based, gender-sensitive research on environmental shocks and optimal training tools.

At Women for Women International, women have shared with us that a key element of strengthening their resilience was the opportunity to come together in a group setting, gain self-confidence and practice speaking up, including by conducting joint advocacy on issues affecting their lives. Women have also told us time and again that individual resilience programs like our vocational trainings are more effective when supplemented by supportive enabling environments that uphold their rights and inclusion. In the case of climate and environmental shocks, a supportive enabling environment is one that – at a minimum – does not ignore or exacerbate the root causes of these shocks.

Systems, policies, and infrastructure must also mitigate the impacts of climate disasters and environmental degradation to support women's adaptation while addressing political and governance decisions that may accelerate the frequency and/or severity of these disasters.

For example, a sustainable solution to flooding cannot be one that only focuses on ensuring adequate relief for those displaced by flooding or rebuilding damaged houses each season without strengthening the quality of infrastructure. And for women living in active armed-conflict zones, a realistic solution to climate challenges cannot solely focus on addressing air pollution from bombings without prioritizing peace negotiations to end the bombings. Nor can the burden of resolving climate challenges fall on women most vulnerable, yet least responsible, while the fossil fuel dependent and highest emitting military economies continue to manufacture and use war machinery without bearing corollary climate costs.

To this end, Women for Women International will continue using its locally-led and equitable partnership approach to amplify the solutions and priorities of women and women-led organizations to holistically prevent and mitigate the effects of environmental degradation and conflict.

## Calls to action<sup>10</sup>

As with our approach to advancing and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, Women for Women International calls for the inclusion of women affected by conflict in decision-making processes and discussions relating to environmental management and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The voices, leadership, and participation of women affected by conflict is key to strengthening climate resilience and to mitigate the cycles of conflict and environmental degradation. The recommendations on the next pages are based on inputs from women and women's rights organizations navigating climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected environments and outline how to support their inclusion and ensure that their climate vulnerabilities and day to day challenges are urgently addressed.



# Recommendations

## Programming Prioritization and Approaches

### 1 Break down siloes between sectors and actors when working across gender and climate in conflict settings.

Women's lives and the challenges they face do not fit neatly into categories or sectors; it will take more than one sector or framework to effectively build and sustain women's resilience in climate vulnerable and conflict-affected contexts. A lack of coordination among actors working across development, peacebuilding, gender-equality and climate in conflict-affected and climate vulnerable contexts are often not coordinated. Their efforts do not effectively adopt an intersectional and cross-sectoral approach that would fully integrate and address the needs, priorities, and realities of people affected by their efforts. This leaves communities, and especially women, with incomplete and unsustainable solutions that fail to address the full scope and scale of the problems they face.

“We must work more at the nexus, so where we have humanitarian actions and also development actions in a single project, because we can not only focus on humanity, but...we must also work to move forward despite the obstacles we have.”

*(Women's Rights Organization, Burkina Faso)*

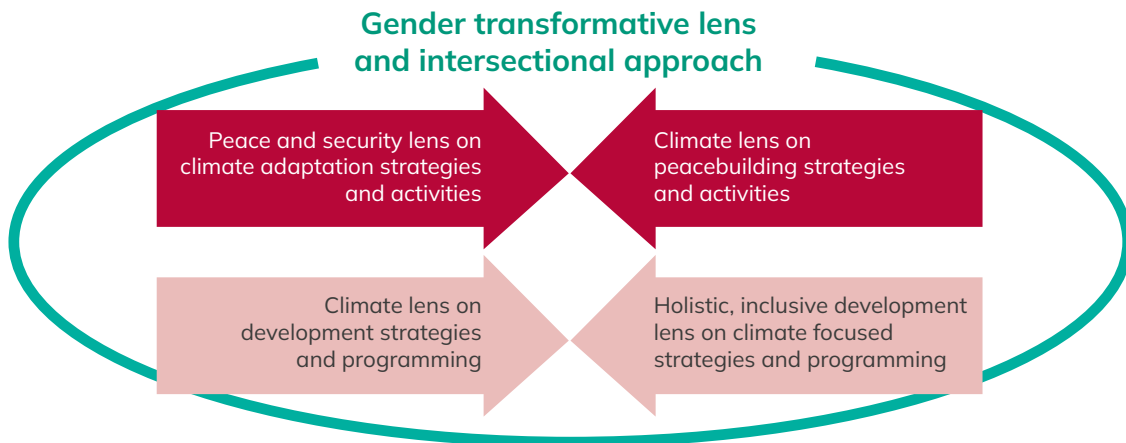


Figure 1

Across existing and new frameworks, strategies, and platforms, there should be cross-sector learning exchanges and collaboration to ensure that conflict and gender sensitivity are integrated across climate action and for climate and gender to be integrated across development, humanitarian, and peacebuilding efforts. For example, existing food security and agriculture mechanisms that aim to address environmental impacts and resilience in climate-vulnerable settings, such as the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, should integrate a conflict lens and a more meaningful gender lens to ensure smallholder women farmers facing climate and conflict challenges do not fall through the gaps of such initiatives. This can be achieved through gender and conflict analyses, increased coordination across the gender, conflict, and agriculture sectors and actors, and including women in their various roles – community member or leader, farmer, end user, mother - in design and decision-making processes for such programs and strategies.

### 2 Prioritize holistic, community-led climate adaptation approaches in global climate change action agendas and through increased financing for climate adaptation in climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected countries.

Advocates and activists have long argued that the approach to addressing climate change and environmental destruction is unequal and unbalanced when it comes to effort and burden by countries that contribute the most to climate change versus those countries that are most vulnerable to climate impacts.

One key manifestation of this imbalanced approach is the focus of the global climate change agenda and financing priorities on reducing carbon emissions and long-term mitigation strategies that do not address the present-day threats and damages facing conflict-affected and climate-vulnerable communities.

While climate mitigation is important, WROs describe how this prioritization and framing of climate action often evokes a sense of dissonance for countries with significant populations and geographic areas that may not even have reliable electricity – for example, in communities in Syria where individuals may be using solar panels not for environmental reasons but because they are under siege and without reliable infrastructure or in Nigeria where fuel is a high-priced commodity that women already find themselves using sparingly.

**“ If we talk about the environment, we also need to address needs [and integrate] to life skills and concrete issues – it needs to be contextualized to a bigger approach. ”**

*(Women's Rights Organization, Myanmar)*

Climate action should include sufficient funding and support for the immediate needs and strengthened resilience of women in conflict-affected communities – especially in small-scale agriculture, water scarcity, and food security programs – and should support existing community-led solutions such as tree planting and crop diversification.

**“ There is a big danger that the world that won't care about these people, we need to create possibilities and opportunities for them. We will lose the minds of people that can change this world if we do not care about their state and their daily life. Then women will be able to think about the world and the climate if they have a normal life again. Important...because this is work will have to continue on for the future of our generations. ”**

*(Beregynia Organization, Ukraine)*

### **3 Strengthen infrastructure and national level warning systems for people ahead of climate events and shifts in weather patterns.**

Women and WROs call for better national and local level infrastructure and early warning systems to strengthen community resilience to climate shocks and to prevent human and material loss in advance of crises. WROs recommend strengthened technical capacity in national governments and greater investment in infrastructure that is often abandoned or degraded following war or smaller outbreaks of armed conflict.

## **Funding**

### **4 Climate financing, including plans around Loss and Damage Funds, should include support for smaller scale projects and provide flexible, long-term funding for locally-led climate adaptation led by WROs and civil society.**

Though our analysis and existing evidence<sup>13</sup> indicates that women and communities affected by conflict are often already adapting to climate change and its impacts, WROs also expressed frustration with international actors attempting to impose blue-print environmental protection or 'green' policies that often feel insensitive considering the scale of women's daily struggle for survival in these settings.

Combined with the fact that the proportion of global funding going to women-led organizations or to address gender equality or climate financing<sup>14</sup> in conflict-affected and climate vulnerable settings is already tiny, WROs find themselves resentful to such top-down approaches to building climate resilience that they feel don't sufficiently account for human rights and conflict resolution. WROs shared that donors mostly have short-term projects that can end in one or two years even though impact for climate adaptation efforts is rarely visible within one or two years from the start of interventions. Providing additional operational flexibility also allows WROs to adapt to the challenges posed by frequent and unpredictable climate disasters.

**To support locally-led, sustainable climate adaptation, WROs recommend that:**

- **Climate financing should include projects co-designed with and managed by local civil society organizations, especially WROs, with donors providing technical support where needed alongside funding.**
- Funding should be **long-term and operationally flexible** to allow for WROs to adapt and focus on the changes that they feel are most critical to their communities rather than those changes and solutions which will deliver on a short-term outcome dictated by donors.
- Donors should accept the increasing costs necessary to incorporate climate adaptation elements in all projects – regardless of project focus – without reducing the allocation available for the primary project focus such as livelihoods, peacebuilding, or gender-based violence prevention.

## Participation and Inclusion

Today, those communities that have contributed the least to cause the global climate crisis are feeling the greatest impact. Moving forward, the burden and moral responsibility to fund the solution should rest on those that caused the problem, but the solutions themselves need to be built by the people most affected. What women and WROs see happening instead are governments and corporations in the agricultural and fossil fuel industry making decisions without including those most affected. This means that solutions will continue to prioritize profit over people and new, marketable technology ‘fixes’ over working with the earth to heal the earth and working with people to make their homelands livable.

WfWI partners across conflict-affected settings from Ethiopia to Syria to Afghanistan all described a gap in language and framing being used to introduce and address the climate crisis in the communities where they operate. Civil society in climate vulnerable, conflict-affected settings struggle to connect their daily adaptation challenges to the climate change framework and funding and blueprints for mitigation introduced by international funders. They call for greater civil society inclusion – especially women civil society – in developing climate action strategies, environmental management decision-making, and climate, conflict, and resource-management diplomacy.

### **5 Civil society and WROs should be meaningfully included not only in project implementation but also in diplomacy and negotiations for peace and environmental management, including natural resource management.**

WROs highlight that in addition to being supported to participate in implementing climate adaptation programming, it is critical for women and WROs to participate in high-level decision-making around environment and conflict management. They emphasize that decisions made at the national or international level among governments and/or corporations have the potential to exacerbate conflict and climate shocks and gender inequities.

For example, WROs in countries where there is active conflict noted that there is a need for women in civil society to participate in peace negotiations to build and inclusive peace and to ensure that peace agreements include women’s priorities around climate mitigation, environmental management, rural development, and commitments to invest in infrastructure.

In addition to peace agreements, WROs describe the impact of cross-national competition over resources, insufficient climate sensitivity in conflict management, and corporate exploitation of conflict. WROs describe how oil companies take advantage of weak governance and infrastructure to deposit petroleum and waste in communities and water sources without accountability for impact on communities. Women and WROs inclusion and participation must expand to the political sphere in order to fully and meaningfully address the current threats and risks that they face at the nexus of climate and conflict crises.

### **6 To strengthen technical capacity and enable meaningful participation of WROs in climate mitigation, adaptation, and financing discussions, provide WROs and women-led civil society with opportunities to attend climate adaptation trainings, conferences, and convenings with other WROs operating within climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected settings.**

Women are key stakeholders and agents for building community resilience and are willing to participate in environmental protection efforts. However, women face an information gap and gendered barriers to participation that prevent their inclusion in existing environmental protection programs or in proposing new adaptations. To address this gap, WROs request support to participate in trainings and conferences around this topic and have indicated a desire to connect specifically with other women’s organizations facing similar challenges as they are from operating in conflict-affected settings.

### **7 Pursue creative and context-specific solutions to raise awareness about environmental issues in contexts where women cannot access formal education.**

WROs have proposed incorporating context-specific content on climate and environment into existing educational curricula as an important starting point for women’s participation and building awareness around preparedness strategies and the links between the climate change and conflict impacts that they experience. However, WROs also acknowledge that most women in conflict-affected and gender unequal societies are rarely able to access a quality education to begin with.



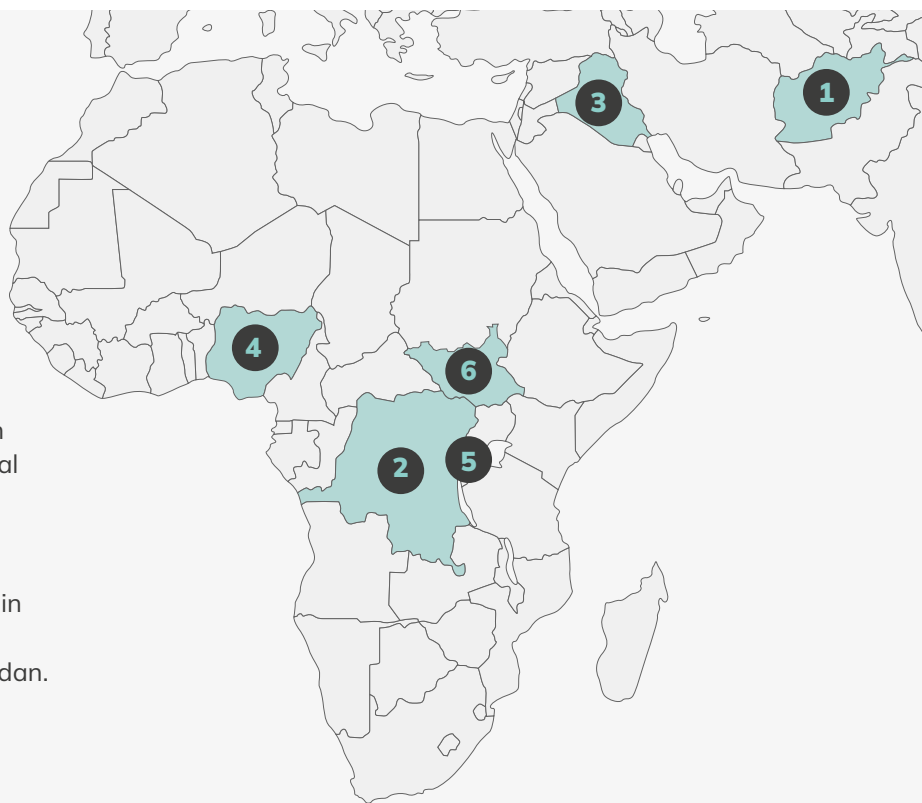
Therefore, while incorporating these topics into formal education would be useful, more creative methods of tapping into existing community platforms or training programs to raise awareness

can more immediately strengthen women's participation in designing and implementing climate resilience and adaptation approaches.

## Overview of Methodology

### Where and who?

Between August and October 2023, Women for Women International conducted individual surveys with 408 women and focus group discussions (FGDs) with over 550 women across communities where Women for Women International implements programs in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Nigeria, Rwanda, and South Sudan.



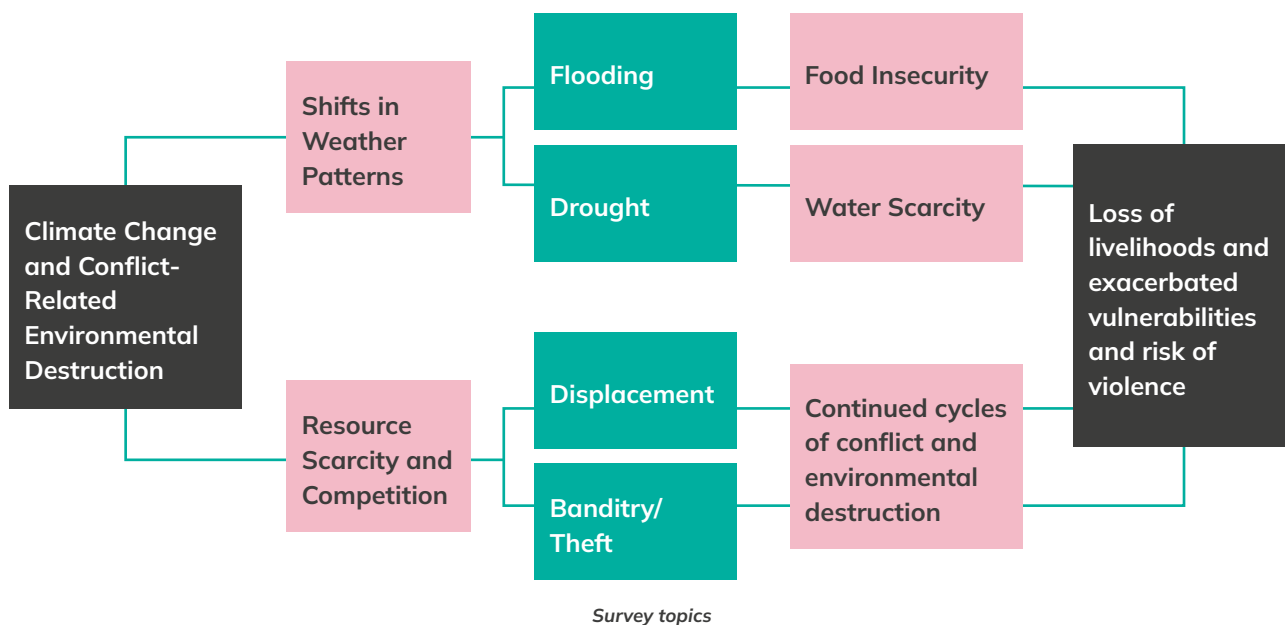
Country	Number of women surveyed	Number of focus group discussions
1 Afghanistan	80	10
2 Democratic Republic of the Congo	84	9
3 Iraq	80	10
4 Nigeria	80	14
5 Rwanda	84	10
6 South Sudan	n/a	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>550 women across 67 focus group discussions</b>

The women who responded to the surveys and participated in the FGDs are current or former participants in Women for Women International's **Stronger Women, Stronger Nations** program and therefore meet our programmatic eligibility and selection criteria, which specifically focuses on women facing multiple forms of marginalization including:

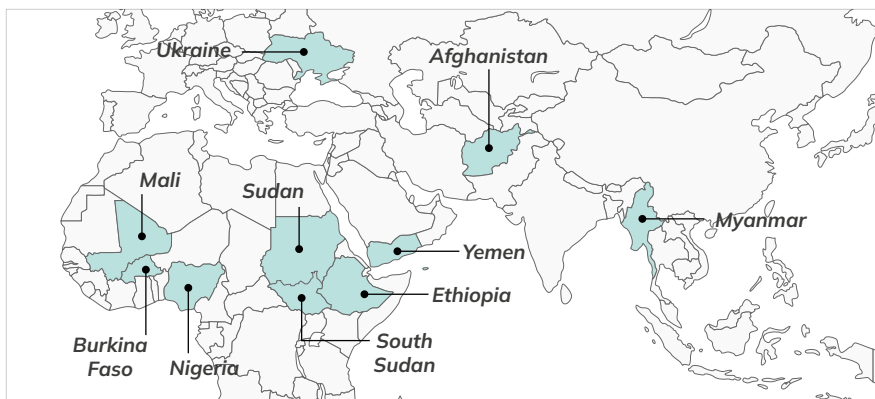


The surveys covered the spectrum of impacts of climate change and conflict-related environmental degradation on the communities where we were conducting the research. The different categories of impacts were selected based on desk research and input from colleagues overseeing the implementation of our programs to determine the relevance of each question and response option. Each survey was translated and delivered to women in-person in their local language.

We asked women about their long-term experiences – over the past 10 years – with climate change and conflict-related environmental challenges, how they have perceived these challenges to have worsened or improved more recently, and the practical effects of these challenges on their day to day lives. We also asked about efforts or initiatives that they were aware of or participating in to address these challenges, and how successful those initiatives were perceived to be.



The FGDs were conducted exclusively with former graduates from Women for Women International's Stronger Women, Stronger Nations program and explored women's resilience, including by seeking women's own definition of resilience. The discussions focused on how external shocks from conflict, climatic changes or other significant events affect their lives and their ability to practice the resilience that they may have strengthened, in part by engaging in Women for Women International's programs. The FGDs provided insights into how resilience programming can address the ripple effects of the shocks discussed and described by women in climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected communities.



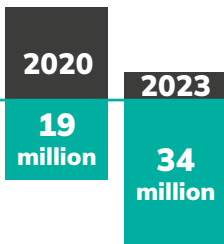
In addition to individual surveys and FGDs with individual women living in climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected contexts, we also conducted in-depth interviews with 17 women-led and women's rights organizations (WROs) in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Ukraine, and Yemen. The organizations were selected based on their past or current partnership or collaboration with Women for Women International and our awareness of their experience working on gender, conflict and – in some cases – climate and the environment, specifically. In those conversations, we sought to understand their personal and organizational framing and experiences working on conflict, gender and the environment including their biggest concerns about the coming years and what they see as the priorities, barriers and opportunities for strengthening climate resilience for women in the communities they serve.



## Overview – Key Facts



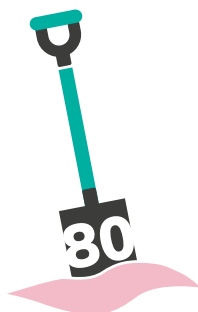
ACLED ranks Afghanistan as having a 'HIGH' level of conflict, ranked 13th in their conflict index.<sup>15</sup>



The amount of Afghans, out of a population of 40 million, that lived in poverty in 2020 and 2023.<sup>16</sup>



Ranking for women's inclusion, justice, and security<sup>17</sup> with women self-reporting severe restrictions and worsening suffering since 2021.<sup>18</sup>



Percentage of Afghans that rely on agriculture for their livelihoods.<sup>19</sup>



Ranking of Afghanistan, one of the most vulnerable nations to climate change impacts according to the 2020 ND-GAIN Index measuring country climate vulnerability against adaptation readiness.<sup>20</sup>

### WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

**80**

women surveyed individually

**10**

focus group discussions

### TOP 5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT CONCERNS

**62** Drought

**48** Flooding

**41** Lack of food

**39** High cost of food

**37** Pollution / Unclean air

*Out of 14 environmental impacts given as options to all women responding to the survey, each woman was asked to select between 1 to 5 of their top concerns.*

When asked about a series of overall environmental impacts, the women we surveyed in Afghanistan most frequently selected the concerns of drought, flooding, lack of food, high costs of goods and pollution/unclean air as the top 5 worsening issues that are affecting their daily lives.

Droughts being the top worsening environmental concern also came out strongly in the FGDs, with women highlighting how droughts created a massive clean water shortage that compounded existing health and economic challenges.

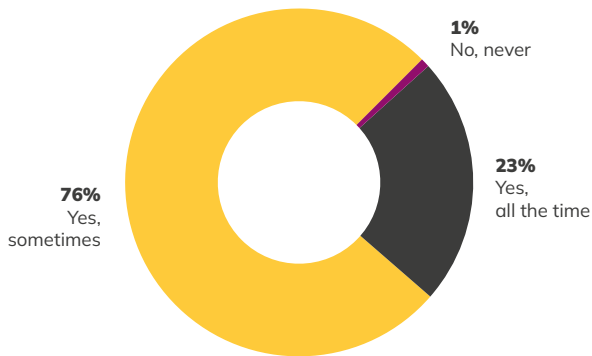
Natural disasters like intense rainfall and flooding, as well as the four earthquakes<sup>21</sup> that struck Afghanistan in the space of a week in October 2023 also sparked concern for women.

Across all challenges, the women we surveyed in Afghanistan noted that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) used to fill some of these gaps, but that the Taliban takeover in 2021 and subsequent restrictions on NGO operations by the de facto authorities have meant that women in Afghanistan have lost access to most NGO-led clean water and livelihood support efforts.<sup>22</sup> The compounding effects of these restrictions on women's rights and worsening climate and environmental impacts are weakening women's resilience, even for those women receiving direct support through Women for Women International's programs.



# Weather Shifts

## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED SHIFTING WEATHER PATTERNS AS A CHALLENGE?

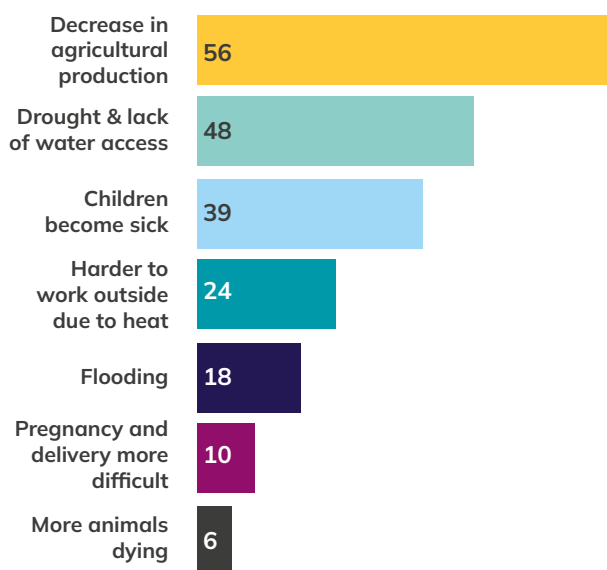


99% of women surveyed in Afghanistan said that they experienced shifting weather patterns as a challenge, with 76% of women reporting that this was sometimes the case and 23% of women reporting that this was always the case.

### Challenging shifts in weather patterns cited include:

- Longer, more intense rainfall leading to flooding
- Increased heat and drought
- To a lesser extent, women also described a higher frequency of dust storms

## HOW HAVE THESE SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS AFFECTED YOUR DAILY LIVES?



Women who responded that shifts in weather patterns created challenges in their lives were asked about the effects that they associate with these weather shifts and given the option to choose multiple options from seven choices. They were also given space to add a different response for any options we may not have provided.

## Women in Afghanistan described the following effects of weather pattern shifts:

- Illnesses such as flu, fevers, breathing difficulties (throat, chest), and skin illnesses
- Droughts leading to lack of available drinking water, decrease in agricultural production due to shortage of irrigation water, lack of food due to reduced agricultural yield and income
- Increased risk of death and destruction of infrastructure due to natural disasters or weather anomalies
- In severe weather, women and girls are restricted to their homes and are at greater risk of intimate partner violence or child marriage due to the combination of restriction in movement and activities and reduced agricultural income – the most common source of income in Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup>

When surveyed, 34% of women in Afghanistan confirmed that they had been forced to relocate specifically as a result of the previously mentioned negative effects of shifting weather patterns.

Our partners at Organization for Sustainable Aid (OSA) in Afghanistan cited drought as a particular driver for economic insecurity and displacement, both of which have contributed to increases in child labor and child marriage. OSA further shared that while women are more likely to view child marriage as a problem, men increasingly are viewing this as an acceptable means to address economic insecurity or reduce economic burden in the household.

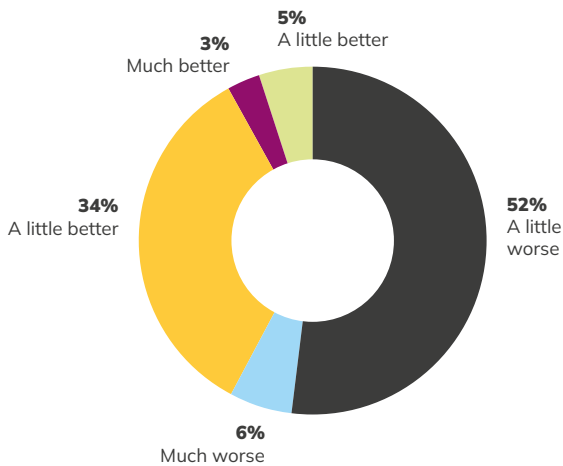
# Food Insecurity

## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY OVER THE PAST DECADE?



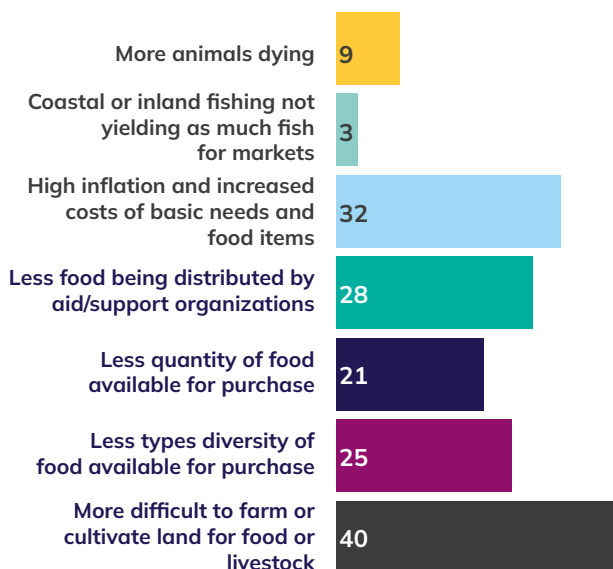
100% of women surveyed in Afghanistan reported experiencing food insecurity in the past 10 years, to varying degrees, with 75% of women reporting that this was sometimes the case and 12% of women reporting that this was always the case.

## HAS FOOD INSECURITY GOTTEN BETTER OR WORSE RECENTLY (IN PAST YEAR)?



Of those women, 58% felt that food insecurity had worsened in the past year. In addition to the impact of environmental degradation and climate change on food insecurity, the dire economic and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan since 2021 has further compounded the food insecurity challenges facing women in the country today. This is evident in the responses from women below and recent gender assessments and research carried out by a range of organizations.<sup>24</sup> It is also clear from Women for Women International's own programmatic data which indicates that only 45% of Afghan women graduating from our program in 2022 have had sufficient food at home, compared to 2019 when 100% of women sharing the same demographic characteristics reported having sufficient food at home at the time of their graduation from our program.

## WHAT HAS MADE IT MORE DIFFICULT TO ACCESS FOOD?



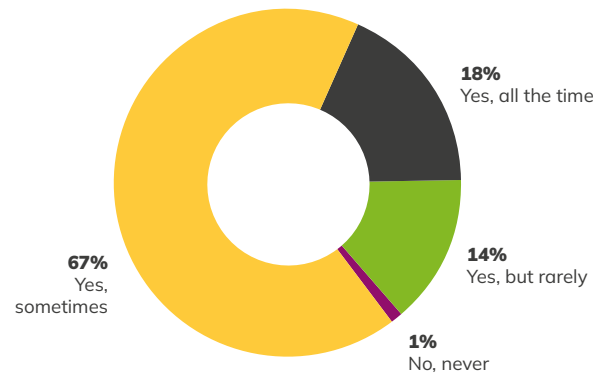
The women surveyed were each asked, "What has been a signal or indicator to you that this challenge of not having enough food to eat at home is getting worse?" and were given 7 options response along with an option for an open-ended answer. Women were able to select as many responses as they felt were relevant.

“ We have to work in the fields but as this year we have lack of water and more droughts, so we don't have much earnings and we don't have enough food to eat. ”  
(Woman, Afghanistan)

“ Food items are very expensive and before we had products from our fields but now we are facing droughts. ”  
(Woman, Afghanistan)

## Water Access

### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WATER SCARCITY AS A CHALLENGE IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



99% of surveyed women in Afghanistan reported experiencing water scarcity in the past 10 years, with 85% of those experiencing this either sometimes or all of the time. Of that 99%, 55% of women described the situation as worsening in the past year. One reason that women gave for the worsening situation was the de facto authorities' ban on women working in NGOs which has led to a lack of NGOs doing their previous work of providing clean water or establishing water supply sources in the community.<sup>25</sup>

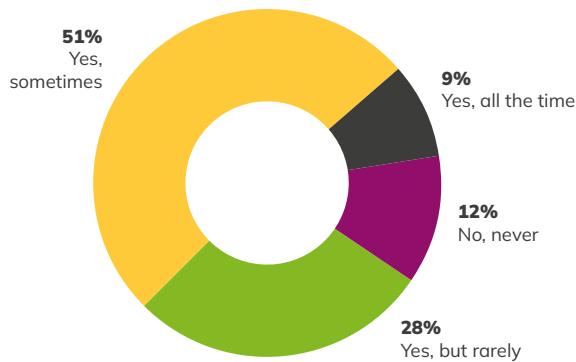
“ Before NGOs were working and supplying clean drinking water but now NGOs are banned so we are facing these problems. ”  
(Woman, Afghanistan)

“ In war, they destroy the well and the resources of getting clean drinking water. ”  
 (Woman, Afghanistan)

“ Lack of water keeps women from school and daily work. Collecting water can be life threatening experience for all woman. ”  
 (Woman, Afghanistan)

## Flooding

HAS FLOODING IMPACTED YOUR LIFE AS A CHALLENGE IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?

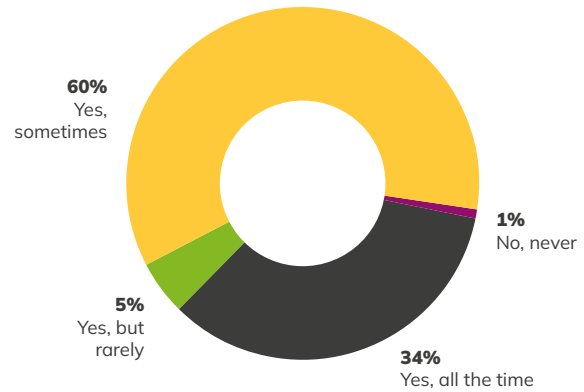


88% of women surveyed in Afghanistan responded that their lives had been impacted by flooding in the past 10 years, with 58% of those reporting that this was the case either sometimes or all of the time. Of the 12% of women who responded that flooding was not a challenge they faced, it was notable that they explained that flooding had previously been a big worry for them but that they more recently had felt greater pains from droughts and lack of access to clean water. 53% of respondents reported that they had to relocate due to flooding.

“ When the flood came, it was almost two nights and it was a very terrible night in our lives, when we lost all the things in our house, many of our people lost their lives, many people have broken their arms and legs, and severe earthquakes and the corona disease have affected all people, and there have been many accidents and incidents. ”  
 (Woman, Afghanistan)

## Pollution and air quality

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY POLLUTION IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



In responding to our survey, 99% to the women we spoke to in Afghanistan reported experiencing pollution as a problem. This finding was supplemented by our focus group discussions with women, during which participants described concerns regarding the health impacts of air pollution and dust from attacks and explosions during outbreaks of conflict, primarily affecting pregnant women and children.

The high cost of basic goods has also made fuel and oil unaffordable luxuries in Afghanistan. There are reports of a rise in civilians burning plastic as a fuel alternative,<sup>26</sup> since plastic is more readily and cheaply available.<sup>27</sup> During our interview with Women Now for Development, an organization working primarily in Syria, this practice was noted to be on the rise as fuel becomes increasingly unavailable or inaccessible in certain parts of the country, especially those areas under siege with limited supply deliveries. Across communities affected by conflict, these practices damage the environment and also have immediate health effects on community members, as described in survey and FGD responses in Afghanistan.

“ Food distribution by organizations are stopped and most of NGOs stopped their activities in our community, it affected us more. ”  
 (Woman, Afghanistan)





## Overview – Key Facts



ACLED ranks the DRC as having an 'EXTREME' level of conflict, ranked 9th in their conflict index.<sup>28</sup>

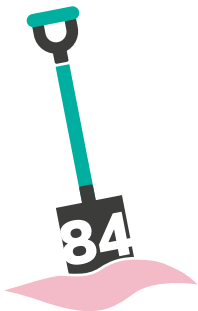
2022

62%

In 2022, approximately 62% of Congolese people lived below the poverty line.<sup>29</sup>

174  
out of  
177

Ranking for women's inclusion, justice, and security<sup>30</sup> with community norms that still enable violence against women.<sup>31</sup>



Percentage of Congolese that rely on the agriculture sector for their jobs, rising to 84% for women.<sup>32</sup>



Ranking of DRC, one of the most vulnerable nations to climate change impacts according to the 2020 ND-GAIN Index measuring country climate vulnerability against adaptation readiness.<sup>33</sup>

### WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

84

women surveyed individually

9

focus group discussions

### TOP 5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

77 Lack of enough available food

56 Inflation

56 Flooding

53 Banditry

48 Water scarcity

*Out of 14 environmental impacts given as options to all women responding to the survey, each woman was asked to select between 1 to 5 of their top concerns.*

When asked about a series of overall environmental impacts, women enrolled in our program in the DRC most frequently selected the concerns of lack of food, inflation, flooding, banditry, and water scarcity as the top five worsening issues that are affecting their daily lives.

Women in FGDs confirmed that the shifts in weather were having a significant impact on food security and agriculture activities. They shared examples of significant shocks to their capacity for resilience that reinforce survey results of the top five environmental concerns.

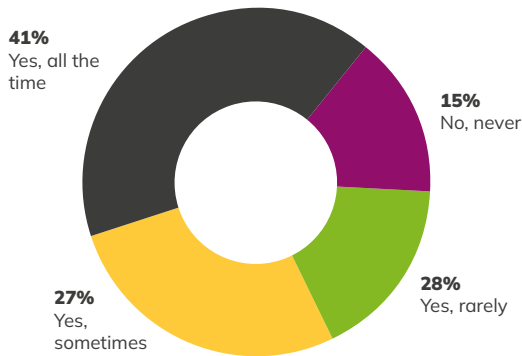


**The torrential rain (hail) caused a calamity. We can no longer find agricultural crops and this has brought poverty in the community. The soil is no longer fertile. We're having trouble finding seeds.**

*(Woman, DRC).*

## Weather Shifts

### HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS IN PAST 10 YEARS?

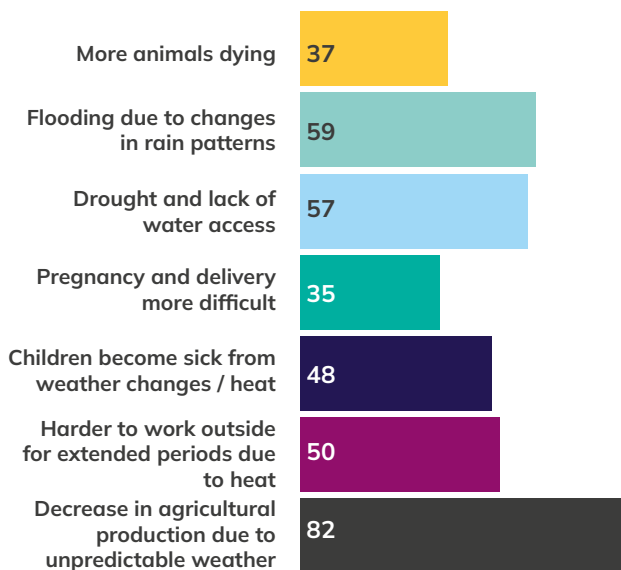


85% of women surveyed in the DRC said that they experienced shifting weather patterns as a challenge, with 27% of women reporting that this was sometimes the case and 41% of women reporting that this was always the case.

Challenging shifts in weather patterns cited include:

- Hotter weather
- Longer dry season and more droughts
- More natural disasters and dust storms
- Longer, more intense rainfall

### HOW HAVE THESE SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS AFFECTED YOUR DAILY LIVES?



Women who responded that shifts in weather patterns created challenges in their lives were asked about the effects that they associated with these weather shifts and given the option to choose multiple options from seven choices, including space to add a different response for any options we may not have provided.

Women in the DRC described the following effects of weather pattern shifts:

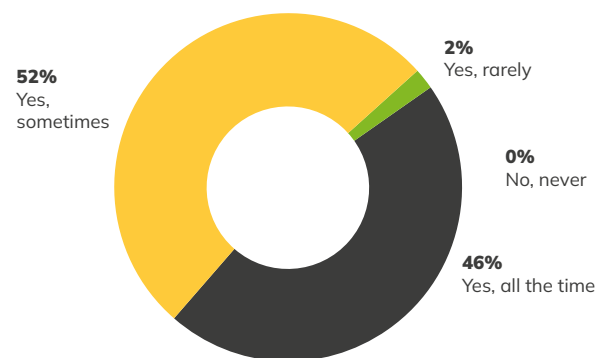
- Fish and grass shortages during the longer dry season which affects fishing and farming subsistence activities, respectively
- Buildings collapsing (including homes) during the rainy season due to flooding
- Floods and droughts destroying seedlings and rendering the soil infertile for future farming
- Famine and lack of food due to inability to farm

“Families do not have enough to eat due to lack of harvest caused by heavy rains.”

(Woman, DRC)

## Food Insecurity

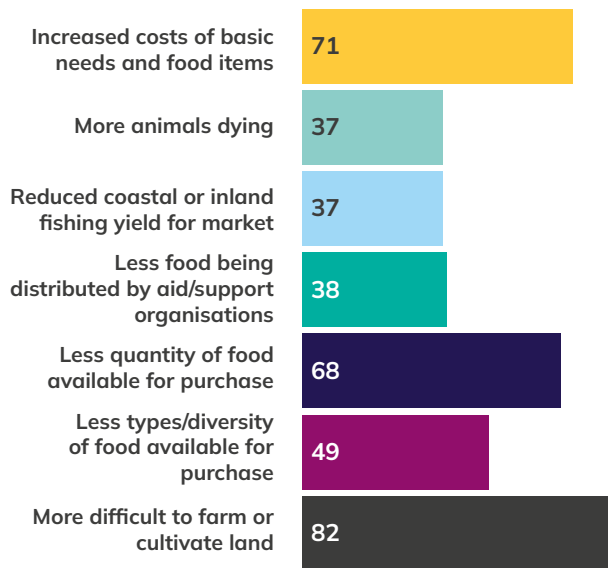
### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY AS A CHALLENGE IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



100% of women surveyed in the DRC reported experiencing food insecurity in the past 10 years, with 52% of women reporting that this was sometimes the case and 46% of women reporting that this was always the case.

70% of the women we spoke to in the DRC expressed that there are not enough efforts to combat lack of available food, and 46% of women indicated that they have been forced to relocate due to the multiple ways in which food insecurity is worsening. Flooding and drought were specifically mentioned as the changing weather patterns most destructive to farming efforts and therefore having a direct impact on women's ability to feed themselves or earn any money.

## SIGNS THAT FOOD INSECURITY IS WORSENING



The women surveyed were each asked, "What has been a signal or indicator to you that this challenge of not having enough food to eat at home is getting worse?" and then were given 7 options response along with an option for an open-ended answer. Women were able to select as many responses as they felt were relevant.

“For those who sell fresh fish, there isn’t enough during the dry season. From the sixth to the eighth month, there’s a real shortage of fry/fresh fish. And so, for those who are involved in this activity, they are in difficulty during this period, and even run the risk of eating up their capital. As for the livestock farmers, there isn’t enough grass during the dry season to feed their livestock. For those who produce bread, if Tanzania hasn’t produced the flour, they won’t be able to produce bread, and there’s a risk that their capital will be eaten up. On top of that, it’s the taxes that bother market vendors too much. With a small business, there are a series of exorbitant taxes.”

(Woman, DRC)

## Resource Competition

When asked whether they had experienced a rise in resource competition within and between communities, 100% of women surveyed in the DRC indicated that they are experiencing a rise in resource competition and theft as climate and environmental challenges exacerbate resource scarcity and, in some cases, drive localized conflict over the limited available resources and between herders and farmers competing over agricultural land.

“Women are getting sick from drinking dirty water.”

(Woman, DRC)

“On top of this, lately we’ve had the theft of agricultural produce at night by strangers, and this is very disturbing for the community. On the one hand, we have the refugee camp, and on the other, the inhabitants of Lusenda. So, the need for food is starting to show in Lusenda.”

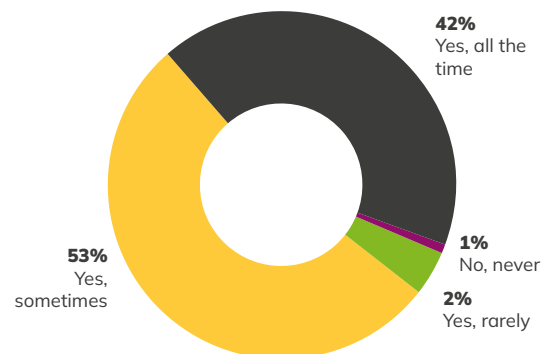
(Woman, DRC)

“Women are afraid to go to work with others because of these conflicts.”

(Woman, DRC)

## Water Access

### HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WATER SCARCITY IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



99% of Congolese women surveyed indicated that they have been affected by water scarcity in the past 10 years, with 53% reporting being affected sometimes and 42% of women reporting being affected all the time. Though women cited drought as a key concern for them – especially since many rely on agriculture for their income – it is important to note that, in addition to unpredictable weather patterns, Congolese women are struggling to access water due to the damage of water infrastructure as a result of conflict which is yet to be rebuilt.<sup>34</sup> In FGDs, women in the DRC frequently highlighted the lack of sources of clean drinking water in their communities as a long-standing challenge that they want to see addressed.

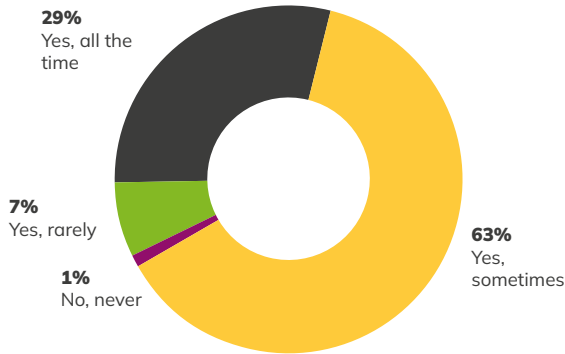
“Water shortage. The women get their water from Lake Kivu. It’s a long walk (4 hours) to get to the mill.”

(Woman, DRC)



# Flooding

HAS FLOODING POSED CHALLENGES FOR YOU IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



Flooding has posed a challenge for 99% of the women surveyed in DRC, with 63% reporting being affected sometimes and 29% affected all the time. Only 7% of women reported being affected rarely. Women in the DRC described the impact on their agricultural production, damage to infrastructure and housing, and the stress and shock of severe flooding as negatively affecting their resilience.

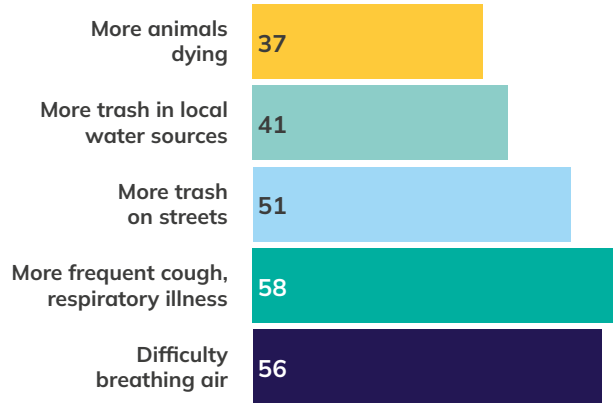
**“The floods at Kalehe happened there while my husband was working there. After announcing that many people have been carried away by the rainwater, I quickly thought of my husband. I called several times but his phone did not go through. I was afraid thinking that maybe he was also carried away.”**

(Woman, DRC)

**“Women are getting sick from air pollution.”**  
(Woman, DRC)

# Pollution

SIGNS THAT POLLUTION IS WORSENING



Women were asked about what they perceive to be signs that pollution is getting worse. They were provided with five response options along with an option for an open-ended answer. Women were able to select as many responses as they felt resonated with them.

96% of women experience pollution and/or poor air quality, with participants specifically reporting difficulties breathing air and a more frequent instances of respiratory illnesses.





## Overview – Key Facts



ACLED ranks Iraq as having an 'EXTREME' level of conflict, ranked 8th in their conflict index.<sup>35</sup>

**168**  
out of  
**177**

Ranking for women's inclusion, justice, and security.<sup>36</sup>



Iraq is one of the five most environmentally vulnerable and fragile countries.<sup>37</sup>



Environmental degradation and violence are causing displacement movements that are expected to increase tenfold by 2050.<sup>38</sup>



The minimum average temperature (36°C/97°F) in Iraq by 2050, making it the hottest country in the Middle East and North Africa region.<sup>39</sup>

### WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

**80**

women surveyed individually

**10**

focus group discussions

### TOP 5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

**68** High cost of goods

**49** Excessive heat

**47** Pollution/  
Unclean air

**46** Water  
scarcity

**39** Drought

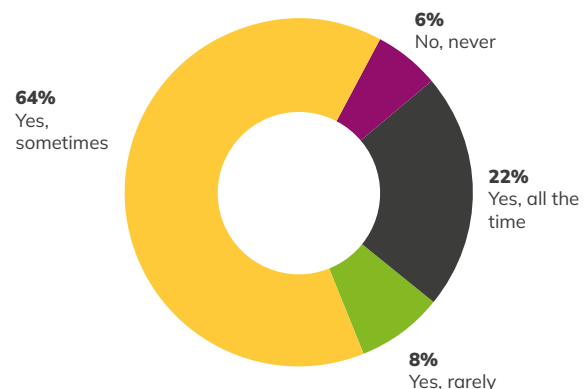
*Out of 14 environmental impacts given as options to all women responding to the survey, each woman was asked to select between 1 to 5 of their top concerns.*

When asked about a series of overall environmental impacts, women in Iraq most frequently selected the high costs of goods, excessive heat, pollution/unclean air, water scarcity and drought as the top five worsening issues that are affected their daily lives. High costs of goods came out particularly strongly.

“As a mother, I reduce the purchase of materials and foods for my children due to the increase in prices and the lack of job opportunities.”  
*(Woman, Iraq)*

## Weather Shifts

HAVE YOU BEEN NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?

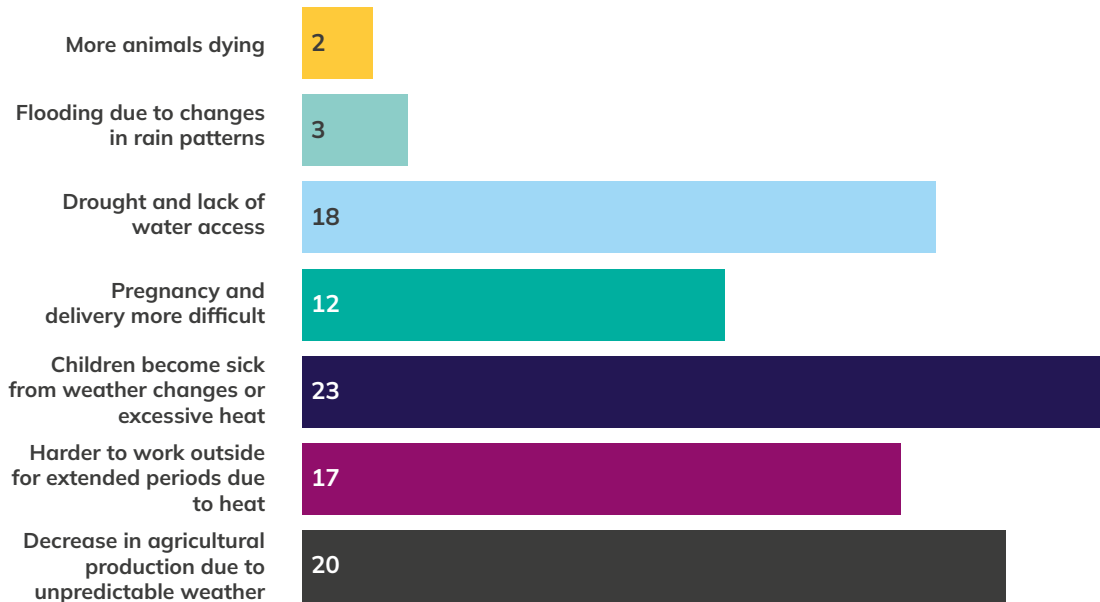


94% of women surveyed in Iraq said that they had negatively experienced shifting weather patterns as a challenge, with 64% of women reporting that this was sometimes the case and 22% of women reporting that this was always the case.

Challenging shifts in weather patterns cited include:

- Intense heat
- Droughts
- Natural disasters

### HOW HAVE THESE SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS AFFECTED YOUR DAILY LIVES?



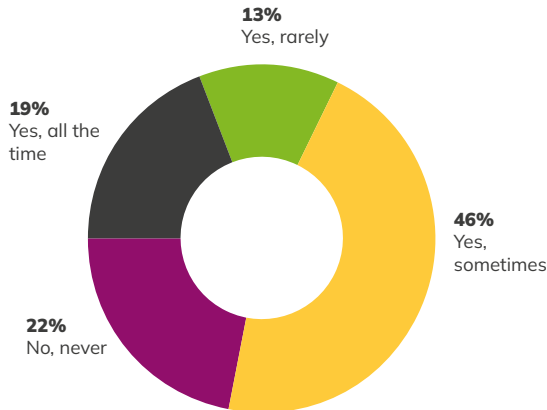
“ The high temperature and dust during pregnancy affected me and [my] breathing worsened. ”  
*(Woman, Iraq)*





# Food Insecurity

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY FOOD INSECURITY IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?

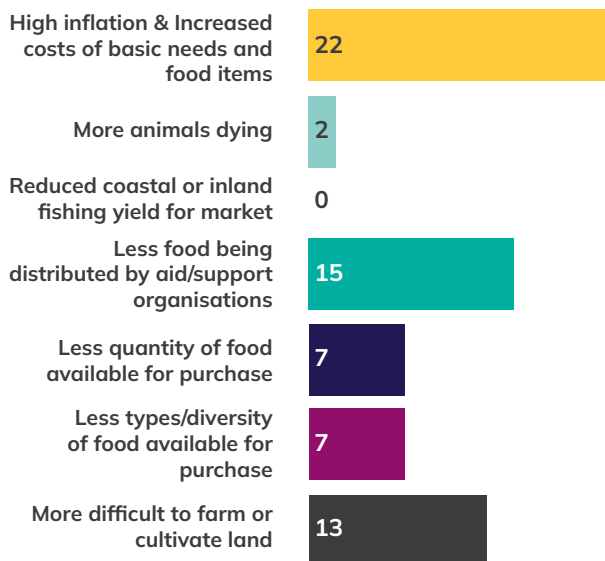


78% of women surveyed in Iraq reported experiencing food insecurity in the past ten years, and cited inflation, high costs of basic goods, and reduced support from NGOs, as recent factors that have compounded their experiences of food insecurity.

“When the children ask for food and I cannot buy it, I feel psychologically uncomfortable.”

(Woman, Iraq)

SIGNS THAT FOOD INSECURITY IS WORSENING



The women surveyed were each asked, “What has been a signal or indicator to you that this challenge of not having enough food to eat at home is getting worse?” and then were given 7 options response along with an option for an open-ended answer. Women were able to select as many responses as they felt were relevant.

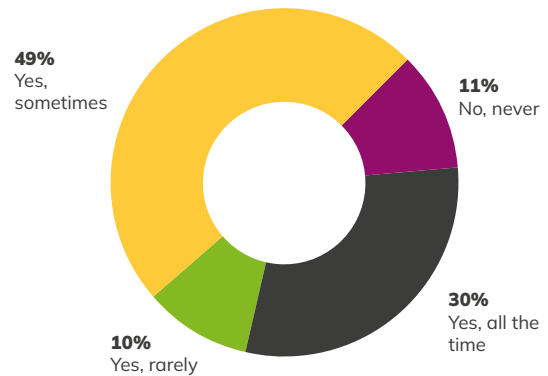
“As a mother, I reduce the purchase of materials and foods for my children due to the increase in prices and the lack of job opportunities.”

(Woman, Iraq)

In the Kurdistan Region of Iraq specifically, many respondents reside in refugee camps. Those women were more likely to cite inflation and the high cost of goods as the primary challenges exacerbating food insecurity. This differs to the more agricultural challenges highlighted in other contexts where we work.

# Water Access

IS CLEAN WATER AVAILABILITY A CHALLENGE FOR YOU?



89% of women surveyed in Iraq indicated experiencing water scarcity issues, with 79% of those experiencing this either sometimes or all of the time. Iraq is experiencing water shortages due, in part, to Turkey and Iran’s desire to limit the flow of water shared between them and Iraq.<sup>40</sup>

“More costly to access water, increase in sicknesses from unclean water and difficult to feed infants without clean water for formula.”

(Woman, Iraq)

“Life stops with the lack of water, especially for women, due to cooking and cleaning supplies.”

(Woman, Iraq)

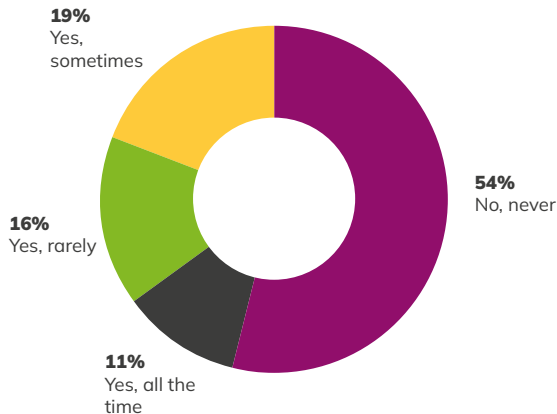


## Flooding

“**Damage occurs to the house, the house must be repaired, and the cost of living increases.**”

(Woman, Iraq)

HAS FLOODING BEEN A CHALLENGE FOR YOU IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



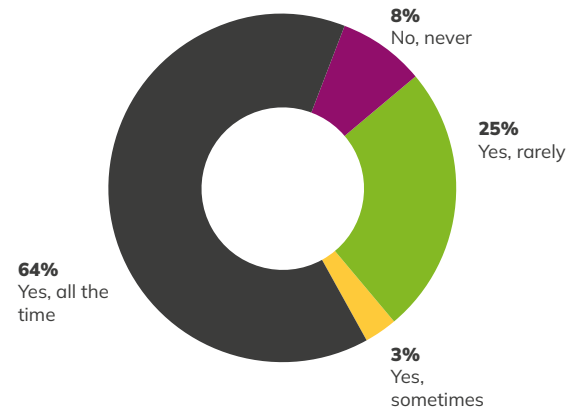
46% of women surveyed in Iraq responded that their lives had been impacted by flooding in the past ten years, with 30% of those reporting that this was the case either sometimes or all of the time. A combination of increased, intense rainfall and desertification creates a confluence of climate disasters that lead to intense flooding and drought across Iraq.<sup>41</sup>

“**Psychologically, there is an increased fear of losing children due to the flood.**”

(Woman, Iraq)

## Pollution and air quality

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED POLLUTION AS A CHALLENGE IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



93% of women surveyed in Iraq reported being affected by pollution, and importantly, 64% of women noted that it affected them all the time. “Difficulty breathing the air” and “more frequent coughs and respiratory illnesses” were cited as the most prevalent signs that pollution and air quality is worsening.

“**Psychologically, it is uncomfortable, the smells are unpleasant, and it causes diseases in children.**”

(Woman, Iraq)

These responses are consistent with data on air quality in Iraq which currently ranks it as the country having the second worst air quality in the world.<sup>42</sup> Emissions from industry – especially oil production – and electricity generation are driving air pollution which has been linked to rises in cancer.<sup>43</sup> Untreated sewage is also being dumped into Iraqi rivers daily, impacting water quality and introducing diseases into the water supply.<sup>44</sup>

Survey respondents that reside in Syrian refugee camps in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq described other pollution problems at the camps, such as the presence of trash which is picked up by camp authorities infrequently. Due to the surplus of open trash and the lack of cleaning, respondents indicated that this affected their health and their children’s health.



## Overview – Key Facts



ACLED ranks Nigeria as having an 'EXTREME' level of conflict, ranked 5th in their conflict index.<sup>45</sup>

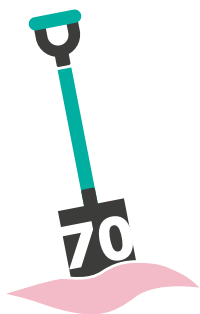
2023

84 million

Nigeria's poverty rate is expected to reach 37% in 2023, with 84 million Nigerians living under the poverty line and accounting for the second-largest poor population in the world.

162nd out of 177

Ranking for women's inclusion, justice, and security<sup>46</sup> with community norms that still enable violence against women.<sup>47</sup>



Percentage of Nigerians that rely on agriculture for their livelihoods.<sup>48</sup>



Ranking of Nigeria, one of the most vulnerable nations to climate change impacts according to the 2020 ND-GAIN Index measuring country climate vulnerability against adaptation readiness.<sup>49</sup>

### WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

80

women surveyed individually

14

focus group discussions

### TOP 5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

77 High cost of goods

71 Excessive heat

39 Pollution/  
Unclean air

38 Water scarcity

36 Drought scarcity

Out of 14 environmental impacts given as options to all women responding to the survey, each woman was asked to select between 1 to 5 of their top concerns. The five concerns that were selected by the most women responding are presented in the graph above.

When asked about a series of overall environmental impacts, women surveyed in Nigeria most frequently selected the concerns of the high costs of goods, lack of food, cattle/livestock theft, inflation and water scarcity as the top five worsening issues affecting their daily lives.

“**Food shortage and high cost [of] living has really affected me and my household because we eat a fewer meal compared to before the fuel subsidy removal.**”

(Woman, Nigeria)

Women also described theft of livestock and crops alike in the midst of farmer-herder conflicts over land. As weather patterns shift and natural disasters become worse, displacement and the reduction in available and cultivable land has driven an increase in resource competition and intercommunal conflict.

“**Thieves now steal our livestock that we used to rear in order to earn more income and that has affected our savings and economic status.**”

(Woman, Nigeria)

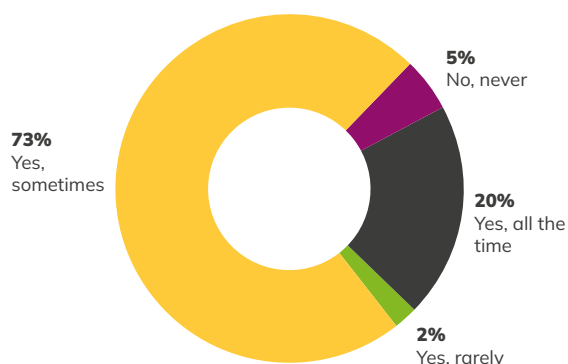
These concerns were re-emphasized in the FGDs, where women described the challenges of water access, particularly during the dry season and more frequent droughts, which dry up boreholes and reduce water accessibility. That's for communities that even have a borehole to begin with, which many do not.

“ I spend more on food and still get less of the food. The food is scarce, and some farmlands have been destroyed during recently uprisings. Some farmers were not able to go back to farm due to insecurity. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

## Weather Shifts

HAVE YOU BEEN CHALLENGED BY SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



95% of women surveyed in Nigeria reported experiencing weather pattern shifts in the past ten years, with 73% of women reporting that this was the case sometimes and 20% of women reporting that this was always the case. Of those 95% of women, 81% reported that they felt these shifts had worsened in the past year.

Challenging shifts in weather patterns cited include:

- Prolonged dry season
- Intense rainfall
- More frequent dust storms
- More droughts

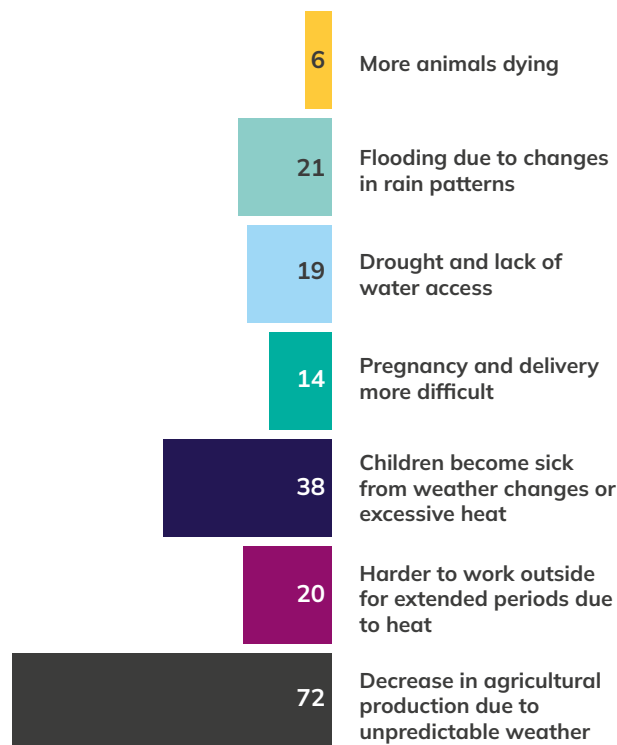
“ The wind recently in June 2023 razed down the roof of my house. This caused a setback in my business as I had to spend money fixing my house rather than use it to trade. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

“ Two years back I took a loan to do farming and the rain stop and the thing didn't grow, I have to sell my asset and repay the money. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

HOW HAVE THESE SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS AFFECTED YOUR DAILY LIVES?



Women who responded that shifts in weather patterns created challenges in their lives were asked about the effects that they tie to these weather shifts and given the option to choose multiple options from seven choices. They were also given space to add a different response for any options we may not have provided.

“ My children now [get] sick frequently because of the rainy season weather, like malaria. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

Women we spoke to in Nigeria described the following effects of weather pattern shifts:

- Decreases in agricultural production. It is worth noting that 90% (72 women - a relatively high proportion of women surveyed) selected this as having a negative effect on their daily lives
- Children becoming ill
- Flooding
- Droughts and excessive heat impacting water access and health

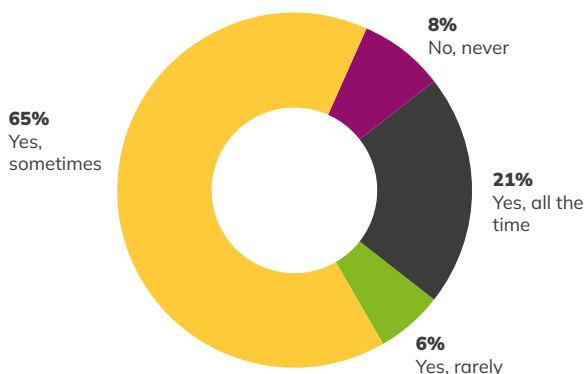
Women we spoke to in Nigeria described inflation, high prices, and recent removal of the fuel subsidy as challenges compounding the impacts of shifting weather on agricultural production.<sup>50</sup>

“ Last year 2022 rainy season has been a problematic to my household in the sense that my room collapsed in the night while I was sleeping with my children, I heard some sounds and then wake my children and run out and suddenly the room collapsed thank God but we nearly lost our lives. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

## Food Insecurity

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED FOOD SECURITY IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



“ More of my children now go to bed hungry more than ever before. This often leads to them falling ill more regularly. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

92% of women reported struggling with food insecurity in the past ten years, and 89% reported food insecurity worsening specifically in the past year. This was primarily signaled by:

- Increased difficulty in farming or cultivating land for food or livestock
- There being fewer types/less diversity of food available for purchase
- High inflation and increased costs of basic needs and food items

“ My children always cry for hunger, and it makes us not to be productive in doing our farming activities like before because even if we go to the farm we don't have energy to work in the farm like before. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

Women for Women International's program data between 2017-2022 reinforces women's responses on the worsening food security situation. In 2017 and 2018, 99% of women in Nigeria reported having sufficient food at home at the time of their graduation from our Stronger Women, Stronger Nations program. In 2022, only 83% reported having sufficient food at home at the time of graduation. The gap is starker when looking at data at the time of enrolment – before women complete our one-year program - which indicates that 83% of women in Nigeria reported having sufficient food at home in 2018 at the time of enrolment compared to 57% of women in 2022 who reported having sufficient food at home at the time of enrolment. This is a significant decrease in this average over the course of only five years.

“ It has affected my farm. [Rain and water are sometimes 'cut off'] without notice and our crops are destroyed. This is same for most women in my community because we do the same thing, we are either farmers or traders selling farm products. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

## Banditry and theft

When asked about experiences of banditry and theft, 88% of women surveyed in Nigeria indicated banditry as a challenge they have experienced in the past ten years, and half of those respondents indicated it was a worsening challenge marked by:

- Increased experiences of personal violence
- Economic hardship due to loss of property
- Difficulty navigating roads and needing to change routes for travel

“ Crops on the farm are being stolen by bandits or herders while they are yet to be harvested leading to poor or no harvest. ”

(Woman, Nigeria)

Many women in Nigeria described a rise in conflicts between herders and farmers which drives outbreaks of violence, economic hardships, and competition within communities.



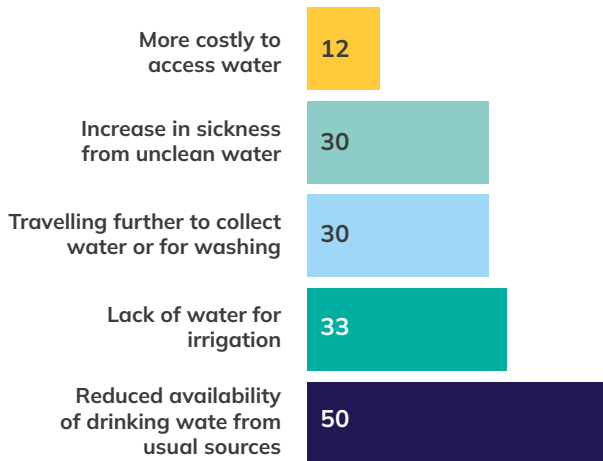
## Water Access

**“ I am currently heavily pregnant, and I have to walk long distances to fetch water for my family. This has increased my workload and stress right now. ”**

*(Woman, Nigeria)*

73% of women we surveyed in Nigeria have been affected by water scarcity in the past ten years, with half of women surveyed indicating this challenge has worsened in the past year. Of the 73%, the most frequently cited driver of this was that there was reduced availability of drinking water from the usual sources, due in part to extended dry seasons and drought.

### EFFECTS OF WORSENING WATER SCARCITY



**“ Lack of access to clean water has really affect my child because he contracted bacterial infection like worm infestation and typhoid. We only have access to well and rainwater and during dry season the well also dry up. ”**

*(Woman, Nigeria)*

**“ Our children fall sick frequently, we walk up to 5 to 7 kilometers before we get drinking water. It also affected our plants, shortage of rainfall or inadequate rain - pests invade our farm which resulted in loss of farm products. ”**

*(Woman, Nigeria)*

**“ We have to wake up earlier than expected to go look for water. We also feel fatigued from the distance where we get the water. Sometimes we fear being raped as a result of the distance so we have to wait for each other to go in groups. ”**

*(Woman, Nigeria)*





## Overview – Key Facts

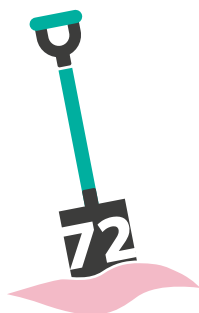


The percentage of those in Rwanda in 2023 that are multidimensionally poor.<sup>51</sup>

**48%**

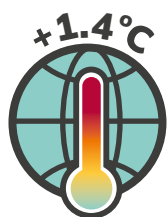
**103rd out of 177**

Ranking for women's inclusion, justice, and security.<sup>52</sup>



The percentage of the working population currently employed in agriculture.<sup>53</sup>

**72**



The increase in temperature, higher than the global average, that Rwanda has experienced since 1970, and can be expected to continue rising to 2 degrees Celsius higher than the 1970 average temperature by 2030.<sup>54</sup>



**112 out of 185**

Ranking of Rwanda, one of the most vulnerable nations to climate change impacts according to the 2020 ND-GAIN Index measuring country climate vulnerability against adaptation readiness.<sup>55</sup>

## TOP 5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

**71** Lack of enough available food

**64** High cost of goods

**55** Water scarcity

**50** Cattle/Livestock theft

**48** Excessive heat

*Out of 14 environmental impacts given as options to all women responding to the survey, each woman was asked to select between 1 to 5 of their top concerns. The five concerns that were selected by the most women responding are presented in the graph above.*

When asked about a series of overall environmental impacts, women surveyed in Rwanda cited lack of enough available food, high costs for basic goods, water scarcity, cattle and livestock theft, and excessive heat as their top five concerns. In FGDs, women described “too much sun” and drought as affecting their agricultural yield and the types of crops they are used to framing becoming too difficult to cultivate – such as beans and corn.

## WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

**84**

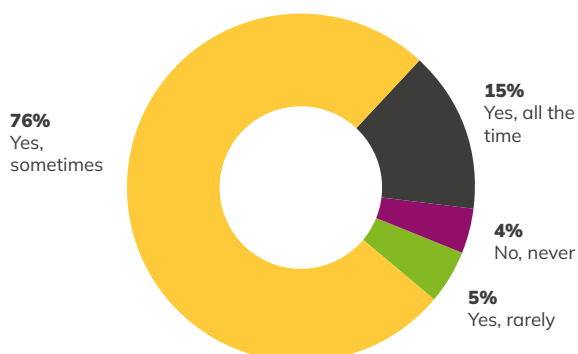
women surveyed individually

**10**

focus group discussions

# Shifts In Weather Patterns

HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED BY SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



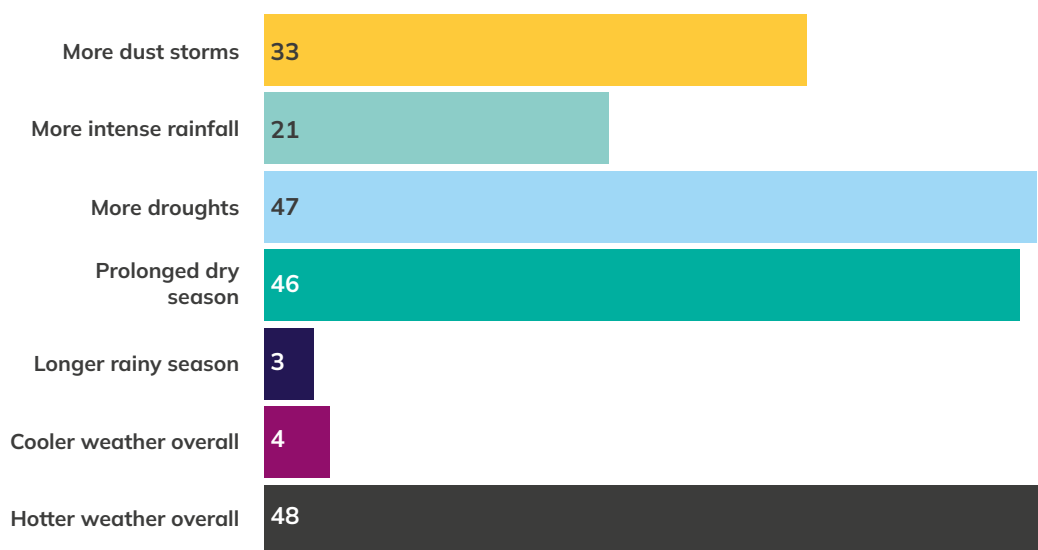
96% of women surveyed in Rwanda indicated experiencing shifts in weather patterns as a challenge, with 76% of women reporting that this was the case sometimes and 15% of women reporting that this was the case all the time.

85% of women reported that unpredictable weather patterns have decreased agricultural production, within a context where farming equipment and land and livestock availability were already a challenge.<sup>56</sup>

Other effects of worsening shifts in weather patterns:

- Droughts
- Lack of water access
- Increased illnesses in children and in pregnant women

WHAT ARE THE SHIFTS IN WEATHER PATTERNS YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS?



Women who responded that shifts in weather patterns created challenges in their lives were asked about the effects that they associated with these weather shifts and given the option to choose multiple options from seven choices, including space to add a different response for any options we may not have provided.

“The droughts are followed by heavy rains which destroy houses and sweep away crops from our farms. We have been engaged in agribusiness, but now making losses, and then unable to pay our children’s school fees. Health issues related to weather changes have also become common, these include flu, coughing, respiratory challenges, and finally there is hunger.”

(Woman, Rwanda)

“We had a problem of heavy rains, the vegetables are overflowing causing us losses. Lack of legal documentation made us unable to get loans to do business and thus face losses. We lost siblings; one of us lost a parent. We have the problem of not having our own land.”

(Woman, Rwanda)



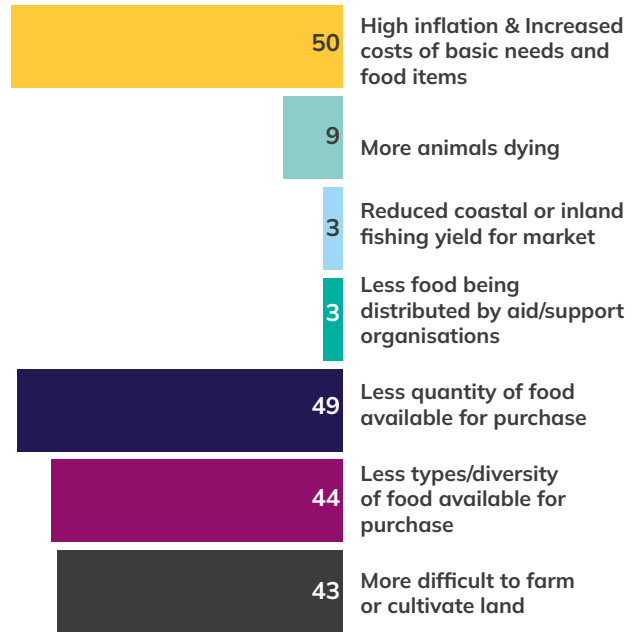
# Food Insecurity

## HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED FOOD INSECURITY OVER THE PAST DECADE?



100% of women surveyed in Rwanda reported experiencing food insecurity in the past ten years, with 75% of women reporting this was the case sometimes and 13% of women reporting that this was the case all the time. 40% of those women reported that food insecurity had worsened within the past year.

## WAYS IN WHICH FOOD INSECURITY IS WORSENING



*The women surveyed were each asked, "What has been a signal or indicator to you that this challenge of not having enough food to eat at home is getting worse?" and then were given 7 options response along with an option for an open-ended answer. Women were able to select as many responses as they felt were relevant.*

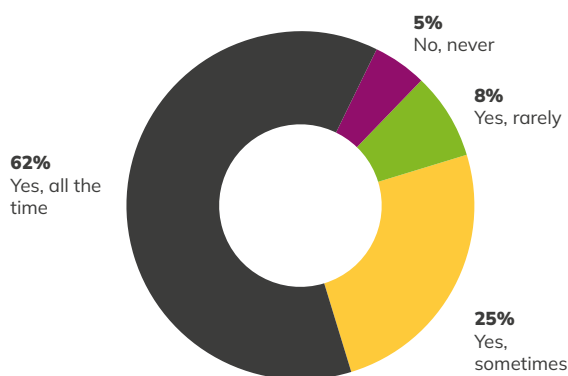




Women cited inflation and high costs coupled with greater challenges in farming their land as the primary ways in which food insecurity is presenting and worsening in their daily lives. Some community members who own land reported positively that they now practice farming techniques that prevent soil erosion, for examples by putting in place terraces, practicing water harvesting, and planting trees. Other techniques referenced included agroforestry and changes to irrigation methods. These adaptations are being made at the individual level though respondents acknowledged national level efforts to spread awareness of these practices, even if those practices had not yet reached them.

## Water Access

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED WATER SCARCITY IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



95% of women surveyed in Rwanda reported experiencing water scarcity in the past ten years, with 25% of those reporting that this impacted them sometimes and 62% of those reporting that this impacted them all of the time.

Respondents indicated that this was a worsening challenge, signaled by:

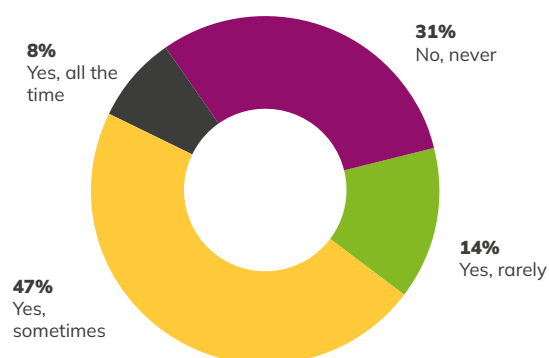
- Crops drying up
- Animals dying
- Drinking muddy water leading to illnesses
- Walking long distances to fetch water resulting in children missing school

This finding was supported by the FGDs in Rwanda, where women shared that the lack of water supply was leading to deaths of animals and crops drying up. Women also explained that water, in some seasons, becomes expensive as people in Rwanda have to solely rely on buying it rather than accessing it through a public source point.

They shared that the first sign of water scarcity in a community is a too-long line of women at one source or tap in a community. This often results in some people resorting to fetch the muddy water (in swamps) leading to poor hygiene and the risks of increased number of children suffering from different types of worms and other intestinal parasites with associated effects like increased medical expenses, especially for the children.

## Banditry and theft

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED BANDITRY OR THEFT AS A CHALLENGE IN THE PAST 10 YEARS?



69% of women surveyed in Rwanda indicated that banditry and theft had affected their lives in the past ten years and 69% of women responded that it had become worse in the past year. Women's feedback suggests that the drivers of increased theft and banditry are economic, and possibly linked to the high costs and worsening land cultivation challenges as described in the section on food insecurity.

They express frustration and a sense of fatigue at the thefts that they describe as undoing any hard-won gains they have made toward building their own economic resilience. They also spoke of the fear and ongoing trauma that this introduces into their daily lives.

“When you find that they took what was yours, it is not easy to find it again....[also we are affected by] the consequences of trauma, the consequences of being harmed by those thieves, the violence.”

(Woman, Rwanda)



## Overview – Key Facts



ACLED ranks South Sudan as having a 'TURBULENT' level of conflict, ranked 31st in their conflict index.<sup>57</sup>

During FGDs with women who are former or current participants in Women for Women International's programs in South Sudan, women frequently highlighted the following persisting and/or worsening issues affecting their daily lives:

2023

76%

The percentage of those in South Sudan living in poverty in 2023.<sup>58</sup>

- Food insecurity
- Banditry and theft
- Inflation
- Drought
- Flooding

173  
out of  
177

Ranking for women's inclusion, justice, and security<sup>59</sup> with women self-reporting severe restrictions and worsening suffering since 2021.<sup>60</sup>

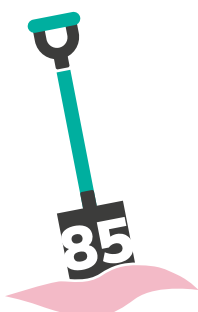
“**Food shortage in the community has remained the same due to poor intrusion of farms by cattle keepers causing destruction.**”

(Woman, South Sudan)



The number of people between 2014 and 2017, out of the total South Sudanese population of 13.1 million people that were affected by drought. 1.14 million people were affected by flood events.<sup>61</sup>

Based on Women for Women International's 2022 program data, only 50% of women in South Sudan enrolling in our programs reported having had sufficient food at home in the past month at the time of their enrolment.



The economy of South Sudan is based on agriculture which consists of a combination of subsistence farming, livestock rearing, fishing, and wild food collection. About 85% of the households cultivate crops and around 65% own cattle.<sup>62</sup>

“**We are concerned of the erratic rains affecting our crops hence we will need support in terms of agriculture inputs to support irrigation when the weather patterns are not favorable to us.**”

(Woman, South Sudan)

“**There should be improvement in agriculture through having large scale farms, livestock, and cooperative society to support the effort of women towards the development of South Sudan a conflict affected state that all women need to be empowered and supported on seeing light of transformation in their lives.**”

(Woman, South Sudan)

### WHO DID WE SPEAK TO?

**14** focus group discussions

Women participating in FGDs discussed the challenges in their community that may have changed over past years and, in addition to the top environmental concerns they highlighted, they described many critical compounding factors affecting their resilience to respond or adapt when faced with these challenges:

- Poor infrastructure
- Conflict – the civil war from 2016-2019 and recent rise in intercommunal conflict
- Displacement

## Land competition

Most women in South Sudan are engaged in or rely on agriculture for their subsistence and for income. The shifts in weather patterns such as extended dry seasons and increased frequency of flooding have either reduced crop-yield or wiped out crops before harvests. Even when they are able to salvage any agriculture yield, women described the need to protect their harvest or their agricultural inputs against theft - which they say is on the rise.

“**Food shortage in the community has remained the same due to poor agriculture harvest and stealing food stuff from the house and from the farms.**”

*(Woman, South Sudan)*

Women for Women International partners at Root of Generation - a gender equality, human rights, and peace and reconciliation advocacy organization in South Sudan – describe how environmental changes are driving land competition, shifts in pastoralist mobility patterns, and broader displacement to drive this competition over land and resources. As agricultural areas become less fertile and arid, farms in these areas are unable to produce food. Agricultural farmers are forced to shift to riverbanks as the only reliably fertile areas, which exacerbates competition over diminishing swaths of fertile land and increases conflict between community groups.

For pastoralists who rely on income dependent on their cattle, drought drives them to more fertile grazing land for their cattle. Pastoralists find themselves competing over the same land as agricultural farmers, and women in FGDs shared that some cattle herders destroy crop yield or farms to force agricultural farmers off their land. With the rise in different groups turning to riverbanks as the only remaining fertile areas, these places are at particular risk of conflict when competition occurs.

“**Our wells which were well managed have flooded and become dirty because they have not been maintained due to the war.**”

*(Woman, South Sudan)*

## Conflict-driven environmental degradation

The cycle of climate change driving resource scarcity and further conflict is continued by conflict driving further environmental damage either as a byproduct of displacement or using environmental destruction as a deliberate tactic of conflict and war.

Women Advancement Organization – an NGO in South Sudan committed to building resilient societies with sustainable services and livelihoods for women – described the practice of land burning during conflicts and following displacement. For example, when there is conflict, farmers are displaced from their land to avoid the violence and then different armed groups arrive and burn down entire farms. In addition to the land competition that occurs when farmers are displaced, the land they leave behind is no longer being maintained which means that trees are also destroyed by bush fires that spread unchecked or through increased tree cutting for fuel use. The widespread neglect of land and deforestation has destroyed fruit trees and any tree cover that may have been available to nearby residents. Several WROs engage in tree planting and indicate that women view this as a priority in order to reintroduce fruit yield and tree cover in their communities.

## Governance and Infrastructure

In each FGD, women in South Sudan cited a lack of infrastructure as a critical gap in supporting them to strengthen and exercise their resilience. The ripple effects of their environmental concerns include water scarcity, disease and weak health, and greater insecurity due to localized violence. Women indicated that they want to see greater investment in infrastructure and services including early warning systems, safe roads, health facilities, and GBV support for survivors – especially for women who have been displaced by conflict and/or natural disasters and are now refugees or returnees. Women for Women International partner, Women for Change – a South Sudan NGO that serves the un-served in war-affected communities through livelihood support and advocacy – emphasized the impact of drought on worsening water scarcity that is compounded by post-conflict infrastructure negligence. The worsening water scarcity means that women and girls will have to travel far distances to collect water which increases their exposure to conflict and violent attacks including sexual violence and rape.





## Analysis: Intersecting impacts on women’s resilience

OVERALL TOP 5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS					
	AFGHANISTAN	DRC	IRAQ	NIGERIA	RWANDA
1	Drought	Lack of food	High cost of goods	High cost of goods	Lack of food
2	Flooding	Inflation	Excessive Heat	Lack of food	High cost of goods
3	Lack of food	Flooding	Pollution/unclean air	Cattle/livestock theft	Water scarcity
4	High cost of goods	Banditry	Water scarcity	Inflation	Cattle/livestock theft
5	Pollution/unclean air	Water scarcity	Drought	Water scarcity	Excessive Heat

Our findings illustrate the interrelatedness of climate change and conflict impacts on building and sustaining women’s resilience across the following dimensions:

1. Strengthened ability to earn and save money
2. Health and well-being
3. Claiming and exercising decision-making power
4. Sustainably accessing meaningful support networks



The environmental shocks and concerns highlighted by the women and WROs we spoke to for this research, coupled with worsening global and local crises, are driving down gains made across these dimensions and are compounded by weak infrastructure and systems resilience.

### **1. Strengthened ability to earn and save money**

Across all contexts, women reported that climate and environmental concerns increased the costs of basic goods and reducing their ability to generate an income, particularly in the African countries we surveyed where women are engaged in smallholder farming. Climate shocks such as floods and droughts reduce crop yield and drive increases in the theft of livestock and crops, as reported widely in Nigeria and South Sudan. High costs and inflation can be linked to government decisions like the removal of the fuel subsidy in Nigeria or to the broader global inflation trends that followed the escalation of conflict in Ukraine following Russia's invasion in 2022.<sup>63</sup>

These abrupt and unpredictable losses of income or crop-yield from a smallholder farm combined with rising costs of basic goods like fuel and food are likely to become worse and more frequent over time, threatening women's economic resilience. The increasingly unpredictable weather patterns also make it harder for communities to use typical coping mechanisms, while the scale and pace of change increasingly requires large-scale government supported adaptation measures which are lacking in conflict-affected settings. The same trends that inflate costs and prices around the world and weaken currencies also drive a diversion of global and national resources from supporting mitigation and adaptation measures.

### **2. Improved health and well-being**

The women and WROs we spoke to for this research consistently emphasized the link between environmental impacts and the rise of diseases and health complications. In these communities, care for children is often primarily the responsibility of women and so women are more keenly aware of trends in wellness and disease.

Particularly in our surveys and conversations with women in Afghanistan, the DRC, Iraq, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Syria, women highlighted the direct links between shifts in weather patterns and pollution with the prevalence of diseases – such as malaria from extended rainy seasons – and declining overall health.

Food insecurity and water scarcity were other common concerns highlighted in surveys, and were described as contributing to anemia, fatigue, pregnancy challenges, and sicknesses from being forced to drink contaminated water. In conflict-affected and low-income countries, there is also poor health infrastructure. This means that women living in rural areas often must travel prohibitively far to reach a healthcare point of access or doctor. This is consistent with our findings – women called for better healthcare access in almost all FGDs.

### **3. Infrastructure and systems resilience**

Women consistently pointed to poor infrastructure as compounding the challenges posed by climate crises and conflict.

One of the most compelling gaps that women mentioned was the lack of electricity and affordable fuel. This is particularly interesting since the global conversation on climate mitigation and adaptation is often led by the world's highest carbon emitters, while countries where only 7-20% of the population might have access to electricity to carry out basic daily tasks are bearing the greatest brunt of the human-made climate crisis.<sup>64, 65</sup>

Other women we spoke to pointed to health centers, water access points, waste management, and early warning systems as key gaps in infrastructure.

For example, in refugee camps in Iraq, infrastructure and services are largely provided through camp management, and women in camps are forced to rely on INGOs to fill in the gaps to provide support, supplies, and services, with little say in the decisions made by either. Women in South Sudan pointed to a lack of sufficient water access points due to destruction and disrepair of water sources during the civil war. Women in Nigeria and the DRC also specified that more boreholes were needed to provide each community with their own access points. They did note, however, that while this would alleviate some water scarcity concerns, more innovative solutions would be necessary when the boreholes run dry during droughts. In countries we surveyed where women reported natural disasters and extreme weather events have led to destruction of homes and loss of lives, there were recommendations for better warning systems from the government so that communities can prepare or evacuate to reduce human and material loss.

#### 4. Conflict and the environment

The results from surveys, FGDs, and interviews reinforce the urgent need to address climate change and environmental protection and conflict as interrelated – rather than separate - challenges.

Women for Women International's partners operating in communities affected currently by active armed conflicts – such as Mali, Myanmar, Sudan, and Syria - emphasized that conflict prevention and political solutions must continue to be a priority alongside environmental protection. While climate change drives environmental degradation and destruction with short- and long-term impacts, so too does conflict. Throughout surveys and interviews, women and WROs described a common cycle of conflict, as depicted below.

Our findings contribute to existing evidence of this trend, and women have extensively described the lost gains in their livelihoods and safety due to intersecting environmental shocks and the subsequent cyclical outbreaks of conflict.

In addition to the pastoral conflicts described in survey results in the DRC, Nigeria, and South Sudan, our WRO partners also shared with us the intercommunal tension that arises when people who are displaced migrate towards hospitable rural areas that have available harvest land. This migration and tension between migrants and their host communities compounds insecurity and environmental damage from ongoing armed conflict by sparking conflict among local residents that farm these lands.



Environmental destruction or degradation is often a strategic political tactic used within conflict, in addition to a byproduct of the cycle of resource competition and conflict.

In Nigeria, our partners at Child is Gold Foundation shared with us that intercommunal conflicts can sometimes result in opposing sides leaving dead bodies in community water sources or rivers as a sign to the other side, which contaminates the drinking water and leads to diseases and maggots.<sup>66</sup>

Crop burning is also a common tactic of 'terrorism' or civil wars. In Burkina Faso and South Sudan, women describe the burning of farms and crop yield by militant groups or as part of the insurgency and civil war, respectively. While natural disasters and weather events drive displacement, so too does conflict-related destruction of land and natural resources. In Sudan, women describe the initial migration that occurs when climate change pushes traditionally rural communities into urban areas. This has meant that tribal conflicts have migrated with them into urban areas. This expanded violence has caused women and children to migrate back to rural areas for protection against conflict. Yet upon their return, women are met with backlash from communities they migrate to and still have no resources or access to land due to the climate crises that forced them to migrate to urban areas in the first place. This is often made worse by the barriers women face in either owning or acquiring land due to unequal gender norms, behaviors, policies and practices. This illustrates how climate change not only perpetuates but expands conflict into urban areas and how women can exist in continuous displacement due to the effects of climate change, conflict, and gender inequality.

In Ukraine, Russian soldiers blew up the Kakhovka dam which flooded fourteen nearby settlements. Chemicals were released into the water that flooded these settlements and eroded the land and soil as the water found its way across land to the sea. This land is now uninhabitable and unusable for agriculture. Due to the ongoing war, there is no active effort to address this yet and the environmental damage will influence food supplies across Europe and have long-term impacts for people living in Ukraine and exposed to the chemicals.

Thus, the climate crisis is compounded by the chain of conflict related environmental damage and degradation that perpetuates the cycle of natural resource scarcity, food insecurity, long-term environmental harms, and violent conflicts.

Women without sufficient resilience and support face limited options for adaptation in the face of these compounding and growing shocks.

### **Climate and gender justice: women's civil society inclusion and participation**

The inclusion of women and women-led organizations and movements is critical for achieving climate justice and gender justice. Survey data in this paper and much existing research emphasize the unique and disproportionate impact of climate crises and environmental damage on women in order to demonstrate the challenges in sustaining women's resilience.

However, the pursuit of more equitable and effective climate mitigation and adaptation must go beyond women's vulnerability and include a justice lens which examines the gender and power inequalities that exist within institutions and decision-making around environmental management. Without a justice lens that recognizes unequal burden of impacts and responsibility and the power dynamics preventing women from participating in decisions that so significantly affect their lives and future, it is possible for climate mitigation to create additional environmental responsibility for women without corresponding reward.

To better understand how gender and power dynamics are affecting decision-making and policies around environmental management and climate change programming, WfWI interviewed WROs to explore how these topics were framed locally and nationally. When asked, WROs generally responded that women they supported were unfamiliar with the language and framing being used by international actors or donors to talk about climate and environmental crises – much less any efforts to remedy those crises.

WROs further described the lack of government commitment to work on climate mitigation or adaptation, instead focusing almost exclusively on responding to crises rather than preventing or building resilience against crises. In addition to a lack of commitment, WROs highlighted the same challenges that women shared in surveys about the lack of infrastructure and lack of government expertise to establish prevention and warning systems.

For organizations working on a combination of issues related to gender, conflict, and climate/environment, the challenges shared around women's inclusion in climate change and environmental management decisions were context-specific but principally similar.

## Framing and funding

WROs shared that international donors typically introduce climate change as a priority that they want to see integrated into programming and proposals, even if the donors' framing does not match local priorities and capacity. WROs shared that it often feels like donors and national governments are asking WROs to do more with less rather than offering more support to work toward their existing objectives using a climate lens. WROs noted that interest in climate sensitive programming has gone up even as development budgets are reduced in response to the diversion of funds to address active conflict and humanitarian crises, such as the war in Ukraine.

For example, in Syria, WROs shared examples of donors asking about the commitment of the WROs to using clean fuel to implement their programs in an out of touch attempt to integrate climate impacts into their funded projects. WROs described their shock at being asked to seek out 'clean' fuel at a time when certain parts of Syria are under active siege and are lucky to have any access to fuel at all. In Rwanda, the Smart Nkunganire program institutes a subsidy scheme that handles fertilizers, improved seeds, pesticides, mechanization, and small-scale irrigation technology, but which small-scale women farmers do not utilize because the prices of these materials are too high even with the subsidy.

WROs do welcome the increased interest in integrating a climate mitigation and adaptation framework. However, they emphasized that they welcome this interest so long as it enables and fully resources locally-led and women-led holistic solutions and it is accompanied by consultation with women in civil society on political or programming solutions that are being proposed at the national and global level. Across countries, there were examples of governments or donors shifting the burden of crisis response onto local communities or development projects without increasing the amount of funding or support available to those communities and without reducing their own harmful practices or policies exacerbating environmental damage. This resonates as a familiar microcosm of the global conversations around addressing the climate crisis.

## Barriers to participation and leadership

“With so many limitations on women, I don't know what to suggest.”  
(Midwife, Afghanistan)

To increase women's participation and inclusion, the formal and informal barriers to participation across civic life and political leadership must be addressed. WROs particularly highlighted the following challenges in participating in climate mitigation and adaptation decision-making and implementation:

### Trauma

- Our partners in Ukraine and Sudan noted the trauma of war and displacement that has shifted women and their families not only from their homes but into completely different environments – such as rural to urban or vice versa – and are struggling to adapt to new needs, surroundings, and culture. This exacerbates the trauma and shock of war and insecurity that originally displaced them. For them to live and survive in a new environment, they need to be supported through a long process of integration and adaptation before they can shift from focusing on survival to civic participation or involvement in environmental preservation.

### Lack of operational flexibility

- WROs described a lack of operational flexibility that would fully account for the shocks and unpredictability of working in communities affected by both conflict and climate crises. For example, a WRO in South Sudan describes how flooding rendered the target area of a project inaccessible and when the WRO suggested a shift in implementation area the donors cited non-compliance and requested that the funding be returned.

### Declining landscape for human rights and specifically for women's rights to participate

- Some WROs interviewed operate in contexts where human rights violations and extreme gender apartheid restrict even the most basic civic access for women, exacerbating an already well-documented under-representation of women in political leadership. In Yemen, women are not invited to planning meetings as a norm, and in Afghanistan women are outrightly banned from any meetings where men are present and women's organizations are being stripped of their operational licenses.



## Lack of awareness of existing policies or roadmap

- WROs are often unaware of existing policies or roadmaps that they can operate or advocate within. Often, there may not be an active roadmap or plan for adaptation and mitigation due to government transitions or loss of technical expertise within ministries.

## Lack of technical capacity and collaboration

- In addition to the critique of capacity within existing infrastructure, programs, and government programs for addressing climate crises, WROs recognize their own limited capacity to implement climate mitigation or adaptation programs without additional support.

- Partners in Burkina Faso note the potential of cross-learning and sharing, citing an example of learning from women in Mali on the harvesting and processing potential of soybeans as an adaptation to conflict and climate related impacts on the environment and agricultural productivity. WROs in Syria also expressed a desire for convenings with other WROs working in climate vulnerable and conflict-affected communities to discuss strategies and best practices for programs and advocacy.

An intersectional gender-transformative and human rights approach to mitigation and adaptation is critical when designing solutions and strategies across this nexus of conflict, climate change and environmental degradation, gender inequality, and poverty.

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