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Policy Brief

Key Messages to Government, Donors, and Implementers on How to Strengthen Climate Resilience and Household Stability in Jordan

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INTRODUCTION

Jordan faces pressures from climate change that directly affect its communities, economy, and social dynamics, for instance rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and intensifying droughts have become recurring realities, contributing to water scarcity, reduced agricultural productivity, and growing livelihood insecurity (MoEnv, 2022; FAO, 2020). These environmental pressures are no longer confined to the ecological domain, they shape how families earn, spend, and protect themselves. As communities confront shrinking income opportunities, limited access to resources, and rising costs of living, climate change has become a defining driver of household vulnerability in Jordan.

The Jordan River Foundation (JRF), with support from by the European Regional Development and Protection Program for Jordan and Lebanon (RDPP III) is a joint European initiative supported by Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the European Union, Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland, conducted the study **“Investigating the Impact of Climate Change on Household Dynamics in Jordan: A Special Focus on Women, Children, and Youth.”** The study provides the first national-level evidence linking climate change to household-level dynamics, focusing on how environmental stressors influence livelihoods, social protection, and family well-being across Jordanian and Syrian refugee communities.

The study adopted a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach, and combined quantitative and qualitative tools, including national surveys, with targeting 1,000 respondents across 28 districts and sub-districts (employed stratified sample with 95% confidence level and 3% margin of error), 22 key informant interviews (KIIs), and consultations with internal and external Research Reference Groups (RRGs) included government institutions, international and local organizations, and academic experts. It also drew upon more than 77 secondary sources to cross-cutting findings and align them within Jordan’s broader policy frameworks, including the National Adaptation Plan (NAP), Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and the Economic Modernization Vision (EMV).

The findings reveal clear patterns, where climate-induced hazards such as heatwaves (reported by 90% of surveyed households), reduced rainfall (69%), and prolonged droughts (64%) are undermining economic stability. Additionally, the agricultural sector, which employs a significant share of vulnerable households, reports yield losses of up to 89%, increased irrigation needs, and higher pest incidence, while the tourism and industrial sectors face declining productivity and income instability. These economic impacts ripple through social structures, 92% of surveyed households live below the national poverty line, with many reporting shifts in gender roles, child labor, and early marriage as coping responses. Moreover, women in affected areas increasingly shoulder both economic and caregiving responsibilities, while men migrate for work, which disrupted traditional household dynamics.

Despite these challenges, the study highlights emerging local resilience, where communities are adopting water-saving technologies, renewable energy solutions, and small-scale green enterprises, yet these efforts remain largely reactive and underfunded, for instance, limited financial support, weak infrastructure, and insufficient institutional coordination continue to hinder large-scale adaptation.

This policy brief translates the study’s evidence into actionable recommendations for donors, practitioners, and policymakers, with outlining priority actions to strengthen social protection systems to reduce harmful coping mechanisms, expand investment in green livelihoods, infrastructure, and innovation, foster inclusive governance and evidence-based policymaking, and support education, awareness, and behavioral change toward climate adaptation.

KEY MESSAGES TO GOVERNMENT

Integrating Environmental Education and Green Thinking into National Curricula.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MoHESR) should embed environmental sustainability and green economic concepts across all education levels; because building environmental literacy from an early age will strengthen adaptive capacities and promote responsible resource use. Also, integrating practical lessons on water conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable production within existing curricula will foster behavioral change and prepare youth for emerging green sectors. In parallel, both ministries should also invest in teacher and faculty development programs that equip educators with the knowledge and tools to deliver interactive, locally relevant environmental and sustainability content.

Advancing Climate-Resilient Livelihoods and Promoting a Green Economy

The Government of Jordan should prioritize investments that link climate adaptation with economic inclusion, as the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MoTA) should develop a seasonal tourism map to diversify destinations and reduce climate-related disruptions, while showcasing eco-tourism initiatives that generate local employment. Additionally, the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) should expand afforestation and water-efficient farming to enhance shading, soil fertility, and food security, and the Ministry of Environment (MoEnv) should strengthen awareness and provide technical assistance for green entrepreneurship, helping small producers access finance and markets. All these measures will reinforce resilience, reduce poverty, and position green growth as a pillar of Jordan's economic modernization.

Encouraging Innovation and Private-Sector Investment in Green Solutions

The MoEnv, in partnership with the JRF and other stakeholders, should establish a National Innovation Hub for Climate Resilience and Livelihoods to promote community-driven, climate-smart solutions, where it will prioritize inclusion of vulnerable groups by providing technical mentorship, training, and seed funding for pilot ideas that reduce environmental risks and create jobs. In parallel, the Ministry of Investment and MoEnv should design a green investment pilot that demonstrates measurable economic and environmental returns, supported by fiscal incentives such as tax exemptions and preferential loans to attract private-sector participation.

Protecting Households Through Adaptive Social Protection and Child-Focused Systems

The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and the National Aid Fund (NAF) should integrate climate risk into social protection programs to prevent harmful coping mechanisms such as child labor, school dropout, and early marriage. As a result, expanding cash assistance, livelihood support, and psychosocial services will help families maintain stability under climate stress. Additionally, the National Council for Family Affairs (NCFA) should lead a coordination mechanism linking climate adaptation, child protection, and social policy across ministries, and a Joint Committee on Climate Vulnerability and Social Protection, co-led by MoSD, MoEnv, JRF, and NAF, should institutionalize data sharing, research, and tailored interventions for the most affected communities.

Safeguarding Public Health and Worker Safety Under Extreme Climate Conditions

The Ministry of Health (MoH), in cooperation with the Civil Defense Department and the Ministry of Labor (MoL), should implement public awareness and first-aid campaigns addressing heat stress, dehydration, and climate-related diseases. As a result, strengthening occupational safety standards for outdoor workers, particularly in agriculture, tourism, and construction, will protect laborers from heat exposure and ensure compliance with national safety regulations. Which, in long-term, will preserve

productivity, reduce health costs, and safeguard vulnerable populations from the direct impacts of rising temperatures.

Strengthening Research, Data, and Policy Coordination for Evidence-Based Action

The MoHESR, in collaboration with MoEnv, JRF, and universities, should establish a National Research Consortium on Climate, Livelihoods, and Social Protection, in which it would work on applied studies, promote interdisciplinary research, and support knowledge transfer between academia, policymakers, and practitioners. Therefore, strengthening research-policy linkages will ensure that adaptation strategies are grounded in evidence and aligned with Jordan's NDCs and national resilience objectives.

KEY MESSAGES TO DONOR AGENCIES AND FINANCING BODIES

Ensuring Multi-Year and Flexible Funding for Climate Resilience and Social Protection

Donor agencies and financing institutions should prioritize predictable, long-term investments that bridge humanitarian relief and sustainable development. Multi-year, flexible funding will enable partners to plan effectively, align interventions with Jordan's NAP, and provide consistent support to vulnerable households. Hence, short-term funding cycles often limit the ability of programs to generate durable impact; extended funding horizons allow for stronger baselines, deeper community engagement, and adaptive programming, in addition, predictable financing also helps local partners institutionalize climate-resilient systems and promote self-reliance among affected families.

Investing in Climate-Resilient Infrastructure and Green Livelihoods

Donors and development banks should expand funding for community-level infrastructure and livelihood programs that strengthen climate adaptation, priority should be given to renewable energy, sustainable water management, waste recycling, and climate-smart agriculture. Also, investments should also support innovation and entrepreneurship among women and youth, who represent both the most affected and the most capable groups for driving local resilience. As a result, linking these initiatives to Jordan's green economy transition and EMV will help stimulate inclusive growth while reducing environmental degradation.

Promoting Inclusive and Sustainable Green Market Systems

Donors should collaborate with the private sector, government, and civil society to develop local green value chains and markets to strengthening small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through access to finance, business incubation, and sustainable production technologies, which can generate employment while promoting environmental sustainability. Moreover, donor support should also encourage local procurement, circular economic interventions, and environmentally responsible business practices. Additionally, co-creation with community actors will ensure long-term ownership and equitable benefit-sharing across regions and population groups.

Designing Protection-Sensitive and Evidence-Based Programming

Future donor support should be grounded in empirical evidence on how climate stress intersects with household vulnerability, as programs must integrate child protection, gender equality, and social inclusion principles to prevent harmful coping mechanisms such as child labor or early marriage. Building on JRF's climate change research, donors can align project design with localized risk data and protection frameworks, ensuring interventions reduce both environmental and social vulnerability.

KEY MESSAGES TO IMPLEMENTERS (CIVIL SOCIETY & MEDIA ACTORS)

Advancing Community Awareness, Education, and Behavioral Change

NGOs and CSOs should prioritize public awareness and education campaigns that connect climate adaptation to protection and well-being, where they can also promote responsible practices in water use, waste management, and energy efficiency. Also, non-formal education programs should equip households with the knowledge to adapt to changing conditions while encouraging collective action and local innovation.

Strengthening Public Awareness on the Social Dimensions of Climate Change

Media institutions should design and implement sustained awareness campaigns that link climate change to livelihoods, protection, and household resilience, in addition, they can help communities recognize climate change as an immediate social issue rather than a distant environmental concern through emphasizing the human and economic impacts, such as income loss, water scarcity, and social strain. Furthermore, campaigns should also highlight practical adaptation measures, promote positive behavioral change, and amplify the experiences and solutions emerging from affected communities.

Collaborating For Inclusive Evidence-Based Communication

Media institutions should work closely with experts, NGOs, and government to ensure that all messages are accurate, evidence-driven, and accessible; because partnerships can help translate complex climate data into simple, engaging narratives that resonate with women, youth, and rural populations. Therefore, media can bridge scientific knowledge and local realities through fostering public engagement and collective responsibility for climate adaptation.

Strengthening Livelihoods and Local Green Economies

NGOs and CBOs should design livelihood programs that link income generation with environmental sustainability, for instance, supporting micro-enterprises, community cooperatives, and savings groups will improve financial stability and reduce climate-related vulnerability. Also, Women, in particular, should receive targeted training in entrepreneurship, digital marketing, and legal literacy to enhance their participation in economic life and their ability to adapt to climate-induced socioeconomic changes.

Building Institutional Capacity for Green Transition

NGOs and CBOs should invest in the institutional development of CBOs to ensure effective climate and protection responses, which includes training on data management, partnership building, and project implementation aligned with national climate strategies. Also, collaborations with universities and research centers can enhance knowledge sharing on green economy trends, sustainability education, and youth engagement.

Strengthening Protection Systems and Psychosocial Support

NGOs and CSOs should strengthen and maintain clear, regularly updated referral pathways and case management systems to respond to climate-induced protection risks. Coordination with government and local leaders is needed and important to address child labor, early marriage, and gender-based violence. Additionally, NGOs should also expand mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) services in affected communities, training staff on psychosocial support and first-line interventions to enhance service quality and coverage. In addition, implementing partners should continue support to national mechanisms, such as the National Helpline 110, which will ensure that vulnerable individuals and families receive timely, accessible assistance.

MEANINGFUL STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN THE CLIMATE CHANGE RESEARCH PROJECT

The “**Investigating the Impact of Climate Change on Household Dynamics in Jordan: A Special Focus on Women, Children, and Youth**” study, implemented by the JRF with the support of by the European Regional Development and Protection Program for Jordan and Lebanon (RDPP III) is a joint European initiative supported by Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the European Union, Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland, integrated meaningful participation of international, national, and local stakeholders throughout the entire research process (inception, design, validation, advocacy, and dissemination). The study followed a participatory and multi-stakeholder approach that ensured diverse institutional and community perspectives were represented.

Two RRGs were formally established, an internal RRG including JRF’s expert staff in livelihood and protection, and an external RRG bringing together representatives from ministries, international missions (e.g. embassies), civil society organizations, and academia, and technical experts in climate change, protection, and livelihoods, including green entrepreneurship. Additionally, the RRG members provided technical and strategic guidance across all phases of the research, helping define thematic priorities, review data collection tools, and validate emerging findings. Through a series of meetings, technical consultations, and validation workshops, members contributed to refining the research design.

This participatory framework promoted knowledge exchange between policy, research, and practice, RRG members helped contextualize findings within Jordan’s climate, socio-economic, and institutional realities, which enhanced the credibility and ownership of the results. In addition to that, their engagement also strengthened cross-sectoral collaboration and deepened institutional understanding of the social dimensions of climate change, particularly as they relate to vulnerable populations such as women, children, and youth.