

Women in Energy Sector in the MENA Region



RCREEE 

Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
المركز الإقليمي للطاقة المتجددة وكفاءة الطاقة

A large, dark grey silhouette of a landscape featuring various renewable energy elements: a city skyline on the left, two solar panels in the center, two wind turbines of different sizes, and a power transmission tower on the right.

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May 2019

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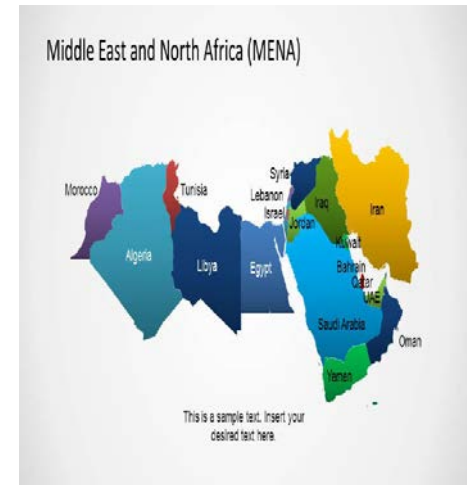
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1. Introduction: Overview of the MENA Region

- **Energy:** The MENA region is very rich in **energy resources** with about **57%** of the world's proven oil reserves and **41%** of proven natural gas resources (WBG). The region is blessed with abundant solar irradiation and is estimated to offer **45%** of the world's renewable energy potential (REN 21).
- Although a number of countries in the region has reach a **100% energy access rate**, there is still a gap between countries rich in oil resources and other countries with around 28 million people lacking electricity access and 8 million depending on traditional biomass.
- **Climate Change:** The MENA region is quite **vulnerable** to **climate change** as it **suffers** from **water-scarcity** with many of the population and economic activities residing in the **flood-prone costal zones**.



1. Introduction: Contd.

Challenges:

The region is characterized with **high population, high economic growth** and **rapid urbanization** that put pressure on existing infrastructures and create high energy demand. The excessive energy use has serious implications on region's climate and natural resources.

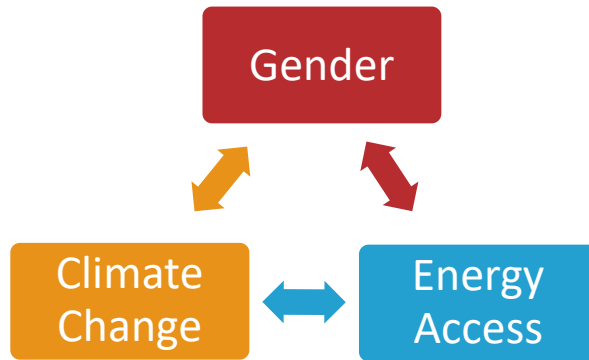
Recommendations:

- I. Delivery of energy services in line with sustainable development and economic growth.
- II. Safe guard of the environment and climate via the use of efficiency measures for the utilization of energy and natural resources.

This requires innovative solutions and integration of all society parties (**Gender Equality**) in order to:

- i) Ensure Energy Security.
- ii) Mitigate Climate Change.

2. Climate Change, Energy Access & Gender Nexus



The women constitute around 48.3% of the total population in the MENA region. Hence, they are a potential powerful **taskforce** for **combating climate change** and **achieving SDG targets** via the implementation of sustainable energy policies in the region.

However, women only constitute 26% of the total labor force. !!!

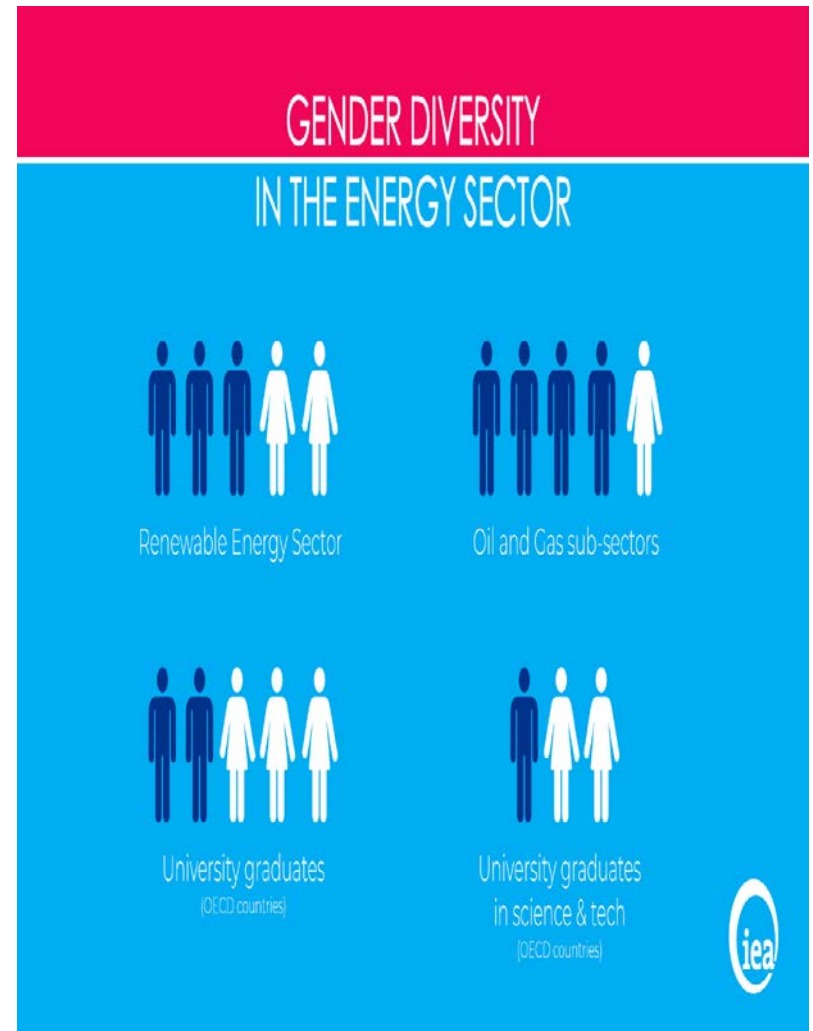
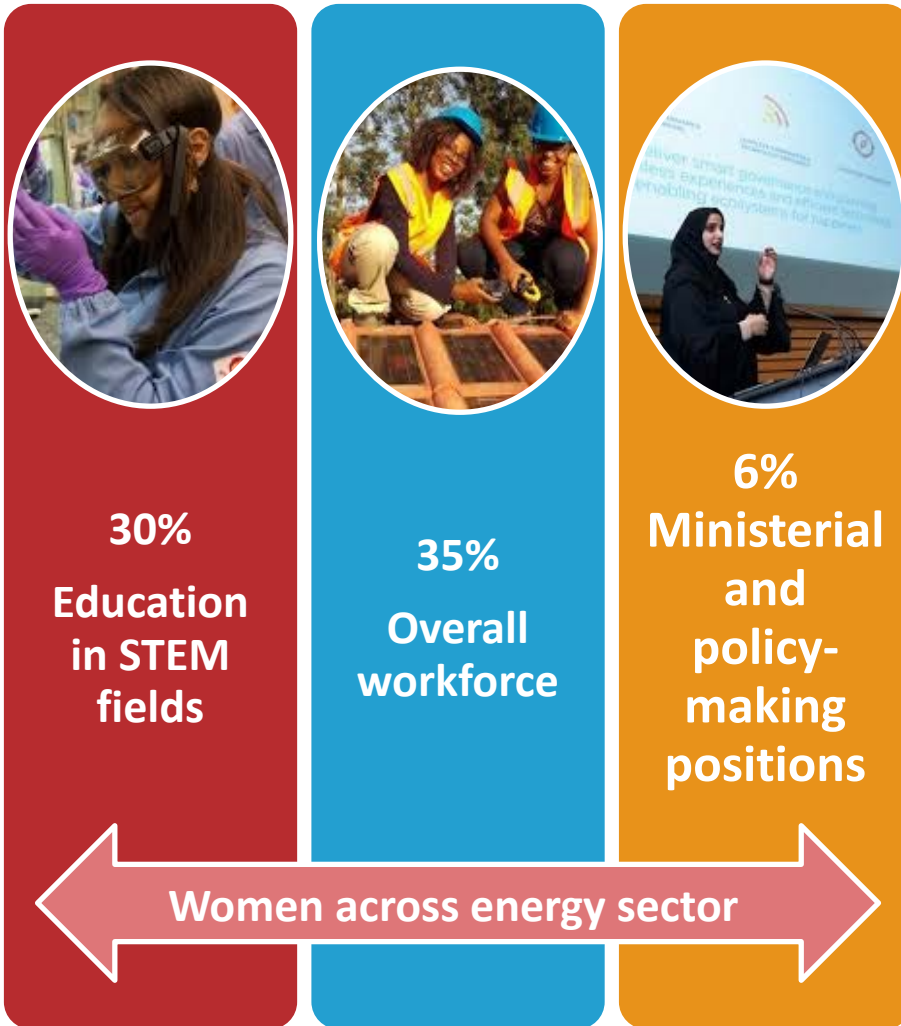


However,

- In spite of their economic development, modernization and advancement in field of education, the MENA countries have the world's lowest participation rates of overall **women employment** of only **26%**.
- Although women **surpass** males in university education, they fall short when it comes to their enrollment in scientific fields (STEM) and workplace thereafter.
- The **Global contribution** of women in the **renewable energy sector** is **35%** showing that the sector is highly appealing to women (IRENA 2016).

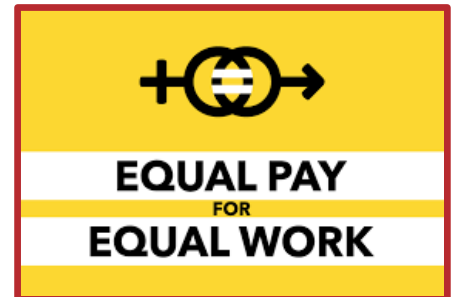


3. Global Energy Sector Statistics



4. Challenges and Barriers

- In the MENA region, the challenges to women's enrollment in the energy sector include:



Sky is the Limit ???

May be the answer is **NO !!!!**

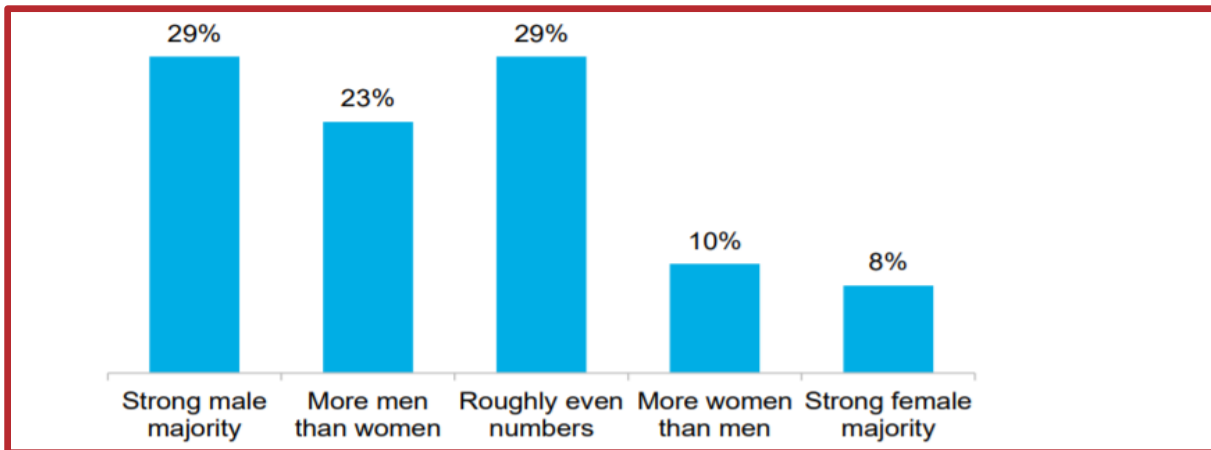
- **Glass Ceiling**

The lack of equal representation of women in decision-making roles

- **Invisible Barriers** keeping women from taking influential positions senior executive positions through all RE value chain.

15% representation → Lower threshold (marginal & invisible ☹️)

30% representation → Critical mass (supportive environment 😊)



Women in Clean Energy MENA 2017



5. Potential Roles of Women in RE Sector

As a Leader

Women leaders and policy makers :

- **Businesses** with women in leading managerial positions are more likely to invest more in green and renewable energy sector.
- Women leaders in **rural communities** were found more proactive to **deliver RE solutions** (i.e. solar) and therefore **facilitate gradual change** in social and cultural norms.

As a consumer

Studies on gender-based differences in energy consumption behavior showed that:

- Women are in average lower in **energy consumption** than men.
- Women are **more sustainable** consumers than men and highly value eco-labeled product.
- Women are more willing than men to change their **energy-related behavior** for sustainability reasons (iea, 2016)

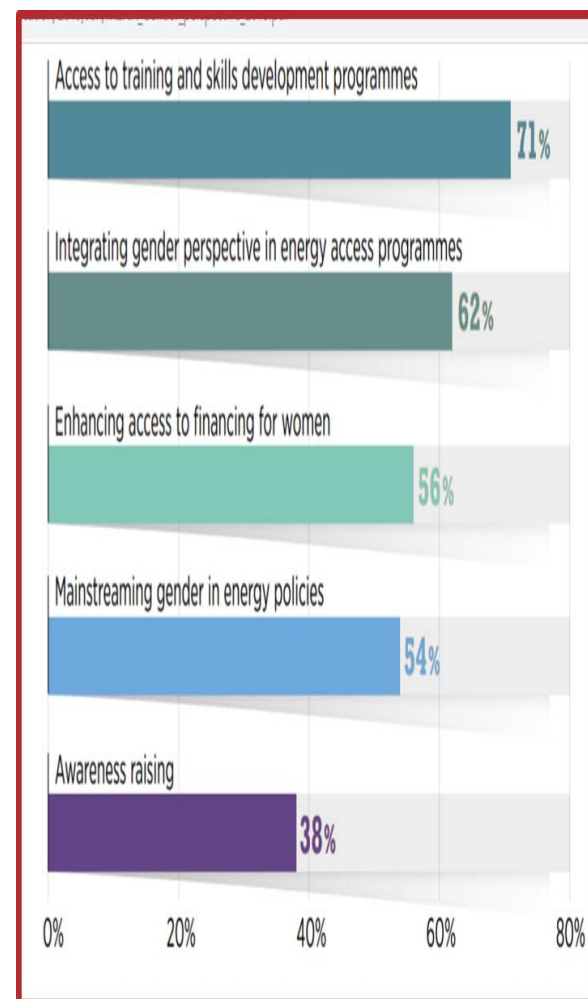
This shows that women are more ready to take a leading role in implementation of climate change mitigation and energy efficiency measures.

6. Recommendations & Actions needed

A number of actions are needed to facilitate gender mainstreaming in renewable energy sector such as:

- Mainstreaming gender in energy policies **(54%)**.
(e.g. Women Quota)
- Removing of social/ cultural barriers towards women **enrollment in STEM fields (38%)**.
(i.e. Via awareness raising)
- Facilitating of women **access to training and skills' development programs (71%)**.
- Provision of finance to **women entrepreneur** in energy sector **(56%)**
- Implementation of **gender-sensitive economic and employment policies**.
(e.g. flexi-hours, work-from-home, paternal leaves)

IRENA Gender Survey 2018 (1440 participants)



7. How Can We Help each Other?

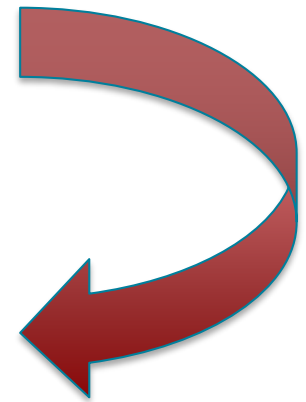


8. Success Story: Barefoot College in Sudan



- Women leading their communities to light rural Africa
- Started by a workshop in Kigali-Rwanda on **Appropriate Technology for rural communities**.
- A collaboration all way from India to Sudan, **Bunker Roy** of **Bare-foot college** selected a pilot project in Sudan.
- Developers a **partnership** with **community-based NGOs** in Nuba mountains in western Sudan and signed a **community/college partnership agreement**.
- Trained **illiterate rural women** to be **solar engineers** and serve their rural communities.

(Shows how far empowered women can go and do!!)



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Finally..

The benefits of unlocking the potential of women in the MENA region

- The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published:

“The MENA region is **losing an estimated \$575 billion a year** due to the legal and social barriers that exist around women’s access to jobs and careers.” *(Cost of lost opportunity!!)*



Thank you ! 😊

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