


#ClimatecommsNorthAfrica




Welcome to our webinar, we'll be starting shortly

Communicating climate change in
Tunisia, Egypt and Mauritania
WITH LESSONS FOR NORTH AFRICA AND THE LEVANT REGION
A global narratives project




The three photographs show: 1) A woman in a black headscarf and red and white striped shirt standing next to a large pile of yellow lemons. 2) A man in a yellow jacket carrying a large blue box on his head, walking on a paved street. 3) A woman in a pink shirt and blue headscarf sitting on a pile of pink fabric, possibly a rug or blanket.




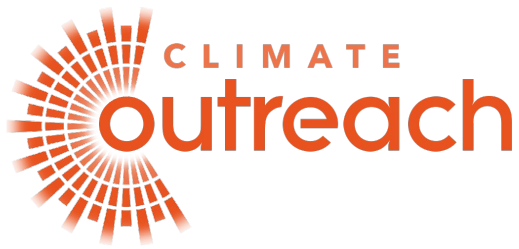
The flags of Tunisia, Egypt, and Mauritania are displayed below the photographs.

Lead partners



National partners





Communicating climate change in Tunisia, Egypt and Mauritania - with lessons for North Africa and the Levant region

24 June 2021



@ClimateOutreach



climateoutreach.org

Robin Webster, Fatima Ahouli, Mohamed Kamal
robin.webster@climateoutreach.org

Project team





What this report is about

- Social research work across three countries in North Africa: Tunisia, Egypt and Mauritania.
- **Aim:** to test language on climate change, creating advice that climate advocates across civil society and in government, media and business can use to engage people in terms that resonate with their culture and experience.
- **Audiences** incl rural women, fishermen, local & national politicians, students, farmers & herders etc.



Report launch process

Climate Outreach webinar: 24 July
overview of research results & learnings
from the process

CANAW roundtable: 5th July, 11am GMT
- National country results (Arabic with
English translation)



What we did & why

Global narratives - the 'barefoot doctor' model



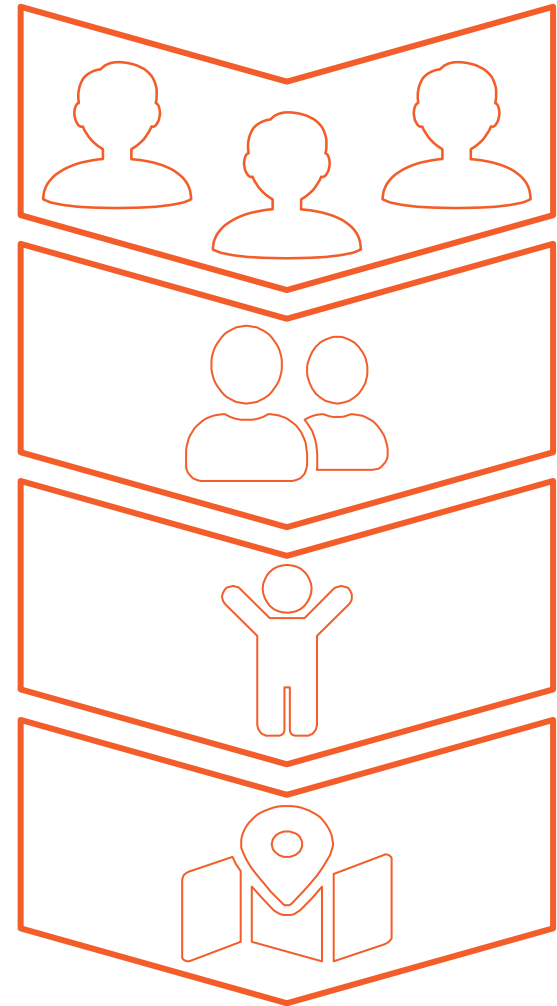
Key statistics

25 in-country
partner
organisations ran

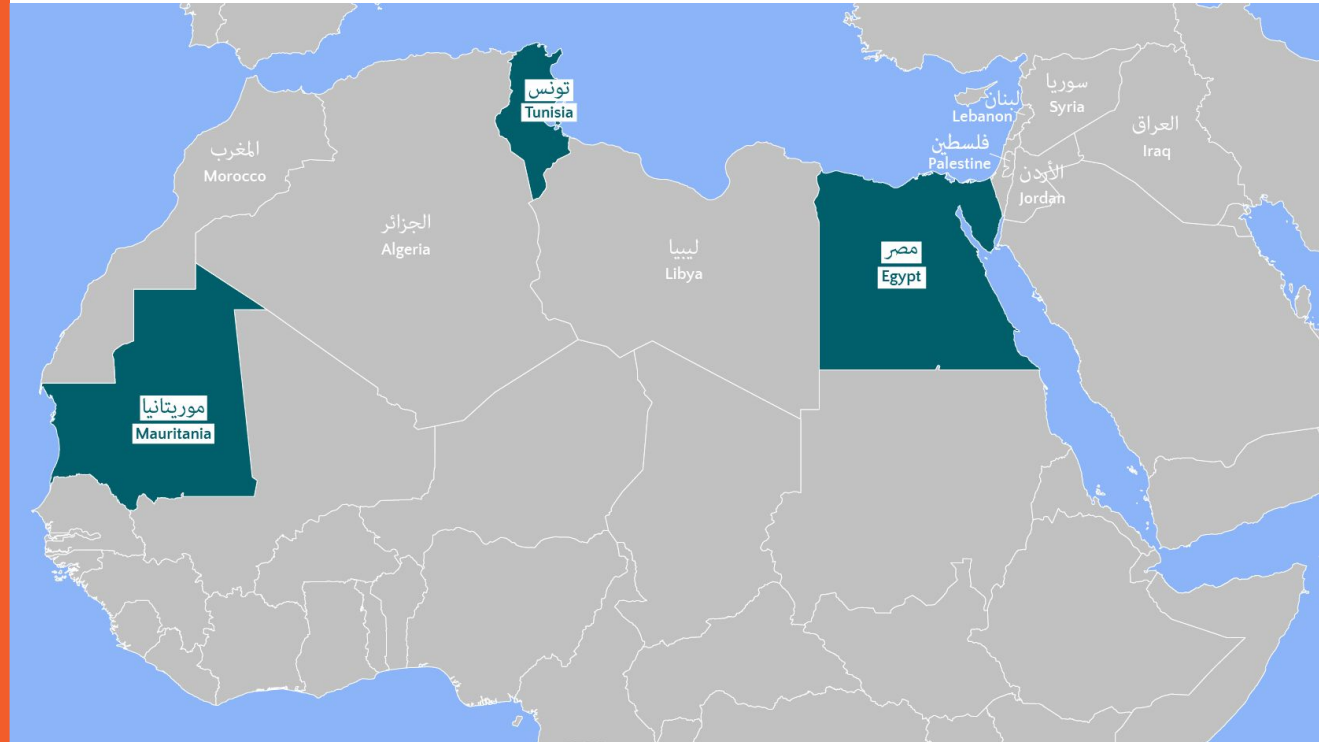
33 narrative
workshops with

248 participants

Across 3 countries



Tunisia, Egypt & Mauritania





High climate impacts

- Some of the most vulnerable countries in world, cld experience worst impacts
- Eg Tunisia - water availability cld declined by 28% by 2030; Alexandria in Egypt most vulnerable city in world to sea level rise; temps in Mauritania could rise at 1.5x the global average

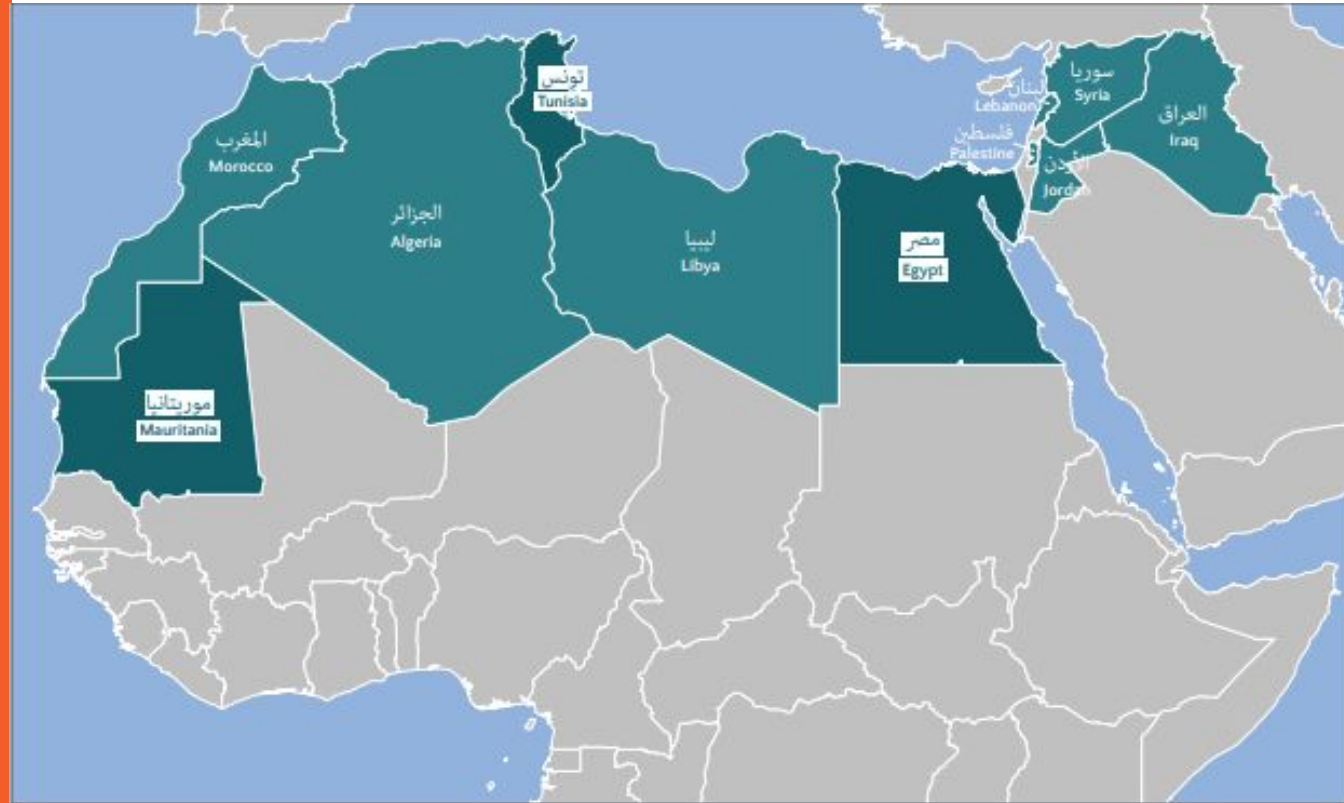
[Photo credit: Carsten ten Brink / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)



Low climate concern (and poorly investigated)

- Public engagement with climate change in Arabic countries a **neglected research area**.
- **Low knowledge/concern** - eg 60% North Africans say it is a threat to their country vs 93% Southern Europe (2019 poll). Support fewer no. climate policies (2020)
- **Significant variation** across Arabic speaking countries (eg Morocco 71% human-caused climate change exists vs Egypt 26%)

North Africa & the Levant





Key findings & recommendations

1

The voice of impacted people & climate awareness



Climate change happening in our participants' lives

- In every workshop, participants spoke about the changes they were observing on a day-to-day basis.
- Fishermen and farmers particularly had first-hand knowledge
- Older people telling younger people about the differences (Mauritania)
- Awareness of nationally significant changes

[Photo credit: Dana Smillie / World Bank / CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)



"...the weather changed in the sea due to very hot summers, the fish species we fish became different as well. – Fisherman, Egypt

The seasons no longer come in time. – Fisherman, Tunisia

*In regions like Nouakchott, we are experiencing flooding. It's like the climate is becoming crazy.
– Small business owner, Mauritania*



Low awareness and understanding of climate change

- Low awareness and understanding of climate change, incl causes
- Including amongst participants with access to higher education
- High awareness of local environmental issues
- Participants valued and asked for more information/ education



Direct, local language needed

You are telling me about renewable energy. Who will implement it for us? These are fancy dreams. Let us talk about things that are on our level. These things are too advanced for us and will be too expensive. – Fisherman, Egypt

- The term 'climate change' تغير المناخ caused some confusion
- Simple, direct language, such as 'clean' and 'polluting' energy, resonated more deeply with people
- Distrust of 'political' language

1

The voice of impacted people & climate awareness

Respect and help amplify the voice of people who are witnessing climate change, including fishermen, farmers and older people

Raise awareness & counter misconceptions about climate change

Use local & nationally recognised impacts as a starting point

Use locally relevant language

2

Social solidarity, resilience and action



Social solidarity

Strong values: togetherness, support, respect, solidarity and community

- **Egypt** - (Gad'a'na), helping someone during their time of need & trustworthiness
- **Tunisia** - respect
- **Mauritania**: hospitality, mobilising together



We should respect the other and respect ourselves. ... We should keep the streets and nature clean. We need to respect our nature and our country.

– Association member, Tunisia

Of course [the values of Egypt are better than those in other countries], because here in Egypt we are all brothers and sisters, working together and helping each other.

– Woman farmer, Egypt

We find that we are working as a single team to contain the [climate] crisis and search for solutions.

– University student, Mauritania



Resilience

"What is good about living in Mauritania? The resilience of Mauriticians. We are able to adapt easily due to our education and faith."

– Union member, Mauritania

- Political turbulence, security risks and other enforced changes
- -> Resilience / ability to come together
- Can lead to passivity

2

Social solidarity, resilience and action

Language that speaks to togetherness and community, and building robust communities in times of change

Support the idea of mobilising together

But also provide people with things to do
- agency and action

3

Take care & learnings



Take care: the language of personal responsibility & blame

This is pointing the finger at me as an individual, when I didn't really cause this.

– Egyptian participant

We feel like it's a Western agenda far from our main concerns.

– Union member, Mauritania

“

...our greed for material things [is to blame]

.....through our ignorance, arrogance and greed, we have damaged the gift, harmed the earth and broken our relationship with creation.”

Test narrative script

“

our greed for material things [is to blame]

.....through our ignorance, arrogance and greed, we have damaged the gift, harmed the earth and broken our relationship with creation.”



Take care: faith-based messaging

- Islamic values & ethics have a deep impact on cultural attitudes and social norms
- Embedded in people's lives in many & varying ways
Eg presenting people as nature's guardian (most strongly in Mauritania)
- Complex debate on fate & free will



Photo credit: Greenish

Take care: Western terms & methodologies

- The term 'MENA': commonly recognised, abt 20 countries - roots in British colonialism
- Research methodologies
 - Eg Recruitment methodologies in Mauritania
- Overriding importance of listening to what is needed & building relationships

3

Take care & learnings

Take care with the language of personal responsibility & blame

Take care with faith-based messaging

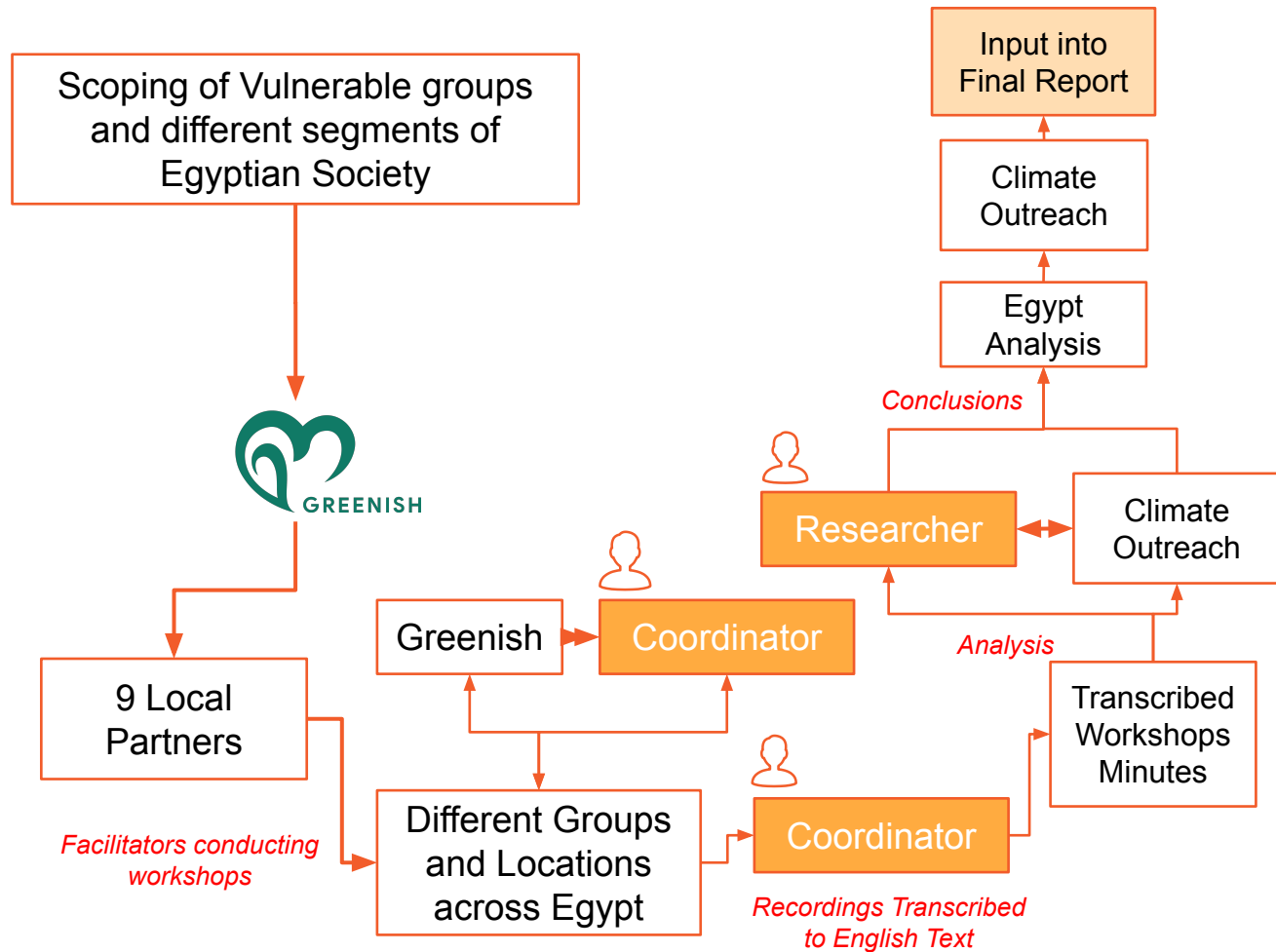
Take care with Western terms & methodologies - a listening approach



Egypt in-depth

Mohamed Kamal

The Journey in Egypt



What should
you know about
the experience
in Egypt?



93 Participants
12 Groups
6 Governorates



9 Local Partners
20 Facilitators
1 Coordinator



Before informing people about the dangers of climate change, people need to know **what actually is climate change** and why it's relevant to **their context**



*“Stop telling me there is a problem and tell me **what I can do about it**”*



*“Losing the life we know or destroying the planet we care about” – People who consider their lives a **daily struggle**, will not comprehend (and frankly not care about) a danger that affects something conceptually as large as climate change.*



What should you know about the experience in Egypt?



Before informing people about the dangers of climate change, people need to know **what actually is climate change** and why it's relevant to **their context**

Use simple language (such as clean and polluting), that is contextual and localized.



*“Stop telling me there is a problem and tell me **what I can do about it**”*

*You must avoid the “**blame**” tone in narratives or communication. Speak to the person and do not **generalize***



*“Losing the life we know or destroying the planet we care about” – People who consider their lives a **daily struggle**, will not comprehend (and frankly not care about) a danger that affects something conceptually as large as climate change.*

*Egyptians truly believe in their **resilience** and their ability to **adapt** to any situation, as they experienced struggle and lack of stability throughout the past decade.*





The work in Egypt
has also shown the
importance of
understanding that
Language isn't
black and white

Please Always Remember

Narratives are **weakened** and **lost** in
translation.

What have we
learned outside
of narratives?

When it comes to
Climate Change

What seems Logical,
really isn't

Ontological
Assumptions?
They matter!





CAN Arab World (CANAW)

Fatima Ahouli

Why is the message testing project important for CANAW

The message testing project happens to be one of the first and most important projects for CANAW through which we were able to:

- Tackle one of the most important areas around climate change in the region which is Awareness.
- Engage our members in 3 countries: work and coordinate together
- Test our ability to manage such a complex project with all the challenges that came with it.

The project represents an important foundation for us as civil society organizations working on raising awareness and communicating about climate change. It provides what we can define as a road map for a different approach on how to mobilize different communities to be part of the decision making in their countries.

Key Learnings!

Management:

Two years working on this project has come with a lot of challenges that eventually became great learning opportunities. On a management level: We learnt that it is important to:

- Have a clear understanding of a country's regulations in terms of fund management.
- Internal capacity and the importance of having at least two individuals engaged in such big scale project in order to insure that the transfer of knowledge will be possible and smooth

On a positive note:

- There is always a way to get around a challenge as long as the team has the same objective

Key Learnings!

Analysing and formulating the
text:

In terms of the research itself:

- It is very important to go into in-depth discussions when it comes to cultures, beliefs before making any type of argument.
- Always be aware of the existence of other perspectives, do not ignore them out but instead find them and explore them because they can be rich and sometimes eye opening experiences.
- In addition to that, the success of any project comes down to the individuals who are involved. Therefore, it is important to have partners who believe that the project is theirs from beginning to end. The feeling of ownership over any project/ human experience provides this experience with the strength it needs to be implemented

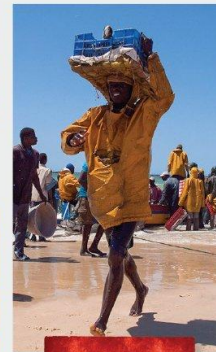


Questions?

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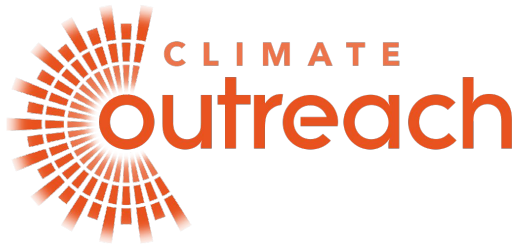


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National partners





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Thank you!



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