



FACTSHEET

Women and Development

While women play a central role in the fight against hunger and poverty, they form the majority of the poor living in rural areas where they account for up to 70% of the population. A person is considered 'poor' when having less than 1.25 US dollar per day [World Bank].

Equal opportunities and equal rights between genders serve not only in the fight against hunger and poverty but are also globally-recognised human rights – in our societies as well. Women make up half of the world's population and should have equal access to healthcare, education, economic participation and income opportunities, as well as political decision making power. This is also recorded in the regularly published reports on the Global Hunger Index from Welthungerhilfe and its partners [Global Hunger Index 2014].

Women secure nutrition

In developing countries, around 70% of men and 40% of women work in paid employment. The most important job market for women in rural areas is agriculture. Their share of the labour here comprises ca. 43% on average. In Latin America it is ca. 20% and in East and South East Asia, as well as sub-Saharan Africa it is ca. 50%.

However, women do not have the same access to production resources and consultancy as men do. Often, there are structural problems or traditional and culturally anchored practices, which hinder the right to food and make it harder for women to secure nutrition

for their families. In many developing countries (from those where there is reliable data), only 10% to 20% of land titles are awarded to women and just 15% of agricultural advisors are women [FAO and ILO].

In developing countries, women produce up to 80% of the food and are responsible for around 50% of global food production. The FAO estimates that agricultural yield could be 20% to 30% higher if the potential of female small producers was realised and they had the same access and usage opportunities as men. This would allow the agricultural production in developing countries to increase by between 2.5% and 4% and, at the same time, reduce the number of hungry people worldwide by between 12% and 17% [FAO 2010-2011].

In addition, the World Bank assumes, if all disadvantages faced by women were eliminated from the global labour market, productivity could increase by 40%. This would also raise the number of women in top leadership positions in the economy and administration and enable more sustainable and democratic development.

Women and education

There are 781 million people worldwide who cannot read and write. 496 million of them are women [UNESCO World Education Report 2013/2014]. In developing countries, more and more girls are attending primary schools. Since 1999, the proportion of female children who do not receive any primary

education has fallen from 58% to 53% (2010). However, it is still the case that far fewer girls go on to high school than their male peers, in South Asia the figure is just 59 girls to every 100 boys (2011) [UN MDG report 2013].

Women and health

The United Nations shows a positive development in maternal mortality. From 1990 to 2013 the death rate fell by 45% from 380 to 210 deaths in every 100,000 live births. [UN MDG report 2014].

Access to and use of clean water is a basic principle for health. In Sub-Saharan Africa – as in many developing countries – it is primarily women and girls who are responsible for water provision for their families. Combined, all the women in the region cover a total daily distance of around 16 x 400,000 km to collect water, so 16 times the approximate distance to the moon [UN Women].

For these women, the total time spent collecting water amounts to 16 million hours each way. Men in the same regions spend about 6 million hours and children about 4 million to fetch water [UN MDG report 2012].

Women and politics

In January 2015, the number of female heads of state or government stood at 22 worldwide. This is still very few in relation to the distribution of male incumbents, but an overall positive trend in comparison to previous years (cf. 2009 = 15). The share of parliamentary seats held by women lies meanwhile at ca. 22% (cf. 14 in 2000). However, if this development was to continue at the same pace, it would require 40 years until there was an equal distribution of men and women in parliaments [UN MDG report 2014].

Women in the project work of Welthungerhilfe

Independent consultants regularly assess the success of Welthungerhilfe projects. If women are promoted in development work, this results in:

- reduced workload, for example, thanks to the presence of a nearby well, means more time and resources for other activities;
- improved participation and sustainable decision making;
- more and better quality food for themselves and their families, particularly for their children, for example through nutritional advice or vegetable cultivation;

- improved health situation as a result of clean drinking water, latrines, nutritional advice, healthcare stations;
- higher and more regular income through credit funds, craft centres, processing of agricultural resources and creative possibilities.

There are numerous project examples from Welthungerhilfe that illustrate these positive impacts (for examples by country see www.welthungerhilfe.de/projects).

Welthungerhilfe is a VENRO member (the German umbrella organisation of development NGOs) and coordinates with other German aid organisations in the gender working group, developing political positions and organising events on gender.

Gender equality cannot be achieved through development projects alone. If women are promoted, human capital will be more efficiently utilised. Greater equality increases not only productivity and economic growth but also strengthens credibility and delivers sustainable results [Global Gender Gap Index]. The consequent anchoring of the idea of equality at all levels is necessary. This requires a fundamental change in current decision making and organisational processes, at all levels and in all regions worldwide.

Sources:

Worldbank, www.worldbank.org

Global Hunger Index 2014, www.welthungerhilfe.de/en/home-en.html

World Education Report UNESCO, 2013/2014

UN NDG report 2012, 2013, 2014

FAO 2010/11; ILO, UN Women 2011/12

www.welthungerhilfe.de

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