

November 1, 2025

GEM Digest of the Month

Published monthly since December 2009



Early morning fog and fall colour on trees. Photo courtesy of D. Ceplis.

The Gender Equality Mainstreaming (GEM) Digest provides a compilation of information and articles gathered on an ongoing basis on gender equality mainstreaming within agriculture, scientific research, rural development, climate change, organizational development and international development. Information is shared with members, colleagues, scientific societies and diverse organizations.

The views and opinions presented are not necessarily representative of the editor.

If you have information to share, please send it to dinah.ceplis@gmail.com to compile and re-distribute once a month.

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Opportunities and Coming Events

1. COP30

<https://cop30.br/en/news-about-cop30/news-about-cop30>

Conference of Parties COP30 is the 30th annual UN climate meeting, where government leaders discuss how to limit and prepare for further climate change. COP30 officially runs from **Monday 10 November to Friday 21 November**. World leaders will gather before the summit opens on **Thursday 6 November and Friday 7 November**. The conference is being held in **Brazil** for the first time, in Belém in the Amazon rainforest.

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2. Webinar: From Data to Impact: New Insights from the 2025 Microfinance Index

https://60decibels.zoom.us/webinar/register/9117605343192/WN_TGFBw9IRJKCA_n_SdxDJAw

Join us for a deep dive into the latest findings from the 2025 Microfinance Index, which build on the world's largest financial inclusion benchmark grounded in client voice. We'll explore what's new in this year's report, including expanded analysis on client outcomes and fresh data on lending practices and service delivery. We'll also be highlighting our 2025 Social Impact Awardees, and feature perspectives from participating Financial Service Providers and clients whose voices helped shape the Index. **November 11. November 13 in Spanish.**

https://60decibels.zoom.us/webinar/register/5217605342902/WN_k4ryr4QuRCmsiO8ub9wIWw

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3. Canada's Outstanding Young Farmer Program

<https://oyfcanada.com/language/en/event/oyf-national-event-2025/>

Please join us in **Toronto from November 26-30th**, for Canada's premier agricultural awards program! Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers recognizes young farmers who exemplify excellence in their profession.

This year's event features an exclusive Welcome Reception at the CN Tower. The event also includes guest speakers, honoree presentations, a gala celebration, an alumni program and multiple agricultural tours in and around the city of Toronto.

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4. FREE COURSE: Learn how to move from impact measurement to climate action

<https://aicra.cgiar.org/news/move-measurement-climate-action-new-online-course-agribusiness-leaders>

<https://climate.thinkific.com/products/courses/from-impact-measurement-to-climate-action>

Many agribusinesses struggle to know where to start in their impact measurement journey — what to measure, why it matters, and how to do it effectively. This course is designed to meet them wherever they are: from those just beginning to explore impact in a climate context, to those ready to refine their data collection and reporting systems.

Impact measurement goes beyond profits to assess how investments affect farmers, communities, and the environment. It's about maximizing benefits while minimizing harm, aligning with goals that matter for the business and potential investors. This matters even more in the context of climate change.

Launched at the recent Africa Food Systems Forum in Dakar, Senegal, a new, online impact measurement course is designed to equip agribusiness leaders with practical open-access tools to measure, track, and report progress, make better decisions, and communicate climate impact with clarity and confidence.

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5. Free Course: Nature-Based Infrastructure

<https://nbi.iisd.org/academy/>

We offer two training courses on making a case for and valuing Nature-Based Infrastructure. This training is free of charge. Participants will learn how to:

- Identify nature-based infrastructure (NBI) and its opportunities for climate adaptation and sustainable development.
- Make the case for NBI by explaining its potential economic, environmental, and social benefits.
- Understand the risk profile and the climate resilience benefits of NBI compared to grey infrastructure.
- Explain the basics of systems thinking, quantitative models, spatial analysis, climate data and financial modelling applied to NBI.
- Appreciate the results of integrated cost-benefit analyses for NBI.
- Use case studies of NBI projects from across the world as context for their work.

This course was developed by the NBI Global Resource Centre to help policy-makers, infrastructure planners, researchers and investors understand, assess, and value nature-based infrastructure. The course familiarizes participants with several tools and modelling approaches for NBI, including Excel-based models, system dynamics, spatial analysis and financial modelling. In addition, the training presents a variety of NBI case studies from across the world.

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This Month's News

1. UN warns 351 million women will stay in poverty without action

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/200903/un-women-gender-snapshot-2025-poverty-digital-divide-report>

The world is on track to leave 351 million women and girls in extreme poverty by 2030, missing key gender equality goals unless countries change course, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) warned in its latest Gender Snapshot 2025 report. The annual data review shows that current trends will fail to meet Sustainable Development Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment.

But the report also reveals a potential solution: closing the gender digital divide could benefit 343.5 million women and girls worldwide, lift 30 million out of poverty, and add \$1.5 trillion to global GDP by 2030. UN Women and UN DESA produced the snapshot using data from over 100 sources to track progress across all 17 development goals. The timing comes 30 years after the Beijing Platform for Action first laid out a global agenda for women's rights.

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2. Women have limited access to digital technologies. How can this change?

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/200172/women-have-limited-access-to-digital-technologies>

In recent years, there have been growing concerns relating to the gender gaps in various sectors, including the digital arena. Latest reports state that women in developing countries are 19% less likely than men to use mobile internet. This trend is of concern because accessing digital technology is vital for ensuring equal opportunities for women, as well as developing a

skilled workforce on the labor market. Learn more about the main challenges that hinder women's access to technology in developing countries and how these issues can be addressed in Development Aid's latest Experts' Opinions article.

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3. IRENA warns gender gaps threaten fair energy transition

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/200965/irena-women-renewable-energy-workforce-32-percent-gender-gaps>

Women still hold just 32% of full-time jobs in renewable energy, the same share as six years ago despite the sector's rapid growth, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) found in a new study. The percentage hasn't budged since IRENA's first gender analysis in 2019, showing no meaningful progress in women's representation over the years.

While renewable energy performs better than fossil fuel industries, the lack of advancement raises concerns about labor shortages and missing diverse perspectives as the sector expands. The report warns that without greater gender equality, the energy transition won't be fair or sustainable. IRENA's second edition of "Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective" provides the most detailed assessment to date of barriers women face in clean energy careers.

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4. Brazilian microbiologist wins 2025 World Food Prize

<https://www.devex.com/news/brazilian-microbiologist-wins-2025-world-food-prize-110058>

A Brazilian soil microbiologist credited with improving crop yields, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers, and helping her country become a breadbasket for the world has won the 2025 World Food Prize.

Mariangela Hungria has developed dozens of biological seed and soil treatments that help crops source nutrients through soil bacteria in environmentally sustainable ways. For more than 40 years, she has worked with Embrapa, the state-run Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation, helping farmers substitute nitrogen-based fertilizers with microbial products that are cheaper and just as effective.

The prestigious World Food Prize is awarded annually to an individual or individuals whose work has improved the quality, quantity, or availability of food worldwide. Known as the Nobel Prize for food and agriculture, it also comes with \$500,000 for Hungria to continue her research.

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5. Let women lead. From peacekeeping to hunger, health to climate, the world will benefit

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/sep/26/african-presidents-women-female-leadership-un-change-hope-innovation>

As former African presidents, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Sahle-Work Zewde know the world has no need of more speeches. In a time of crisis, the UN must encourage strong female leadership. This year, as the United Nations convenes for its 80th general assembly and the world watches, we believe there is no issue more urgent than the rise of female African leaders. From peace and education to health and climate, women are not just affected by crises, they are leading the solutions.

It is time for funders, policymakers, multilateral institutions and development agencies to step up, boldly invest and ensure that African women are empowered to lead. Across sub-Saharan Africa there are about 145 million adolescent girls, and Africa's population of girls under the age of 18 is predicted to increase to approximately 465 million by the middle of this century.

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6. Opinion: Africa needs agroecology, not cosmetic transformations

<https://www.devex.com/news/africa-needs-agroecology-not-cosmetic-transformations-110856>

When AGRA unveiled the Africa Food Systems Report 2025, it introduced the publication as a bold new road map for systemic transformation. On closer inspection, however, the report is less about transformation and more about entrenching the same model that has failed Africa for two decades — the Green Revolution model.

It is a strategy built on industrialization, corporate-led agribusiness, and financialization, not on the agroecology and food sovereignty that millions of African farmers and citizens are calling for.

To be fair, AGRA is right about one thing: Africa's challenges cannot be solved in silos. Food systems are interconnected — from soil fertility and farm production to nutrition, trade, finance, and climate resilience. The report's effort to broaden its lens beyond agriculture to food systems reflects this reality.

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7. Chinese, African experts join force to advance collaboration on food security, agricultural modernization

<https://english.news.cn/africa/20251028/06f184d108d74448a4bcdcbd5af78501/c.html>

The 2025 General Assembly of the China-Africa Agricultural Science and Technology Innovation Alliance (CAASTIA) kicked off in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, with a focus on cooperation for Africa's food security and agricultural modernization.

President of the African Academy of Sciences Lise Korsten said China's journey in agricultural modernization, marked by intensive cultivation, developed value chains, and breakthroughs in digital agriculture, provides invaluable experience to Africa.

According to the president, China exemplifies mastery in high-yield, technology-driven agriculture, feeding nearly 20 percent of the global population with less than 9 percent of the world's arable land. Meanwhile, Africa faces food insecurity despite being home to 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land.

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8. AI-generated 'poverty porn' fake images being used by aid agencies

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/oct/20/ai-generated-poverty-porn-fake-images-being-used-by-aid-agencies>

AI-generated images of extreme poverty, children and sexual violence survivors are flooding stock photo sites and increasingly being used by leading health NGOs, according to global health professionals who have voiced concern over a new era of "poverty porn".

Generative AI tools have long been found to replicate – and at times exaggerate – broader societal biases. The proliferation of biased images in global health communications may make the problem worse, said Alenichev, because the images could filter out into the wider internet and be used to train the next generation of AI models, a process which has been shown to amplify prejudice.

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9. World Food Prize laureates call for doubling of food and agriculture aid

<https://www.devex.com/news/world-food-prize-laureates-call-for-doubling-of-food-and-agriculture-aid-111163>

Humanitarian chef José Andrés and 28 current and former World Food Prize laureates are calling for a doubling of investments in emergency food assistance and sustainable agricultural development as the world falls behind on the goal of ending hunger.

The most recent letter issued Wednesday has four calls to action: preventing famine by sustaining emergency food relief, safeguarding humanitarians, and preventing the weaponization of food aid; addressing the long-term risks to food security by investing in sustainable agricultural productivity; striving for shared prosperity through policies that promote food security for all; and getting everyone to do their part to collectively end hunger.

It emphasizes the role of conflict as a major driver of food insecurity — and highlights investment in peace as a way to reduce hunger levels. All too often, warring parties impose impediments to the delivery of food aid during conflict.

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10. World Bank approves \$40 million for Sierra Leone water project

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/200561/world-bank-sierra-leone-water-sanitation-project-40m>

The World Bank approved a \$40 million grant to bring clean water and sanitation to five million Sierra Leoneans as part of a massive 10-year, \$180 million program, according to a press release. The Sierra Leone Water Security and WASH Access Improvement Project targets the Western Area first before expanding nationwide.

The project aims to fix broken institutions, upgrade water infrastructure, and launch a behavior change campaign to make Sierra Leone “Open-Defecation Free.” About 400,000 people in the Western Area will get better water services while 1.3 million will benefit from improved sanitation and hygiene. The program should create around 1,400 direct jobs and train 600 water sector professionals.

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11. ‘Just money, with no strings attached’: how direct cash transfers are giving women in rural Kenya a new life

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/oct/09/money-direct-cash-transfers-women-rural-kenya-a-new-life>

A study published in August by the National Bureau of Economic Research which looked at the impact of unconditional cash transfers found that they reduced infant mortality by 48% and under-five mortality by 45% in rural Kenya – effects rivalling those of vaccines or antimalarial drugs.

The August study highlighted how financial support reshaped women’s daily lives, cutting back on the time they spent working and allowing them to focus on the wellbeing of their newborns: “The transfers resulted in a substantial decline of 51% in female labour supply in the three months before and the three months after a birth, and improved child nutrition,” the authors said.

The study found the transfers had improved diets and made health facilities more accessible for families, and also that the money had an impact on the wider community.

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12. How community-led innovation is transforming goat and sheep production in Ethiopia and Uganda

<https://aiccra.cgiar.org/news/how-community-led-innovation-transforming-goat-and-sheep-production-ethiopia-and-uganda>

Across Eastern and Southern Africa, livestock innovations are changing how communities breed, feed, and market goats and sheep. Community-Based Breeding Programs (CBBPs) and the Small Ruminant Value Chain Transformation (SmaRT) Pack help farmers, especially women and youth, achieve significant gains in productivity and climate resilience.

At the center of this transformation is the Community-Based Breeding Program (CBBP). This participatory and cost-effective approach improves the genetic quality of indigenous goats and sheep while keeping their climate-resilient traits. For smallholder farmers and pastoralists who face unpredictable rainfall, feed shortages, and animal diseases, this method is not just a scientific advancement; it is a lifeline.

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13. Zanzibar’s Blue Economy Offers Hope Amid Rising Seas and Gender Inequity

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2025/08/zanzibars-blue-economy-offers-hope-amid-rising-seas-and-gender-inequity/>

Thousands of Zanzibari women sustain the island’s marine economy through seaweed farming, artisanal fishing, ecotourism, and conservation. While their labor underpins Zanzibar’s blue economy—a model that leverages marine resources for sustainable development—many women say the system still disproportionately favors men.

Seaweed farming became a prominent source of income in Zanzibar in the 1990s, especially for women. Yet climate change is altering the dynamics of this once-reliable livelihood.

To address these imbalances, Zanzibar’s government—supported by UN Women and Norway—launched the Blue Economy Gender Strategy and Action Plan in 2022. The initiative is the first in the region aimed at embedding gender equity in marine policy.

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14. Drought-hit Tanzania’s Villages Confront Harshest Reality of Climate Change

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2025/10/drought-hit-tanzanias-villages-confront-harshest-reality-of-climate-change/>

Launched in 2018 and funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) with support from Tanzania’s government, the UNEP-led Ecosystem-based Adaptation for Rural Resilience project has helped thousands of smallholder farmers build resilience to climate change.

Since its launch, the programme has drilled 15 boreholes—12 powered by solar energy—bringing clean water to over 35,000 people, built earthen dams with capacity to trap three million cubic metres of rainwater, planted 350,000 trees to restore 9,000 hectares of degraded forest and rangeland, placed 38,000 hectares under sustainable land management, and trained thousands of farmers, particularly women and youth, in drought-resilient farming and alternative livelihoods.

Water is an important resource in Dodoma. Women once trekked more than five kilometres with jerry cans on their heads. Children skipped school to fetch water.

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15. How Farmed Fish in Dutch Supermarkets Undermines Food Security in West Africa

<https://www.desmog.com/2025/09/28/how-farmed-fish-in-dutch-supermarkets-undermines-food-security-in-west-africa/>

On the eastern side of the Senegalese capital Dakar, a lorry is being loaded up with small fish that have just been brought ashore in colourful wooden canoes. For generations, the daily catch in Dakar has been sold directly on the beach to women

traders who smoke the fish and sell it at the local market. But now fishermen have a new, and powerful, customer: fishmeal factories which produce feed for the global fish farming industry, the fastest growing food sector in the world.

A new investigation by Follow the Money and DeSmog can reveal that sardines from Senegal are fed to sea bass – labelled as sustainably farmed – which is sold in Dutch supermarkets.

European consumers prefer to eat salmon, tuna, sea bass and other carnivorous fish but millions of tonnes of wild fish must be caught to feed them. And in the case of Senegal, these small fish would otherwise be feeding people.

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16. From Numbers to Narrative: In Pursuit of Gendered Data to Transform Nigeria's Aquaculture

<https://awardfellowships.org/news/from-numbers-to-narrative-in-pursuit-of-gendered-data-to-transform-nigerias-aquaculture/>

In Nigeria, men and women are involved in all nodes of the aquaculture value chain, but their activities are highly gendered. A recent report reveals that while men are mostly involved in the harvest sector of small-scale fisheries, women dominate the post-harvest activities. Moreover, gender norms and dynamics influence household decision-making over incomes and resources.

Dr. Temitayo Adeyemo, a Nigerian agricultural economist, notes that the gaps presented her with an opportunity to contribute to the future of equitable aquaculture in Nigeria. Temitayo's sentiments on power dynamics and gender disaggregated data speak to a significant challenge in Africa's agrifood systems on women's care work, contribution to the agrifood workforce, and their reward.

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17. Bolivian fish tale, Manitoba hook

<https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/arts-and-life/life/2025/10/10/bolivian-fish-tale-manitoba-hook>

Most of the Yapacani region's 5,000 rural families live in poverty, eking out a meagre subsistence farming rice and small herds of cattle. But in the late 2000s, a new opportunity emerged. A consortium of local farmers, hoping to diversify the region's economy, teamed up with the Bolivian government to explore how to bring fish farming to Yapacani. At the time, fish was not a large part of the Bolivian diet, but experts believed that could change with the right promotion.

It had been nearly 10 months since Manitoba Council for International Cooperation MCIC had begun to fund an innovative project, spearheaded by Bolivian women and guided, in part, by a team of local experts and academics from Canada, including a professor from Royal Roads University in Victoria, B.C.

The project's goal: to help these women try a bold new business idea, one that could transform their families' lives.

A new program launched in Yapacani offered workshops, led by Bolivia's foremost aquaculture experts, on how to raise and sell the tasty native fish. They called the program Peces para la vida, or Fish for Life.

Before long, dozens of families had signed up for a government grant to dig their first pond. Here, observers noted, something interesting was happening: in a culture where men typically account for most of a family's income, many of the fish businesses were led by women.

In addition to the profitable pacu and tambaqui, the little sardinas began to pop up in the ponds. They are edible, but Bolivians weren't interested in buying them; farm families fried up as many as they could, but most went to waste.

Enter the Fund for Innovation and Transformation, or FIT. Since 2019, the program — funded by Global Affairs Canada and administered by Winnipeg-based MCIC — has financed innovative, even experimental projects that advance gender equity

in the Global South, aiming to support efforts that can slip under the radar of larger development organizations. The fish powder project fit that agenda.

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18. CABEI backs \$7.5M upgrade of El Salvador agriculture school

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/201570/cabei-finances-7-5-million-el-salvador-agriculture-school-modernization>

Work has started on a major upgrade of El Salvador’s Roberto Quiñónez National School of Agriculture, backed by more than \$7.5 million from the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI) announced. The project will modernize facilities that serve 1,000 students, parents, teachers, and staff directly, with benefits reaching over 200,000 residents across 15 municipalities in La Libertad, Sonsonate, and Santa Ana.

The work includes renovating five main buildings where modern classrooms with up-to-date technology will be installed. Crews will also fix roofs on more than 75 buildings, replacing asbestos roofing, gutters, and adding waterproofing throughout the campus.

The standout piece of the project is a photovoltaic plant going into the laboratory building, making the school a pioneer in educational energy sustainability.

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19. Meet the astro-ambassadors who welcome stargazers to the Himalayas

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2025/oct/13/astro-ambassadors-stargazers-himalayas-hanle-ladakh-india>

A tourism initiative in India’s first dark sky reserve has brought new hope to a community as employment means they can stay close to their roots and culture. At 4,500 metres above sea level, remote Hanle in Ladakh offers some of the clearest night skies on Earth and became India’s first dark sky reserve in 2022. Twenty-five villagers – 18 of them women – trained as astronomy ambassadors to boost Hanle’s tourism and offer livelihoods to villagers. The programme is also aimed at safeguarding the conditions essential for the nearby Indian Astronomical Observatory by raising awareness of light pollution.

Since the 2-metre Himalayan Chandra telescope was installed by the institute in 2000, three more telescopes have been added on the mountain peak of Digpa-ratsa Ri or in its foothills, transforming Hanle into a world-class astronomy hub, and giving formerly nomadic communities a reason to settle permanently. The ambassadors, receive a week’s training and are given access to telescopes.

The astro-tourism initiative draws thousands of visitors, and homestays have expanded from a handful to 70, reviving the local economy and luring back those who had left for city jobs.

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20. Saving seeds, securing staples: How women are leading seed security in Nepal

<https://ricetoday.irri.org/saving-seeds-securing-staples-how-women-are-leading-seed-security-in-nepal/>

Wheat and maize, next to rice, are among Nepal’s most staple crops. A recent study surveyed 250 households in Mandan Deupur and Panchpokhari Thangpal municipalities in Bagmati Province to find out how gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and exposure to shocks affect household seed security. Under the lens of the FAO seed security framework, it revealed new insights on how these factors affect availability, accessibility, varietal suitability, and quality.

As the trend of men migrating for foreign employment rises, women are also shouldering more responsibility for seed-related decision selection, saving, and exchange.

A parallel story also reflects Nepal’s rice sector. Women are stepping up to take larger roles in farming, though with limited support and slower access to agricultural resources, such as good-quality seeds.

Most importantly, by valuing women’s significant contributions to the seed system, Nepal can move closer to ensuring that farming households, especially in its mountainous areas, have timely access to affordable, suitable, and high-quality seeds.

“Women are the backbone of seed security,” said Dr. Hom Gartaula, IRRI Senior Scientist for Gender and Social Research. “As custodians of household food security and holders of unique knowledge of how crops are cultivated, consumed, and conserved, they are indispensable to sustaining resilient seed systems and safeguarding our food future.”

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21. Iraq: New Personal Status Code Makes Women Second Class
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/10/15/iraq-new-personal-status-code-makes-women-second-class>

(Beirut) – Iraq’s new Ja’afari Personal Status Code, passed by parliament on August 27, discriminates against women by favoring men in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance, and children’s guardianship and care, Human Rights Watch said in October 2025.

Religious authorities drafted the code following an amendment to Iraq’s Personal Status Law passed in February 2025. The amendment allows couples concluding a marriage contract to choose whether the Personal Status Law of 1959 or the Personal Status Code (mudawana), developed by the Shia Ja’afari school of Islamic jurisprudence, would govern their marriage, divorce, children’s guardianship and care, and inheritance. The code includes multiple provisions that roll back hard-won women’s rights.

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22. Tackling the Hidden Toll of Breast Cancer in the Pacific Islands
<https://www.ipsnews.net/2025/10/tackling-the-hidden-toll-of-breast-cancer-in-the-pacific-islands/>

The burden of breast cancer, the most common cancer among women, is global, and the projected increase in cases in the coming decades will affect women in high- and low-income countries in every region. That includes the Pacific Islands, where it is the top cause of female cancer mortality.

“Breast cancer is a significant health concern in Madang Province,” Tabitha Waka of the Country Women’s Association in Madang Province on the northeast coast of Papua New Guinea told IPS. “Most of our women residing in urban centers have access to enough information and facts about cancer, but at least half who live in rural areas don’t.”

A major step in improving rural health services occurred this year when a new public hospital opened in the remote Highlands province of Enga. It is expected to have an operational mammography unit by the end of this year.

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23. Latvian parliament votes to withdraw from Istanbul Convention opposing violence against women
<https://www.euronews.com/2025/10/31/latvian-parliament-votes-to-withdraw-from-treaty-opposing-violence-against-women>

Following a day-long heated debate, the Latvian Parliament decided Thursday October 30 to withdraw from the Istanbul Convention, a human rights treaty opposing violence against women and domestic violence.

If ratified by President Edgars Rinkēvičs, Latvia would become the first EU member state to withdraw from the convention, which the same parliament ratified in November 2024.

Signed by 45 countries and the European Union as of 2019, the Council of Europe treaty is meant to standardise support for women who are victims of violence, including domestic abuse. However, ultra-conservative groups and political parties across Europe have criticized the treaty, arguing that it promotes “gender ideology,” encourages sexual experimentation and harms children. The Union of Greens and Farmers, an agrarian alliance member of the tripartite ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Evika Siliņa's centre-right Unity party joined opposition MPs.

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24. An ancient tradition is helping girls in Zimbabwe fight child marriages

<https://apnews.com/article/zimbabwe-child-marriages-nhanga-tradition-81c5dc6633afe92ebabf785e2a05f337>

The girls’ hangout in rural northeastern Zimbabwe is a revival of Nhanga, the local term for “girls’ bedroom,” an ancient traditional space once used to prepare adolescent girls for marriage. Across rural Zimbabwe, girls are now reinventing the centuries-old practice as a peer-led movement to resist child marriage, which is rife in the southern African nation.

In traditional homesteads, a round thatched hut served as Nhanga, a female-only room where girls were taught obedience, how to please husbands and moral education. It reinforced patriarchal expectations. Today, the practice is being flipped.

Sessions include practical skills like poultry raising, farming and soap making. The trust organizes gatherings by age group, from girls as young as five to women over 35, ensuring an age-appropriate curriculum and mentorship across generations. Elders, including senior government officials, are sometimes invited.

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25. Korea to count same-sex couples as spouses in census for first time

<https://www.koreaherald.com/article/10598810>

Same-sex couples in South Korea can now be counted as “spouses” in the national census — a simple checkbox that, for many, marks long-overdue recognition in a country that still denies them legal marriage.

South Korea does not legally permit same-sex marriage or civil partnerships. While the census change does not affect legal status or benefits, it represents a rare form of official recognition.

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26. Child marriage illegal in Sierra Leone, FGM

<https://www.devex.com/news/the-first-lady-who-made-child-marriage-illegal-in-sierra-leone-111160>

It’s been just over a year since child marriage was outlawed in Sierra Leone — a country that for decades held one of the highest rates of the practice in the world.

It’s unclear how effective the law has been, as child marriage statistics haven’t been published in Sierra Leone since before the law’s passage. But from June 2024 until today, the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act has been lauded as historic — and used to push other countries in West and Central Africa to do the same.

In 2019, a national survey found that 83% of women in Sierra Leone had undergone female genital mutilation, with 71% of them facing the practice before the age of 15. Female genital mutilation, or FGM, is deeply rooted in Sierra Leonean society and is often seen as marking a girl’s transition into adulthood, according to UNICEF. The practice is also entrenched in

cultural and religious beliefs, with UNICEF finding that nearly 70% of Sierra Leonean women and girls who have heard of FGM believe it should be continued.

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27. Brandon University researcher is working to devise a blood test for breast cancer

<https://researchmanitoba.ca/a-brandon-university-researcher-is-working-to-devise-a-blood-test-for-breast-cancer-a-move-that-would-effectively-revolutionize-diagnosis-and-treatment-of-the-disease/>

Brandon University's cell biologist Dr. Mousumi Majumder and a trio of student researchers recently identified two molecules in blood samples that could serve as reliable biomarkers for the early diagnosis of breast cancer. A paper on their findings was published July 30 in the journal *Cancers*.

The discovery could open the door to the development of a simple blood test for breast cancer that would effectively revolutionize the way the disease is diagnosed and treated. A blood test would be far more effective and convenient than the mammograms and biopsies that are used to diagnose breast cancer today. In addition to being less invasive, a blood test would also lead to earlier diagnosis.

The focus on premature microRNAs is a defining feature of Majumder's work, which is part of a collaborative effort that also includes researchers from the University of Western Ontario and the Lawson Health Research Institute, both located in London, Ontario.

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28. Jane Goodall, primatologist turned global environmental icon, dies at 91

<https://www.devex.com/news/jane-goodall-primatologist-turned-global-environmental-icon-dies-at-91-110999>

Jane Goodall, the pioneering primatologist who transformed the world's understanding of chimpanzees and later became one of the planet's most recognized environmental advocates, has died at the age of 91.

Her decades of field research in Tanzania, beginning in 1960, overturned assumptions about the divide between humans and animals — including her groundbreaking observation that chimpanzees use and fashion tools. She went on to establish the Jane Goodall Institute in 1977, which supports research, community-based conservation, and policy advocacy around the world, with a focus on Africa.

By 1986, she began to devote more energy to advocacy and outreach. She spent the rest of her life traveling the globe, urging governments and communities to protect biodiversity, address climate change, and pursue a more sustainable relationship between people and the natural world.

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Reports, Publications, Resources

1. Towards Gender-Transformative Action on Super Pollutants

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/towards-gender-transformative-action-on-super-pollutants-621734/>

The guidance document, *Towards Gender-Transformative Action on Super Pollutants*, produced in partnership with Oxfam America, identifies gender-differentiated impacts of super pollutants by sector – from gender-related exposure, vulnerability, resources, and decision-making capacity. It shows how women and marginalized groups are disproportionately affected by these pollutants, facing greater health risks, care burdens, and exclusion from decision-making, while also playing vital roles in frontline solutions.

Moving from how the six sectors tend to be organized today, the guidance provides policy-relevant analysis on reshaping sectors based on deeper analysis of gendered considerations and greater participation of women, in particular from low-income and marginalized groups.

Taken together, these point to recommendations which policymakers and civil society can apply towards promoting gender-sensitive and gender-transformative change, alongside sector specific recommendations to be integrated into super pollutant reduction projects on the ground.

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2. Mercy Corps report links climate change to rising conflict in East Africa

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/200644/mercy-corps-climate-conflict-report-uganda-kenya-turkana>

Mercy Corps released a new situation report showing how climate change is driving violent conflict in the cross-border region between Uganda’s Karamoja and Kenya’s Turkana, according to a Mercy Corps. The Climate Change and Conflict Learning Brief draws on studies conducted in 2024 to examine how erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts, and shrinking natural resources are making existing tensions worse in these pastoral communities.

The CCLAP project is trying to build what it calls “a gender-equitable and conflict-sensitive knowledge base” to help communities make better decisions about climate adaptation and natural resource management. The report pays special attention to the role women and girls can play in building peace and resilience, despite facing barriers that limit their participation in decision-making.

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3. International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) Report: A Gender Perspective

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/200961/irena-renewable-energy-gender-report-women-workforce-barriers>

Women make up 32% of the renewable energy workforce globally, a better showing than other energy sectors but still below the overall workforce average, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) revealed in its updated gender report. The figures mask a troubling pattern: female participation drops sharply as jobs get more technical or senior, falling to just 28% in STEM roles, 22% in medium-skilled positions like installation work, and only 19% in senior management or board positions. The renewable energy sector could create 30 million jobs by 2030, making gender balance more than just a fairness issue. IRENA’s second edition report shows that barriers facing women have less to do with skills or interest and more to do with entrenched workplace cultures and organizational practices.

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4. The Canadian Centre of Expertise on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH)

<https://cooperation.ca/how-cooperation-canada-is-powering-capacity-for-impact/>

Over the coming months, we’ll fold the Digna website into www.cooperation.ca. Resources, tools, and publications developed through Digna are being consolidated into a single, reliable access point that protects continuity beyond program cycles. The Digna website is going to remain functional during this transition, and you will still be able to access our website, resource library and directory of service providers.

Going forward, the Cooperation Canada Newsletter will continue to feature regular updates on PSEAH, anti-racism, locally led development, Reconciliation/Indigenous rights and feminist international cooperation, as is our current practice. In addition, we are excited to launch a quarterly newsletter that will focus specifically on our efforts to shift power.

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5. Business Plan Template for Modern Agricultural Cooperatives in Cambodia to Advance Sustainability

<https://www.iisd.org/publications/guide/modern-agricultural-cooperatives-cambodia>

This guide supports modern agricultural cooperatives (MACs) and their partners in Cambodia to develop business plans that strengthen sustainability and resilience.

MACs were created by Cambodia's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries to help farmers shift from traditional family-based farming to stronger, more competitive enterprises. While Cambodia has 1,200 cooperatives with 170,000 members, less than a fifth are performing well due to challenges such as limited leadership, financing, competitiveness, and climate risks.

A business plan is a key tool to address these barriers. This template helps cooperatives and supporting organizations improve operations, integrate sustainability, and align with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations' guidelines on responsible investment and voluntary sustainability standards—unlocking new opportunities for markets and investment.

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6. Food Loss and Waste in Maize, Potato, Fresh Fruits, and Fish Value Chains in Kenya

<https://africa.wri.org/insights/turning-tap-food-loss-and-waste-kenya>

<https://africa.wri.org/research/food-loss-and-waste-maize-potato-fresh-fruits-and-fish-value-chains-kenya>

DOI <https://doi.org/10.46830/wrirpt.23.00093>

In Kenya, a quarter of the population faces severe food insecurity, even as up to 40% of the food produced is lost or wasted each year—an estimated KES 72 billion (US\$578 million). This not only squanders scarce resources such as land, water, labor, and energy but also drives climate change, contributing 21% of Kenya's greenhouse gas emissions.

While often discussed together, food loss and food waste are distinct: food loss occurs earlier in the supply chain—on farms or during handling, storage, and transport—whereas food waste occurs later, at retail, in restaurants, and in households.

A new WRI report, *Food Loss and Waste in Maize, Potato, Fresh Fruits, and Fish Value Chains in Kenya*, provides a comprehensive analysis of the scale, drivers, and policy gaps in key value chains, drawing on literature reviews, interviews, and market observations.

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7. Helping ourselves: tactics for improving internal governance of forest and farm producer organisations

<https://www.iied.org/22675iied>

Strong internal governance is essential for the success and sustainability of forest and farm producer organisations (FFPOs).

FFPOs play a vital role in delivering climate-resilient livelihoods, sustainable natural resource management, and inclusive development in forest and farm landscapes. Yet without strong internal governance, FFPOs risk losing member trust, facing operational inefficiencies and failing to achieve their goals.

This report explores what good internal governance looks like in practice and how it can be strengthened. It draws on a review of relevant literature and six in-depth case studies of well-governed FFPOs from Bolivia, Ghana, Nepal, Tanzania, Togo and Viet Nam.

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8. One million voices, one vision: strengthening governance for grassroots producer organisations

<https://www.iied.org/one-million-voices-one-vision-strengthening-governance-for-grassroots-producer-organisations>

Drawing on the experiences of the Ghana Federation of Forest and Farm Producers (GhaFFaP), Stephen Mwangi explores how strong internal governance in apex-level forest and farm producer organisations can drive inclusive leadership, accountability and resilience across grassroots organisations serving millions of smallholder farmers.

GhaFFaP's experiences show why it is vital for FFPOs at all levels to enhance internal governance. Working together and with donors and other FFPO partners, this will enable them to tackle shared challenges, secure resources and foster climate-smart partnerships.

Better internal governance will help to unify advocacy efforts to influence policies on land, climate and forest governance, amplifying the voices of millions of smallholder farmers.

It will also help to empower youth and women through leadership, digital tools and enterprise support to build resilient, locally rooted value chains.

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9. Leadership, Legacy & the Power of Mentorship

https://youtu.be/y_9SeMvj1iI

In this special episode of WICC Voices, we sit down with Nitisha Agrawal, founder of the Smokeless Cookstove Foundation (India), and Dorothy Kerubo, coordinator at Ecobora (Kenya), who joined the Women in Clean Cooking (WICC) program as a mentor–mentee pair.

Hosted by Kelsey Bischof from the Clean Cooking Alliance, this conversation explores how mentorship can shape confidence, leadership, and cross-border collaboration in the clean cooking sector.

From the power of women-led innovation to the value of learning across cultures, Nitisha and Dorothy share stories of their personal and professional journeys, reflect on challenges and growth, and offer advice for women stepping into leadership roles.

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10. A New Research Portal Uncovers Everyday Truths About Clean Cooking in Kenya

<https://cleancooking.org/news/lifting-the-lid-a-new-research-portal-uncovers-everyday-truths-about-clean-cooking-in-kenya/>

To help companies design the clean cooking solution that best meets the preferences of home cooks in Nairobi, Kenya, the Clean Cooking Alliance's User Insights Lab (UIL) launched the People Insights Portal. This new platform, made possible by funding from Osprey Foundation, translates ethnographic research into accessible insights that organizations can use to better design, market, and sustain clean cooking solutions.

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11. The 2025 Microfinance Index

<https://60decibels.com/insights/mfi-index-2025/>

The 2025 Microfinance Index is built on interviews with 24,450 clients from 39 countries, representing approximately 25 million global microfinance borrowers. It's the fourth year of 60decibels' annual Microfinance Index. This year, we listened to clients of 85 FSPs [financial service providers] in 39 countries. Dive in for 8 key headlines from this year's Index, reflections on what's changed versus what's stayed consistent, and figure out the answer to: how do digital-first providers compare to more traditional FSPs in terms of client protection? We also shed light on how vulnerable vs. non-vulnerable clients fare when they take loans, and what FSPs can do to maximize the probability of success for vulnerable clients.

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12. What's working – and why: What 1,200+ farmers told us about Cotton4Impact

<https://www.sustainable-supply-chains.org/funds-projects/sub-saharan-cotton-initiative/cotton4impact/project-diary-story-4/>

Across Zambia, Tanzania, and Côte d'Ivoire, 60decibels spoke to 1,200+ cotton farmers about the GIZ-supported Cotton4Impact project. 88% reported higher incomes, with many sending more children to school and investing in land, livestock, and climate-smart practices. But challenges remain: delayed inputs and resource constraints are holding some farmers back.

Cotton4Impact is part of the Sub-Saharan Cotton Initiative (SSCI), which is managed by GIZ on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). From the outset, Cotton4Impact took a data-driven approach. It examined demographic data from around 100,000 small-scale cotton producers – a first in the three participating countries and a crucial foundation for understanding long-term impact. To assess this impact, Paul Reinhart AG commissioned global impact measurement company 60 Decibels to conduct a representative survey.

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13. Report: The Status of Women in Agrifood Systems in Sub-Saharan Africa

<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd6631en>

Synopsis (short abstract)

Building on the momentum generated by FAO's 2023 Status of Women in Agrifood Systems global report, this report provides a comprehensive analysis of the status of women in agrifood systems in sub-Saharan Africa, highlighting their vital yet often undervalued roles. It explores how gender inequality intersects with climate change, environmental degradation, and socio-economic factors to impact women's livelihoods, food security, and access to natural resources. Drawing on African-led research and stakeholder consultations, the report identifies persistent barriers and showcases transformative opportunities for gender equality. Key themes include women's work, food security and nutrition, natural resource rights, climate impacts, innovation, and women's agency and collective action. It emphasizes the need for gender-transformative policies, improved data, and inclusive governance to foster resilient, equitable, and sustainable agrifood systems. The overview distills the main messages and recommendations.

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14. Policy Brief: Transforming Nigeria's cassava seed entrepreneur policy guidelines for inclusivity and gender responsiveness

<https://awardfellowships.org/our-learning/transforming-nigerias-cassava-seed-entrepreneur-policy-guidelines-for-inclusivity-and-gender-responsiveness/>

Executive summary

Seed policies and guidelines aim to boost crop productivity and provide a framework for dissemination of certified quality seeds, in line with the objectives of national food security and broader agricultural development goals. Case studies in Oyo, Abia, and Benue states in Nigeria examining gender-based constraints affecting farmer participation as cassava seed entrepreneurs (CSEs) found women, the youth, and migrant farmers to have limited awareness on CSE certification criteria and to face restricted access to resources like land, credit, and finance. An added complication was the requirement of male family members to stand as guarantors for credit for these groups. Cultural barriers such as biased inheritance norms and mobility restrictions were challenges to women's participation as CSEs. Migrants or non-indigene populations faced biases in land allocation, with their land portions being in distant, insecure land, impacting their participation as CSEs and compliance with National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) standards and reinforcing existing inequalities. Inclusive strategies such as involvement in cooperative associations to meet land requirements and create finance opportunities, plus fostering community support can enhance participation and create a more diverse, gender-responsive and resilient seed entrepreneurship ecosystem.

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15. Policy Brief: Fostering gender responsiveness and inclusivity in Nigeria's agricultural seed policies: proposed reforms

<https://awardfellowships.org/our-learning/fostering-gender-responsiveness-and-inclusivity-in-nigerias-agricultural-seed-policies-proposed-reforms/>

Summary

Nigeria's National Agricultural Seed Policy (NASP) 2023 has as an objective the need to address women and marginalized groups' vulnerabilities within the decentralized community seed production system. The Cassava Seed Entrepreneurs (CSEs) Initiative represents the outcome of this policy implemented by the National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) in partnership with key stakeholders such as research institutes, farmer groups, and nongovernmental organizations. The Gender in Agricultural Policies Analysis Tool (GAPo) (Kaaria et al., 2016) was used to analyze the extent to which gender and social inclusion were integrated in NASP, strategic policy documents, and CSE policy guidelines. This brief presents the results and recommendations to inform and align NASP with gender equality and social inclusion goals, which include supporting gender research and using sex-disaggregated data in developing the pertinent strategy, and articulating gender and social inclusion considerations and actions.

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