

February 1, 2026

# GEM Digest of the Month

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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](mailto:dinah.ceplis@gmail.com) to compile and re-distribute once a month.

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Winter scene. Photo courtesy of D. Ceplis.

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## Opportunities and Coming Events

### 1. Events and Outreach: International Year of the Woman Farmer 2026

<https://www.fao.org/woman-farmer-2026/events-and-outreach-activities/en>

All around the world, organizations and communities are joining forces to celebrate the International Year of the Woman Farmer (IYWF). Use the map to explore activities and events taking place near you. Whether you're a farmer, NGO, journalist, government, academic institution, business, trade union, or an individual eager to take part in the celebrations of the IYWF, this is your chance to get involved.

Plan a #IYWF2026 event online or in person, and spread the word on your channels, and let us know if you need our help. We can provide you with a range of promotional materials in several languages – from posters to designs for branded merchandise, videos and event banners. Don't forget to add your initiative to the map and create a dedicated page by completing the form. Some events listed at the website:

- Webinar Series: Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock: Innovating governance for sustainable rangelands and pastoralist livelihoods
- Photo Competition in association with CAP Network Ireland
- WAF Interactive Webinar on "Women in Agriculture: Roles, Challenges, and Opportunities"
- The Right to Food and Women in Agriculture: Voices of Women Farmers

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## 2. International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development 2026

<https://ivy26.ca/>

International Volunteer Year is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to celebrate the power of civic participation and renew Canada's culture of volunteering. Ignite Volunteerism is a year-long effort to elevate the role of civic participation, rebuild volunteer infrastructure, and celebrate volunteer stories.

At its core, Ignite Volunteerism means inspiring Canadians to reconnect with their communities through acts of service, civic action, and mutual support. The campaign responds to a decline in formal volunteering by inviting people from all backgrounds to "Find Your Thing" – discovering personal ways to contribute, whether through local events, grassroots initiatives, or ongoing volunteer commitments.

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## 3. Young Agrarians Apprenticeship Program

<https://youngagrarians.org/programs/apprenticeship-program/>

YA's network of exceptional host farms in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba is offering hands-on farm apprenticeships in regenerative agriculture. Our apprenticeships are a full immersion program that puts you into the heart of running a farm business, day in and day out. Our carefully selected family of host farms have diverse expertise, and skill sets to teach you. **Apply by January 31, 2026.**

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## 4. Advancing Climate Resilience: NbS, Partnerships, and Indigenous Knowledge

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/advancing-climate-resilience-nbs-partnerships-and-indigenous-knowledge-tickets-1980673415504>

This national knowledge-sharing event is hosted by Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC), in partnership with Global Affairs Canada (GAC), as part of the Government of Canada's Partnering for Climate initiative and the Nature and Climate Community of Practice.

Throughout the day, participants will engage in high-level panels, interactive discussions, and facilitated breakout sessions focused on advancing inclusive and effective climate change adaptation. Please note: While in-person participation is reserved for registered Community of Practice members, the virtual public audience is invited to observe and take part in key learning moments from the day. **Feb 3 from 8am to 3:30pm CST**

- Morning Session: Opportunities and challenges for nature-based finance and partnerships
- Afternoon Session: Insights from Indigenous partnerships and knowledge sharing

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## 5. Productive Use Financing Facility

<https://www.clasp.ngo/appliance-financing/>

CLASP is excited to open a new funding window under the second phase of the Productive Use Financing Facility (PUFF 2.0). This General Funding Window, which is supported by the Global Energy Alliance, will support companies offering productive use of energy technologies to users in **Kenya, Ethiopia, and Nigeria**. PUFF is an innovative program that provides grants, subsidies, and technical assistance to suppliers and distributors to lower appliance prices and reach more customers. This makes it easier for small businesses, entrepreneurs, and households to buy energy-efficient technologies, such as solar water pumps, mills, and refrigerators, at favorable prices. The application period for the 2026 Open Funding Window runs from **30 January to 13 February 2026**.

Join CLASP for an applicant webinar [https://clasp.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_8pUOLZkNTzqnT8gvlbLimg](https://clasp.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8pUOLZkNTzqnT8gvlbLimg) on **February 03** to learn more about:

- What types of technologies and business models we are funding
- How to apply and what to expect during the review process
- Key eligibility and reporting requirements

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## 6. Learning Journey: Bridging the Gap Between Communities and Funders in Locally-Led Development

<https://salanga.outgrow.us/LLD-Course-Application-EN>

Call for Interest – Cohort-Based Course. Cooperation Canada and Salanga are pleased to invite applications for a cohort-based course designed for organizations committed to strengthening locally led development (LLD) practices.

This virtual learning journey brings together a cohort of 10–15 organizations for five interactive sessions focused on moving from LLD commitments to operational change. Participants will engage in peer learning, case-based discussions, and hands-on application of tools to reflect on internal systems, power dynamics, and partnership practices.

We welcome applications from individuals who:

- Are affiliated with an organization actively working toward or deepening a commitment to locally led development (1–2 participants per organization)
- Are willing to share both challenges and learning with peers
- Can commit to consistent participation across all sessions

All sessions take place from 10:00 AM–12:00 PM ET

- Session 1: Foundations of Locally Led Development – **February 18, 2026**
- Session 2: Locally Led Development and Organizational Practice – **March 4, 2026**
- Session 3: Peer Exchange on Operationalizing LLD – **March 18, 2026**
- Session 4: Integrating LLD into Funding Proposals – **April 1, 2026**
- Session 5: Co-Creating a Sector Resource – **April 15, 2026**

**Application deadline: February 2, 2026.**

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## 7. Development Finance and Canada's Role in International Cooperation

<https://app.glueup.com/event/development-finance-and-canada-s-role-in-international-cooperation-168156/>

Cooperation Canada commissioned a landscape paper on development finance and Canada's role in international cooperation. The paper maps key development finance instruments and assesses Canada's positioning and effectiveness across these modalities. *See the download link for the landscape paper at the website.*

During this online event, we will share highlights from the paper, including opportunities for Canada to strengthen its contributions to meaningful and inclusive development finance reform, and insights on how Canadian civil society can engage beyond traditional Official Development Assistance (ODA). Join us for a timely discussion on policy, advocacy, and next steps for sector engagement. **February 19, 2026.**

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## 8. Financial Literacy for Organic Grain Operations

<https://www.manitobaorganics.com/event-details-registration/financial-literacy-for-organic-grain-operations>

Jacques Gross, Manitoba Organics' newest Member of the Board of Directors, will lead a practical refresher on financial literacy resources available to organic grain operations. In this 45-minute Zoom presentation, Jacques will walk through where to find tools and information to help you strengthen your farm's financial decision-making. Jacques will also draw on firsthand insights from organic grain farmers. A panel of experienced producers will join the conversation to tackle tough questions around bookkeeping and farm finances. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions during a live Q&A at the end of the session. **Feb 26, 2026.**

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## 9. Webinar: AI chatbot, real farmer impact

[https://60decibels.zoom.us/webinar/register/6817696852895/WN\\_GLU0y4cNTLeRSIVMhzZPGQ](https://60decibels.zoom.us/webinar/register/6817696852895/WN_GLU0y4cNTLeRSIVMhzZPGQ)

Report at <https://60decibels.com/insights/farmers-ai-recommendations/>

60 Decibels partnered with Digital Green to hear from 450 Kenyan farmers using FarmerChat, their AI-powered agricultural advisory tool. Most were new to digital advisory, yet 7 in 10 said they had followed the chatbot's advice, and 82% said they find the recommendations 'very trustworthy'. Women farmers reported even stronger results: higher trust, fewer challenges, and greater uptake of the advice shared. We also cross-referenced farmer responses with backend chatbot data—80% of actions taken aligned with the AI's recommendations. **February 26**

*Female farmers have positive experiences with the chatbot.*

*Female farmers are more likely to recommend FarmerChat than their male counterparts (NPS 75 vs. 57). This is likely driven by female farmers reporting greater trust in the information from FarmerChat. They are also likely to face fewer challenges than male farmers (93% vs. 88%). Female farmers are more likely to report that FarmerChat met 'all' of their farming needs (51% vs. 37%) and are also more likely to be meaningful users (72% vs. 58%).*

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## 10. Measuring What Matters: Inclusive Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning (MEL) at the Triple Nexus

<https://app.glueup.com/event/measuring-what-matters-inclusive-monitoring-evaluation-learning-mel-at-the-triple-nexus-168853/>

Measuring What Matters explores best practices for designing and implementing inclusive MEL systems that support real-time reflection, adaptation, and equity-centered decision-making. Grounded in feminist and locally led approaches, the series supports Canadian international cooperation actors to shift MEL from donor-driven reporting toward locally led learning that strengthens program quality, relevance, and justice across humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding

contexts. Sessions combine interactive activities, peer learning, and practical application, with supplemental learning materials to keep participants engaged throughout the training series.

This three-part series is designed for a broad range of practitioners, reflecting a commitment to breaking down silos and fostering collaborative, evidence-based practice. Inclusive, locally driven MEL depends on multi-stakeholder engagement across roles, sectors, and geographies.

This is a cumulative training series, the discussion will build at each session. Participants are encouraged to attend all three of the virtual training sessions. Following the main training sessions, the facilitators will join two additional, optional learning sessions. Course dates. All sessions take place from 13:00 to 14:30 ET

- Session One - Inclusive MEL at the Triple Nexus: Principals and Pitfalls - Thursday, **February 26, 2026**
- Session Two - Power, Participation and What We Measure: Shaping MEL for Equity - Thursday, **March 12, 2026**
- Session Three: From Data to Insight: Practical Tools for Inclusive & Adaptive Learning - Thursday, **March 26, 2026**
- Learning Spaces (optional, from 13:00 - 14:00 ET): Thursday **April 9, 2026**, Thursday **May 7, 2026**

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## 11. Sustainability of Canadian Agriculture 2026 Virtual Conference

<https://umanitoba.ca/agricultural-food-sciences/sustainability-canadian-agriculture-2026>

This 3-day virtual conference brings together researchers, students, producers, government, commodity organizations and industry representatives with a range of perspectives to collectively share ideas and experiences about how to improve agricultural sustainability in Canada. Sessions will feature brief presentations followed by facilitated panel discussions. The conference will include a hands-on interactive workshop on the Holos model designed to estimate on farm greenhouse gas emissions, as well as a research update featuring graduate students who will share their findings through short videos.

**March 3 to 5, 2026.**

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## 12. Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) Study Launch

<https://app.glueup.com/event/feminist-international-assistance-policy-fiap-study-launch-168513/>

Join us for the public launch of a new study examining Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP) and its impact since 2017. In a shifting global context—marked by geopolitical uncertainty and growing pushback against gender equality—this research offers timely insights into what has worked, what challenges remain, and how feminist principles can continue to inform Canada's international assistance and foreign policy.

This 90-minute virtual event will share key findings from the study and explore their implications for policy, programming, and partnerships. Participants will hear reflections from feminist policy actors, followed by an open Q&A. **March 5, 2026.**

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## 13. Advancing Women in Ag and Food Conference West 2026

<https://advancingwomenconference.ca/2026west/registration/>

At Advancing Women in Ag and Food Conference West 2026 (#AWCWEST2026), you are not just attending sessions; you are stepping into a community of women who understand the realities of agriculture, leadership, and life in today's world. Our 30+ speakers bring lived experience, bold thinking, and actionable insight. Some examples:

- PLENARY How to succeed in Male Dominated Spaces: Empowering Women to Advocate for Themselves in Agriculture—From Sales and Business to Everyday Life. Mariah Moen
- SUNDAY SESSION Rural Watch: Because No Farmer Stands Alone. Lauren Van Ewyk
- PLENARY Leads, She Grows: Stories from Ghana. Zachariah Adomako & Nelly Kurd-Marckay



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## 14. Agri-Food Innovation 2026 – Canada’s Unique Advantage for Nation Building

<https://www.aic.ca/2026-conference/>

*Agri-Food Innovation 2026 – Canada’s Unique Advantage for Nation Building* brings together leaders, innovators, researchers, and policymakers to explore transformative solutions for the future of Canada’s agri-food sector. With a focus on leveraging science to unlock global trade opportunities, harnessing innovation to address persistent workforce challenges, and revitalizing the agri-food ecosystem, this conference will showcase Canada’s strategic strengths and provide pathways toward sustainable growth, resilience, and global leadership in agri-food. Join us to shape the next chapter in Canada’s nation-building journey through agri-food innovation. Some key elements we will discuss:

- From Lab to Market to Global Impact: Connecting Innovation to Power Canada’s Agri-Food Sector Trade,
  - Harvesting Innovation: Solving Workforce Challenges in Agri-Food
  - Re-imagining the Agri-Food Science: Technology and Innovation Ecosystem: Connections, Investments and Solutions
- May 26 & 27, 2026, Location: Ottawa, Ontario.**

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## 15. Catalyste+

<https://www.catalysteplus.org/>

Catalyste+ is a Canadian economic development organization. Since 1967, we’ve partnered with businesses, governments and community organizations in emerging countries and Indigenous communities in Canada. We aim to strengthen skills and competencies to increase local capacity and grow economies inclusively and sustainably.

Catalyste+ events offer a unique learning experience, such as key knowledge for volunteering in northern Indigenous communities, information on our partners' actions in environmental sustainability, and cultural sensitivity training for volunteering in the Caribbean.

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## This Month’s News

### 1. Technical skills gap looms for agriculture

<https://www.manitobacooperator.ca/machinery/video-technical-skills-gap-looms-for-agriculture/>

Manitoba farmers are used to adapting — to the weather, to the markets, to unexpected breakdowns or agronomic issues — but agriculture leaders say farm technology is changing so fast that the sector is struggling to find people with the right skills to keep up.

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Today’s farms generate more data, use more technology, incorporate more computers and connectivity and have more digital sophistication than at any point in history.

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### 2. Top 7 key events that shaped the aid sector in 2025

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/203323/top-7-key-events-that-shaped-the-aid-sector-in-2025>

The year 2025 will be remembered as a seismic turning point for global humanitarian aid.

- 1) The USAID Earthquake: In January, Trump dismantled the U.S. Agency for International Development through an executive order
- 2) Unprecedented Western donor cuts
- 3) Mass layoffs: As funding collapsed, humanitarian employment followed, with job losses reaching historic levels. A sector-wide lay-off tracker found that at least 233,818 humanitarian jobs had been lost across 159 agencies.
- 4) United Nations under strain
- 5) Politicization and militarization of aid
- 6) Retreat from multilateral agreements
- 7) The forced humanitarian reset: With resources collapsing, the aid system has entered a phase of ‘hyper-prioritization’.

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### **3. United States Exits Key Entities, Vital Climate Treaties in Major Retreat from Global Cooperation**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/01/what-next-united-states-exits-key-entities-vital-climate-treaties-in-major-retreat-from-global-cooperation/>

President Donald Trump has escalated efforts to further distance the United States from international organizations and entities focused on climate, the environment, and energy. This strategy is in step with his administration’s established approach to undermine and redirect funds and international cooperation away from climate and clean energy programs.

But where some see a catastrophic escalation, other global experts, such as Yamide Dagnet, Senior Vice President, International at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), see first and foremost a continuing formalization of damaging positions already taken by the current administration.

While conceding that the moment at hand is indeed overwhelming, especially coming on the back of COP30, Dagnet told IPS that “the rest of the world must turn this challenge into an opportunity to break new ground in climate action, financing and international cooperation.”

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### **4. From camps to crops: US aid cuts reshape refugee life in Thailand**

<https://www.devex.com/news/from-camps-to-crops-us-aid-cuts-reshape-refugee-life-in-thailand-111627>

More than 80,000 Burmese refugees, many of whom fled military violence in the 1980s and 1990s in what is now called Myanmar, have instead been confined to nine camps strung along the Thai-Myanmar border. New fruit picking workers are Burmese refugees — men and women who, until recently, were barred from formal employment in Thailand. This fruit farm, five hours southeast of Bangkok in Chanthaburi province, is among the first in the country legally permitted to hire them.

Inside those camps, survival depended on aid. After the Trump administration returned to office in January, U.S. humanitarian funding was slashed as part of a broader dismantling of foreign assistance programs. Without payment, aid groups can no longer meet basic food and health care needs across the nine camps. Barred from formal employment, the refugees, until recently, had no means to earn their own money to purchase food or medicine.

At the same time, Thailand was facing a crisis of its own. A long-simmering border dispute with Cambodia reignited in mid-2025, triggering a mass departure of Cambodian migrant workers who make up a significant share of Thailand’s agricultural and service-sector workforce. Farms, factories, and restaurants suddenly found themselves short-staffed. Caught between a labor shortage and a growing humanitarian emergency inside the camps, Thai authorities pivoted. In a careful policy shift, the government granted limited permission for eligible refugees to work under strict conditions.

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## 5. US aid cuts end rural Nepalese girls' schooling

<https://www.devex.com/news/us-aid-cuts-yank-nepal-s-girls-out-of-school-and-into-child-marriage-111580>

A short-lived U.S.-funded education program brought teachers to villages where girls had never been allowed to attend school. Its abrupt end has left many of those girls without a path back to learning — and under increased pressure to marry.

In January 2024, the United States Agency for International Development launched the Equity and Inclusion in Education program, designed to help vulnerable children — especially girls — enter or return to school. For the first time, teachers came to rural villages to enroll girls in accelerated classes meant to bridge years of lost education.

The new USAID program offered a route into that pipeline for children who had never attended school or had dropped out by targeting 900,000 vulnerable children in 1,900 schools across 18 districts.

The program was coordinated by Plan International Nepal under the government of Nepal's School Education Sector Reform Plan, with local nongovernmental organizations Aasaman Nepal and Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre leading implementation. Its abrupt end cost about 250 jobs across Plan International and its implementing partners, according to Ram Kishan, Nepal country director of Plan International.

teachers who had been coming to villages to teach classes at the local madrasa stopped arriving after the Trump administration's sudden foreign aid cuts suspended the Equity and Inclusion in Education program in January 2025 and terminated it in April. Other U.S.-funded education programs — including a \$40 million effort to improve early grade reading and a \$17 million government-to-government education direct financing initiative — were also terminated.

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## 6. It's not too late to reverse course on financing women and girls

<https://www.devex.com/news/it-s-not-too-late-to-reverse-course-on-financing-women-and-girls-111584>

Across the world, one simple truth holds: When women thrive, societies thrive. Yet, as 2026 begins, governments and global institutions are still not investing in women and girls at the scale the evidence demands. The question now is whether they will finally match their ambitions with sustained, strategic financing.

Since leaders affirmed that women's rights are human rights in the 1995 Beijing Declaration, the world has grown more uncertain — economically strained, politically polarized, and increasingly anxious about the future. In moments like these, it can be tempting for governments to tighten budgets in ways that quietly roll back investments in women and girls. But cuts to women's health, child care, or economic opportunity are not savings. They are costs deferred — costs that families, communities, and national economies inevitably pay later, with steeper penalties.

**Three solutions offer especially powerful returns to strengthen economies and support families. We call them the “three Cs”: Contraceptives, Care and Capital.**

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## 7. Confronting efforts to dismantle gender equality and inclusion

<https://odi.org/en/insights/confronting-efforts-to-dismantle-gender-equality-and-inclusion/>

The ongoing attack on the rights of women and all marginalised peoples is intensified by political and institutional decisions that dismantle dedicated offices for equality and inclusion, cut targeted funding or relegate equality and inclusion work to mainstreaming. This is not merely adjusting budgets or streamlining, it's weakening the structural foundations that protect and advance these rights.

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## 8. Fairtrade addresses gender equality

<https://www.fairtrade.net/ca-en/why-fairtrade/why-we-do-it/gender-equality.html>

Fairtrade Standards are designed to prevent gender inequality, including requirements on no discrimination, zero tolerance on abusive behaviour and no testing for pregnancy when recruiting.

We have programmes specifically designed to train women and support them in taking leadership roles within their community. For example, producer networks are rolling out women's schools of leadership, enabling women to learn business, negotiation and finance skills. Many of these women go on to take on leadership and committee positions within their cooperatives and communities.

Many Fairtrade Premium projects directly benefit women, enabling changes to decision-making structures in certified producer organisations, and improving economic opportunities. There are also specific initiatives targeted at entrepreneurship and women.

Close monitoring of gender inequality is crucial to learn what works best and build on successes. Fairtrade undertakes several studies on this matter.

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## 9. Three pathways to advance gender equality in the EU-India partnership

<https://odi.org/en/insights/bridging-the-gap-three-pathways-to-advance-gender-equality-in-the-eu-india-partnership/>

Negotiations on the long-awaited EU–India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) are in their final stages. At the same time, a successor document to the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) – the main framework linking support for gender equality and external action - is under development in Brussels. There is a clear opportunity to bring these two strands together, i.e. to leverage the implementation of the GAP, by linking its goals to the growing economic engagement with India. How to do this effectively is explored here.

Gender equality is one of the five strategic and operational priorities of the EU Human Rights and Democracy Country Strategy for India. Drawing from priority areas in the GAP, the EU's gender action in India has four thematic areas of focus: addressing gender-based violence and sexual harassment, promoting economic and social rights, promoting equal participation and leadership, and seizing the opportunities of the green and digital transformations.

Truly gender transformative approaches are structural in nature, built in - by design - to all strategies, policies and instruments. The EU's current deliberations with India offer three key opportunities:

- 1) Gender mainstreaming in trade
- 2) Global Gateway: ensuring infrastructure investments don't widen inequalities
- 3) Gender-inclusive climate finance and a just energy transition

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## 10. Cloth wraps treated with insecticide cut malaria cases in babies

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/jan/16/cloth-wraps-treated-with-insecticide-cut-malaria-cases-in-babies>

From Africa to Latin America to Asia, babies have been carried in cloth wraps on their mothers' backs for centuries. Now, the practice of generations of women could become a lifesaving tool in the fight against malaria.

Researchers in Uganda have found that treating wraps with the insect repellent permethrin cut rates of malaria in the infants carried in them by two-thirds.

The trial involved 400 mothers and babies aged about six months old, in Kasese, a rural, mountainous part of western Uganda. Half were given wraps, known locally as *lesus*, treated with permethrin and half used standard, untreated wraps that had been dipped in water as a “sham” repellent.

Researchers followed them for six months to see which babies developed malaria, re-treating the wraps once a month. Babies carried in the treated wraps were two-thirds less likely to develop malaria. In that group there were 0.73 cases per 100 babies each week, and in the other there were 2.14. Babies carried in permethrin-treated wraps were slightly more likely to develop rashes, at 8.5% v 6%, although none were sufficiently troublesome that they withdrew from the study.

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## **11. ADB supports Rustavi Azot Indorama's energy-efficient fertilizer project in Georgia**

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/203334/adb-georgia-fertilizer-energy-efficiency-project-2026>

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$50 million loan agreement with JSC Rustavi Azot (Rustavi Azot Indorama) to modernize the company’s fertilizer production facilities in Georgia with energy-efficient technologies. The Rustavi Azot Indorama Energy-Efficient Fertilizer Project aims to improve energy efficiency in fertilizer production while promoting sustainable agricultural practices in Georgia, contributing to the country’s Vision 2030 and Nationally Determined Contribution targets.

ADB also mobilized \$500,000 in technical assistance to support capacity building for smallholder farmers in Georgia, with a focus on women. The project will promote resilient agriculture practices, sustainable soil management and efficient fertilizer application to prevent further land degradation, restore soil health and boost agricultural productivity.

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## **12. Meet the agri-influencers drawing African youth to farming**

<https://www.devex.com/news/meet-the-agri-influencers-drawing-african-youth-to-farming-111464>

Alex Afari of Accra region in Ghana is gaining an audience on Facebook, where he has about 108,000 followers, as well as TikTok and LinkedIn. He’s among a new crop of young African farmers transforming agriculture on the continent through social media, turning platforms into tools that are helping farmers improve crop yields, find new markets, boost their incomes, and build partnerships to solve agriculture problems in Africa.

But in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, these traditional extension services reach fewer than 1 in 5 farmers, according to a report by the Mastercard Foundation and Caribou, a consultancy firm. Meanwhile 86% of adults lack bank accounts, and rural farmers often receive below-market prices for their produce.

The report reviewed social media use among farmers, processors, and traders in Côte d’Ivoire and Benin’s rice, cashew, and soy value chains. It found that they’re using WhatsApp for market intelligence, setting up groups by crop and region; Facebook as a storefront via business pages that showcase their products; TikTok as a training platform where users can upload and watch videos on farming techniques; and Instagram for branding, particularly among urban agribusinesses hoping to attract middle-class or international clientele.

Before becoming an agripreneur and a trainer to other agripreneurs, Sandra Nabasirye, an agri-influencer in her early 30s in Uganda’s Luwero district, usually waited for buyers on her 1.5-acre land to purchase her tomatoes, green peppers, and seedlings. Then in 2019, she started posting on social media — and that created an instant market.

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## **13. How a global cold-chain revolution can boost food security**

<https://www.devex.com/news/how-a-global-cold-chain-revolution-can-boost-food-security-111757>

With global temperatures and food insecurity both on the rise, governments and private-sector companies are increasingly turning to cold chain infrastructure as a way to reduce post-harvest food loss.

Cold chains are networks of cold storage hubs, refrigerated transport, and monitoring systems, which help to keep food cool as it moves along the supply chain from farm to consumer. But many low- and middle-income countries lack adequate cold chain infrastructure. Although estimates vary, up to 40% of food spoils before it reaches consumers in sub-Saharan Africa, in large part due to lack of cold storage.

As well as contributing to food insecurity and eroding farmers' incomes, food loss and waste is also a major contributor to greenhouse gas and methane emissions: The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that if food loss were a country, it would be the world's "third-largest greenhouse gas emitter."

But cold-chain infrastructure will need to come with investment in new technology, local capacity building, and innovative business models to ensure societal and climate benefits, as well as just economic ones, experts said. But investing in cold chain solutions can be unaffordable in sub-Saharan Africa, where smallholder farmers make up around 80% of farms. Many farmers also grow and sell crops seasonally, making year-round investment in cold-chain solutions unprofitable as they would only be needed for a few months of the year.

Kenyan company SokoFresh offers solar-powered walk-in cold rooms in remote and hard-to-reach regions, ensuring affordable access to cooling even in places without stable power supplies. It uses a pay-as-you-store model and serves over 5,000 smallholder farmers each year across Kenya. In Nigeria, ColdHubs allows farmers to purchase cold storage and transportation as they need it, while using a remote monitoring system that offers real-time oversight of refrigerated trucks and cold facilities.

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## 14. One doula's push to help moms-to-be face climate risks head-on

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/climate/what-on-earth-doulas-9.7055729>

Florida faces a variety of climate impacts, including more intense hurricanes, flooding and increasing heat. The program, run through Florida Clinicians for Climate Action, teaches doulas to talk with clients about the dangers extreme heat can pose for pregnant mothers and fetuses. That includes the links between heat waves and pre-term births and stillbirths — risks found to be higher for Black and Hispanic mothers in the United States.

The program also teaches doulas to help clients plan for disasters, including evacuations. They make sure clients know where cooling centres are and discuss plans for how they'll get to medical appointments during a flood or storm.

Worldwide, climate change is posing an increasing risk to pregnant mothers and newborns, with many facing multiple crises simultaneously. According to the charity Save the Children, eight million babies were born in places facing a humanitarian crisis in 2025, and six million of them also faced impacts of the climate crisis.

As climate impacts accelerate, Louis said she hopes more attention will be paid to the needs of pregnant and postpartum families when it comes to emergency planning. Her team is looking for ways to expand and adapt their training so that doulas everywhere can play a role in that work, including in Canada.

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## 15. Thousands of Kenya's Smallholder Coffee Farmers Risk Losing EU Market as Deforestation Law Takes Effect

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/01/thousands-of-kenyas-smallholder-coffee-farmers-risk-losing-eu-market-as-deforestation-law-takes-effect/>

As the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) takes effect, smallholder coffee farmers in Kenya face an existential threat. EUDR is a new law adopted by the European Union to prevent the import and sale of products linked to

deforestation and forest degradation. It targets seven key products, among them cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, soy, timber, and rubber.

And even though smallholders like Sarah Nyaga, a smallholder farmer from Embu County in central Kenya, have an extra six months to comply with EUDR, many are not aware of its existence. Farmers are in rural areas, and many have no access to the internet. They rely on vernacular media houses for information, and many have never heard of EUDR. Government and cooperative society officials who have been tasked with breaking it down have done very little,” said Nyaga.

Across Kenya’s coffee-growing zones, farmers, cooperative societies, and coffee exporters fear losing the EU market for failure to comply with the EUDR policy. According to George Watene from the Global Coffee Platform, insufficient access to infrastructure and technical support is a significant barrier to EUDR compliance for many farmers.

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## **16. Drought leaves more than two million Kenyans at risk of hunger and disease**

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/203897/kenya-drought-who-warning-hunger-malnutrition-disease-crisis-2026>

More than two million people across Kenya are at risk of worsening hunger, disease, and malnutrition after one of the driest October–December rainy seasons in decades, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned. The 2025 short rains brought only 30 to 60 percent of normal rainfall in most areas, marking the driest season since 1981 in parts of eastern Kenya. The drought has strained health services, dried up water sources, and devastated crops and livestock—leaving the country with an unfolding humanitarian emergency.

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## **17. Mozambique floods deepen crisis for children as malnutrition and disease spread**

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/203894/mozambique-floods-unicef-warning-child-malnutrition-unsafe-water-crisis-2026>

Heavy flooding in Mozambique is turning unsafe water and hunger into life-threatening dangers for children, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) warned. Weeks of intense rainfall have triggered widespread flooding, destroying homes, schools, and health centers—and with cyclone season just beginning, the crisis is set to deepen.

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## **18. World Bank puts \$100 million into Benin women entrepreneurs**

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/203766/world-bank-benin-women-entrepreneurs-100-million-financing-training>

The World Bank approved \$100 million to help Benin expand financing and support for women entrepreneurs working in both formal and informal businesses, the bank said. The Women Entrepreneurship Development and Access to Finance Program will reach more than 10,000 women-led micro, small, and medium enterprises with loans, training, mentoring, and business advice. The program will also set up a Women’s Business Center to coordinate support.

The initiative targets high-potential women-owned businesses—called “Agodjié Champions”—through competitive selection. These businesses will get technical assistance, tailored financing, help becoming investment-ready, market access, and structured mentorship to turn them into job-creating flagships of Benin’s economy.

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## 19. As U.S. states ban abortion, Americans refrain from travelling and start to take risks

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/203664/as-u-s-states-ban-abortion>

For nearly five decades, U.S. federal law guaranteed a nationwide right to abortion and limited how far states could go to restrict this. That framework collapsed in 2022, when the Supreme Court's decision in Dobbs vs. Jackson removed constitutional protection and handed full authority back to individual state governments. This has resulted in a fragmented system of different laws, one that not only determines whether abortion is available, but also influences whether people feel safe to pursue care at all.

Abortion law in the U.S. now varies dramatically by state. Internationally, the trend is moving in the opposite direction. Over the past three decades, more than 60 countries have expanded abortion rights while only four have rolled these back – Poland, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the United States.

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## 20. Attempt to overturn the Gambia's ban on FGM heard by supreme court

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/jan/09/the-gambia-female-genital-mutilation-fgm-supreme-court-case-overturn-ban>

A group of religious leaders and an MP in the Gambia have launched efforts to overturn a ban on female genital mutilation at the country's supreme court. The court case, due to resume this month, comes after two babies bled to death after undergoing FGM in the Gambia last year. Almameh Gibba, an MP and one of the plaintiffs, tabled a bill to decriminalise FGM that was rejected by the country's parliament in 2024.

Activists and lawyers see this as the latest move in a backlash against women's rights that is eroding gender protections across the world. The Gambia has one of the highest rates of FGM in the world. Almost three-quarters of women between 15 and 49 have undergone the practice and nearly two-thirds of them were cut before the age of five.

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## 21. Africa has bold cervical cancer plans. Now we must deliver them

<https://www.devex.com/news/africa-has-bold-cervical-cancer-plans-now-we-must-deliver-them-111774>

Every day in Kenya, nine to 10 women die from cervical cancer — a disease that is almost entirely preventable. This is happening not because we lack medical tools or policy ambition, but because too often those tools do not yet reach the women who need them.

Kenya's newly launched National Cervical Cancer Elimination Action Plan 2026-2030 is fully costed and results-oriented, designed to drive progress toward these targets through human papillomavirus vaccination, early and equitable screening, prompt treatment, and long-term follow-up across all 47 counties.

Elsewhere on the continent, Rwanda, Nigeria, and Eswatini have made significant progress. At the institutional level, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention is establishing Centers of Excellence in Rwanda, Morocco, and Zambia to drive the elimination of cervical cancer by 2030.

These are the right moves. But policy does not save lives on its own. A persistent gap remains between reform and uptake.

What works is not mysterious. In western Kenya, facilities using HPV self-sampling share results via mobile messaging, enabling faster follow-up and treatment. Across the country, local organizations and volunteer networks integrate education into markets, churches, and women's groups — the places where health decisions are actually made. The lesson for development groups is clear: Elimination requires delivery architecture, not just strategy.



## Reports, Publications, Resources

### 1. Clean Energy Solutions for Tanzania

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCKQpVYDRII>

"Powering Planetary Change: Climate Solutions for Africa, by Africa" is a groundbreaking documentary series produced by the African Women in Agricultural Research for Development (AWARD).

In this video, we feature Raheli Elibariki, an environmental scientist at the Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organization and a 2020 One Planet Laureate Candidate from Tanzania.

She is working to replace fuelwood in Tanzania by improving access to biomass briquettes, a sustainable energy source that promotes environmental conservation. By offering this eco-friendly alternative to communities, she helps reduce deforestation, lower carbon emissions, and support local livelihoods. She is particularly empowering women in Tanzania to take on leadership roles in energy production and entrepreneurship.

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### 2. Association between climate resilience capacities and pro-WEAI indicators

<https://hdl.handle.net/10568/180736>

*Association between climate resilience capacities and pro-WEAI indicators: Evidence from small livestock farmers in **West Bengal, India.***

#### *Abstract/Description*

This study examines the relationship between women's empowerment indicators and climate resilience capacities in rural India, emphasizing the unequal burden of climate change on women's livelihoods and adaptive options. Using baseline data of CGIAR Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator project, the analysis focuses on 277 women engaged in goat and poultry rearing in West Bengal. Women's empowerment was measured using the project-level Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (pro-WEAI), while resilience capacity assessment included four dimensions: preventive, anticipative, absorptive and adaptive capacities. Descriptive statistics reveal low levels of both empowerment and resilience among women respondents. Correlation analysis indicates a significant positive association between overall empowerment and overall resilience capacity ( $r = 0.373$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), with most pro-WEAI indicators strongly linked to absorptive and adaptive capacities. The analysis further shows a nonlinear pattern: resilience capacity rises sharply up to a threshold level of empowerment adequacy, beyond which gains taper off. Independent-sample t-test indicates that adequacy in ownership of land and other assets significantly enhances resilience capacity, followed by adequacy in self-efficacy and group membership. Conversely, adequacy in autonomy in income shows no significant association with any resilience capacity. The findings suggest that empowerment and resilience reinforce each other in bidirectional but context-specific ways, underscoring the need for integrated approaches that simultaneously strengthen women's agency and their capacity to manage climatic risks.

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### 3. Blog: The hidden costs of gendered inequities: Findings from true cost accounting of cropping systems in Kenya

<https://www.ifpri.org/blog/the-hidden-costs-of-gendered-inequities-findings-from-true-cost-accounting-of-cropping-systems-in-kenya/>

The cost of a tomato in Kenya cannot just be measured by the shillings reflected in the direct cost-based market price—it also reflects the costs associated with the land that gets eroded, the carbon emitted, the water and air that get polluted, the children that miss school, underpaid women’s labor, the harassment they endure in the fields, and the credit they are denied.

As a data point, in other words, a tomato’s market price does not account for all those hidden costs. In the quest to transform food systems, we often focus on what’s visible—i.e., measured by traditional methods: Crop yields, input costs, and market prices. But beneath the surface lies a complex web of social, economic, and ecological dynamics that shapes who benefits and who bears the burdens in food systems. These effects can be captured in true cost accounting (TCA), a framework that addresses the diverse costs and benefits of food production systems.

Our TCA analysis, which draws on data from over 1,500 farm-households and around 1,000 farm workers across Kisumu, Kajiado, and Vihiga counties in Kenya, reveals stark differences in access to resources, labor dynamics, and economic outcomes between male- and female-managed plots:

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## 4. Blog: Five forces reshaping food systems in 2026

<https://odi.org/en/insights/five-forces-reshaping-food-systems-in-2026/>

The World Economic Forum in Davos was dominated by talks around a paradigm shift in technology, AI and what organisers call 'geoeconomic confrontation'. Food systems rarely featured, but the geopolitical forces now influencing the global economy are impacting food security, trade and resilience more than ever.

That reality was captured by the Canadian Prime Minister who told the Forum that the rules-based international order is over, and countries must develop strategic autonomy in energy, food, critical minerals, and finance: 'A country that cannot feed itself, fuel itself or defend itself has few options'.

Food systems are now being reorganised around national protectionism, and geopolitical alignment, rather than a shared global vision like the SDGs. The five forces below show how this shift is already reshaping who eats, who trades, who produces - and who is left exposed:

1. Humanitarian food assistance is being redesigned under scarcity - and millions of people are being left behind
2. Defence budgets are displacing investments in food security at historic scale
3. Trade measures and market access rules are reshaping food systems
4. Price stabilisation is mistaken for resilience, ignoring structural vulnerability
5. Philanthropic capital is reshaping food systems financing, but not replacing public investment

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## 5. Ukraine’s agriculture: FAO sets out a three-year emergency and early recovery plan

<https://www.fao.org/newsroom/detail/ukraine-s-agriculture--fao-sets-out-a-three-year-emergency-and-early-recovery-plan/en>

Permanent Link to the Response Plan <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/cd7800en>

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has published its Emergency and Early Recovery Response Plan for Ukraine for 2026–2028, outlining priority actions to protect agricultural livelihoods, restore productive capacity and support Ukraine’s agrifood sector.

The Plan is structured around three mutually reinforcing pillars: evidence and coordination, emergency agriculture, and early recovery. Together, these pillars aim to ensure that assistance is targeted, data-driven and aligned with national priorities, while supporting the gradual transition from humanitarian assistance toward recovery and longer-term resilience.

Special emphasis is placed on frontline regions, women and youth, internally displaced persons and returnees, as well as on the rehabilitation of agricultural land affected by explosive hazards – a prerequisite for restoring production, strengthening food security and enabling safe economic activity in rural areas. By linking emergency action with early recovery and investment-oriented interventions, FAO seeks to preserve Ukraine’s agricultural potential and support the agrifood sector as a cornerstone of national resilience and future reconstruction.

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**6. Podcast: Voices from the Barn**

<https://www.usdec.org/newsroom/international-year-of-the-woman-farmer>

In recognition of 2026 being the United Nations International Year of the Woman Farmer, the U.S. Dairy Export Council (USDEC) is pleased to launch a podcast, *Voices from the Barn*. Hosted by USDEC President and CEO, Krysta Harden, this podcast features conversations with dairy women farmers from across the U.S. and around the world. These women share their stories, challenges, accomplishments and so much more. Be sure to check back often for more new episodes.

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**7. Long-Term Change at the Last Mile: Solar Sister Alumni Impact Report**

<https://solarsister.org/alumni-impact-report/>

How lasting is the impact of women-led clean energy entrepreneurship? Our alumni study with Solar Sister shows just how far the ripple goes. One year after their last engagement, 92% of alumni are earning income, 85% report improved social status, and 9 in 10 say their quality of life has improved. The findings show that when women access clean energy markets, they build businesses, shift norms, and strengthen communities.

At Solar Sister, we’ve always believed that women’s entrepreneurship is not only about the immediate impact of a woman’s business, but about tomorrow’s opportunities. With the release of our first Alumni Impact Report, created in partnership with 60 Decibels with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE), and 2X Global, we now have the data to show just how far that ripple goes.

Between April and May 2025, 60 Decibels conducted interviews with 474 Solar Sister alumni. These are women who have not engaged with Solar Sister for at least 12 months, indicating that the impacts we observe are sustained and independent.

These findings affirm Solar Sister’s model: investing in women at the last mile creates clean energy access, and, in addition, new businesses, stronger households, and more resilient communities. The report also surfaced important lessons on best practices and key drivers of change, including the power of training attendance, the importance of self-defined empowerment, and the outsized ripple effect when women launch additional businesses.

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**8. The Deployment Handbook for Institutional E-Cookers**

<https://www.clasp.ngo/research/all/making-the-switch/>

This report, “Making the Switch: The Deployment Handbook for Institutional E-Cookers,” conducted by Efficiency for Access in partnership with the Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) programme, aims to inform practitioners seeking advice on the design, deployment, and operation of commercially available institutional e-cooking technologies and provide actionable recommendations for scaling e-cooking in institutions in Kenya. This guide covers commercially available institutional e-cooking technologies designed for both on- and off-grid applications. It provides:

- An overview of the current state of e-cooking in institutions in Kenya
- Step-by-step advice for the pre-assessment, planning, installation, and commissioning of e-cooking solutions
- Opportunities to scale the adoption of institutional e-cooking

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## 9. Mepsy: The Appliance & Equipment Climate Impact Calculator

<https://www.clasp.ngo/tools/mepsy/>

Mepsy is CLASP's digital tool to model the impacts of energy and carbon reduction policies. Pre-loaded with data from 162 countries, it supports analysis and prioritization for the most energy-intensive appliances and equipment. Designed for researchers and policymakers, Mepsy's dynamic interface makes it easy to identify efficiency policy opportunities and analyze their energy and carbon impacts.

Mepsy uses a "bottom-up" accounting approach, considering the number of appliances in use in a country, the energy performance of representative products, the climate-intensity of the local power grid, and other variables to analyze the electricity use, carbon dioxide emissions, and consumer energy costs associated with a given policy scenario.

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## 10. Efficiency for Access newsletter, January 2026

<https://efficiencyforaccess.org/updates/>

We're excited to bring you the latest highlights and stories advancing clean energy access through high-performing appliances in low- and middle-income countries. A sampling of articles:

- Empowering Cold Chain Innovators in Kenya
- The Deployment Handbook for e-Cookers
- Lighting a Path to Affordability
- The Procurement Handbook for Off- and Weak-Grid Appliances
- Global LEAP Awards Launch New Induction Cooktop Buyer's Guide

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