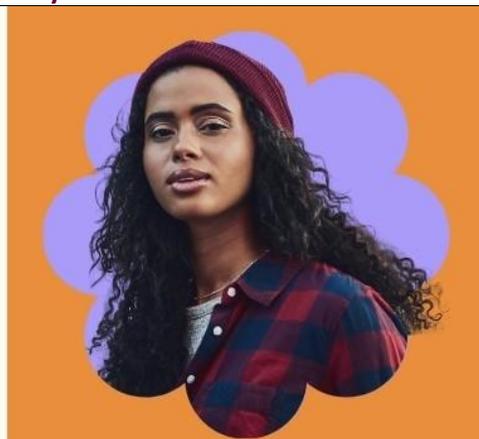




INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Canada



Source: <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/commemorations-celebrations/international-womens-day.html>

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.

Dinah Ceplis, P.Ag. (Ret.), FGHIH, FAIC, (Volunteer Editor)

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## Opportunities and Coming Events

### 1. Co-creating equitable agrifood systems with women at the center

<https://gender.cgiar.org/events/rights-justice-action-co-creating-equitable-agrifood-systems-women-center>

A recent report on the status of women in agrifood systems in sub-Saharan Africa highlights women as carriers of culture, knowledge, and social cohesion within agrifood systems. It underscores that greater investment in women’s empowerment can boost social justice and unlock inclusive growth, food security, and climate resilience.

The event will be held on **March 2, 2026** at the CIFOR-ICRAF campus in Nairobi and live-streamed via the CGIAR Gender Accelerator and AWARD YouTube channels.

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### 2. Impact of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP)

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

Join Cooperation Canada on **March 5** for the virtual launch of a new study examining the impact of Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP). The event also highlights key findings and explores how feminist principles can continue to guide Canada’s international assistance in a rapidly evolving global context as we mark International Women’s Day. This event will feature insights from feminist policy actors and a Q&A with participants.

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### 3. International Women’s Day

<https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/commemorations-celebrations/international-womens-day.html>

The United Nations recognized 1975 as International Women's Year and began celebrating **March 8** as International Women's Day. Today, International Women's Day is a day of unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy, and action and is marked in many countries worldwide, including Canada.

Fair workplaces, equitable policies, and thriving communities don’t happen overnight; they’re built through sustained, coordinated effort over time. Over 50 years ago, Canadian women and civil society groups called for action to advance gender equality, which led to the creation of Status of Women Canada in 1976, now the Department for Women and Gender Equality. This 50-year milestone marks progress and highlights the ongoing work to build a future where everyone can reach their full potential.

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### 4. LIFT Program Launches to Support Community-Led International Cooperation by Canadian SMOs

<https://icn-rcc.ca/programs/lift/> and <https://icn-rcc.ca/lift-eligibility/>

Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) working in international cooperation now have access to a new funding and learning program, one designed to reduce barriers, support learning, and strengthen locally-led change. Canada

LIFTs (LIFT) has been created to support Canadian non-profits and charities working in solidarity with local and international partners with access to flexible funding with practical resources, peer connection, and relevant learning opportunities. It will provide predictable opportunities for organizations to respond to community priorities and to engage with diverse public audiences in Canada and around the world.

LIFT will open its first funding stream, **Catalyst**, focused on smaller funding amounts that support experimentation, learning and early impact. **Registration deadline is between February 19 and March 30, 2026.**

Additional streams will follow, with larger amounts and matching opportunities to scale, adapt and deepen collaboration. Registration for the **Momentum Fund and the Together Fund is between April 1 and June 30, 2026.**

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## 5. Positive Communication & Workplace Culture in Agriculture - Online

<https://youngagrarians.org/events/march-17-2026-online-positive-communication-workplace-culture-in-agriculture/>

Join Young Agrarians and AgSafe BC on **March 17, 2026** for a practical webinar on positive communication and workplace culture. We'll explore the critical role of positive communication and a healthy workplace culture in driving success across the agriculture sector. Participants will learn how fostering respectful, open, and clear communication can strengthen team dynamics, improve productivity, and support staff retention, especially in the often high-pressure, seasonal, and multi-generational environments common in agriculture.

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## 6. Women Deliver Conference 2026

<https://womendeliver.org/wd2026/speakers/>

From **27–30 April 2026**, the Women Deliver Conference will be regionally hosted for the first time — by the Oceanic Pacific — in **Narrm (Melbourne), Australia**, on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation.

(WD2026) will serve as a rallying point for feminist solidarity, resistance, and reimagination. As anti-rights actors grow more organized, funded, and emboldened, WD2026 will be a collective act of defiance against efforts to control our bodies, erase our identities, and dismantle our rights. Going beyond geography to shift power, the Conference centers the leadership, knowledge, and resistance of feminists, activists, and First Nations leaders across the Oceanic Pacific, a region at the forefront of climate justice, gender equality, and decolonization. Registration is now open.

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## 7. Manitoba Farm Women's Conference

<https://www.facebook.com/ManitobaFarmWomensConference>

This year is the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the annual Manitoba Farm Women's Conference in **Winnipeg on November 16th - 18th, 2026**. We want to celebrate to honour all women in agriculture: from those working the land to caring for animals, those behind desks that help us stay running, and to those who stay behind the scenes to help their families in every way possible. This year aligns with the "International Year of the Women Farmer" (IYWF).

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## This Month's News

# 1. Cuts at Global Affairs raise questions about Canada's diplomatic ambitions

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/cuts-at-global-affairs-raise-questions-about-canada-s-diplomatic-ambitions-9.7071322>

Less federal government spending and pending public service cuts are raising questions about Canada's ability to match its global ambitions with its diplomatic capacity.

As part of a near government-wide workforce adjustment process, 3,295 employees at Global Affairs Canada (GAC) have received letters saying they are affected or at risk as 483 positions are set to be eliminated.

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# 2. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to cut more than 600 staff

<https://www.producer.com/daily/aafc-to-cut-over-600-positions/>

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) will reduce its workforce by approximately 665 positions. AAFC employed 5,690 people as of March 2025, according to the Government of Canada.

AAFC's 2025-26 departmental plan shows an expected decrease in full-time equivalents in the 2026-27 crop year, which it says "reflects a reduction in support for the Agricultural Clean Technology Program and for the Youth Employment and Skills Program and reflects attrition and vacancy management under the refocusing government spending exercise."

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# 3. Seven research sites to close, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada confirms

<https://www.producer.com/news/saskatchewan-agricultural-research-centres-cut>

Three Agriculture Agri-Food Canada research and development centres and four satellite research farms will close, the federal government has confirmed. Research and development centres at Guelph, Ont., Quebec City, Que., and Lacombe, Alta., will close, an AAFC spokesperson said in a statement on Friday afternoon.

Satellite research farms at Nappan, N.S., Scott, Sask., Indian Head, Sask. and Portage la Prairie, Man., will also close.

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# 4. UK to cut climate finance to poor countries by a fifth despite promising more help

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/feb/05/uk-cut-climate-finance-poor-countries-by-fifth>

The UK plans to slash its aid to poor countries stricken by the climate crisis by more than a fifth, the Guardian has learned, despite promises to increase assistance and warnings from campaigners that the move will cost lives and livelihoods.

The slashing of climate aid, imposed by the Treasury, is planned despite recent warnings from the UK's spy chiefs that the collapse of ecosystems such as the Amazon or the Congo would inflict serious damage on the UK's national security, including soaring food prices and the risk of war.

It comes just a year after the UK and other rich countries promised to triple global climate finance to the poor world to \$300bn (£220bn) a year by 2035, in recognition of the disasters countries are already experiencing. Although that deal did not specify how much must come from each, a reduction from the UK will make the total harder to reach.

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## 5. US Congress passes \$50 Billion Foreign Aid Bill

<https://www.devex.com/news/us-congress-passes-50-billion-foreign-affairs-bill-111821>

First, the roughly \$50 billion foreign affairs spending bill is now law. The package, which includes funding for food security, agriculture, global health, and humanitarian programs, cleared the U.S. Congress after a delay caused by a broader standoff over Department of Homeland Security funding, briefly triggering a partial government shutdown before lawmakers reached a compromise.

The bill comes in about 16% below last year’s funding level but nearly \$20 billion above the Trump administration’s budget request, which had proposed far deeper cuts. Still, humanitarian assistance funding is roughly 37% lower, and major questions remain about how — and whether — the administration will spend the money Congress has appropriated.

That matters for food and agriculture. The bill includes \$720 million for food security and agricultural development programs, as well as \$100 million for a new public-private partnership foundation on food security, slated to be established by the end of the year.

“The \$300 million investment in American-made [ready-to-use therapeutic food] will provide life-saving support for millions of children and help farmers and small businesses in states across the country,” says Amit Paley, CEO of the Malnutrition Advocacy Fund.

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## 6. U.S. Department of Agriculture formally took over Food for Peace

<https://www.devex.com/news/usda-takes-over-food-for-peace-with-452m-world-food-programme-deal-111781>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture formally took over Food for Peace. The transition kicked off with a \$452 million agreement with the World Food Programme. “The funding will help U.S. producers move American-grown food to people in need around the world, sending nearly 211,000 tons of U.S. agricultural goods to people in need in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, and Rwanda,” according to a USDA press release.

All of those commodities will be delivered by the end of 2026, the agreement states. That includes wheat, corn-soy blend plus — a precooked, fortified food blend used for young children and lactating women — beans, lentils, rice, sorghum, and vegetable oil, all of which are being steered through an interagency agreement between USDA and the now-defunct USAID.

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## 7. Australia’s progress isn’t translating into equality for all women

<https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/australias-progress-isnt-translating-into-equality-for-all-women/>

From a global perspective, Australia often looks strong by international comparison but being “less unequal than others” is not the same as being equal, and it can lull us into a sense that the foundations are sound. The persistence of gender-based violence and the disparities experienced by First Nations women are one of the clearest signs that those foundations still need work.

2025 made it hard to ignore how exposed our systems become under pressure but it also showed how hungry people are, here and globally, for better ways of doing things. Real progress on gender equality, including ending gender-based violence, will come from the everyday decisions we make about how we fund, regulate, design and prioritise the systems that shape our lives.

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## 8. A memo to world leaders: Food security is the basis of global stability

<https://www.devex.com/news/a-memo-to-world-leaders-food-security-is-the-basis-of-global-stability-111865>

More than ever, we need our leaders to recognize that stability and food security are inseparable. An interconnected “perfect storm” of unrest, weather shocks, competition over resources, migration, and rising food prices is reshaping global security. Conflict and hunger are deeply intertwined. Food insecurity can drive instability, fueling unrest and displacement, while conflict pushes countries and regions into food insecurity by disrupting production, supply chains, and markets.

Yet while governments ramp up spending on defense, agricultural research — a powerful tool to build lasting peace and stability — remains underfunded.

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## **9. How an Intersectional Approach Can Help Us Address Vulnerability to Climate Change**

<https://www.iisd.org/articles/explainer/how-intersectional-approach-can-help-us-address-vulnerability-climate-change>

Different forms of discrimination and marginalization—such as racism, ableism, and discrimination on the basis of gender identity—overlap and interact to give some people an advantage while disadvantaging others, thereby creating intersecting systems of inequity.

An intersectional approach enhances our capacity to address intersecting systems of inequity that undermine resilience for individuals, communities, and society. It transcends single-issue analyses—such as those addressing gender or age in isolation—and inclusion efforts that simply compare climate vulnerabilities across social groups, assuming they are homogeneous.

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## **10. EU-India trade deal: a step forward for gender equality, but more ambition needed**

<https://odi.org/en/insights/eu-india-trade-deal-a-step-forward-for-gender-equality-but-more-ambition-needed>

The EU–India trade agreement is framed as one that works for everyone, including by addressing gender inequality. With a dedicated legal provision on "Trade and Gender Equality", the Parties commit to advancing women's economic empowerment and gender equality.

Empirical evidence shows that women’s participation in manufacturing – particularly in export-oriented, labour-intensive segments – is substantial but structurally constrained. India’s manufacturing sector employs about 68 million workers, of whom roughly 23 million are women. Women’s employment is heavily concentrated in apparel, textiles, food products and tobacco, accounting for nearly 78% of women’s manufacturing jobs.

So where, exactly, does gender feature in the EU–India FTA? According to the European Commission’s chapter-by-chapter summary, explicit gender framing appears primarily in the Trade and Sustainable Development (TSD) chapter. In this standalone chapter, the Parties affirm that sustainable development is an important objective of international trade and investment, encompassing economic, social and environmental dimensions.

The absence of a dedicated chapter serves as a fair warning: gender inclusion in trade is only meaningful when it is embedded in the core mechanics of trade policy itself – not merely acknowledged in sustainability language.

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## **11. Zimbabwe’s youth pay the price of US funding drawdown**

<https://www.devex.com/news/zimbabwe-s-youth-pay-the-price-of-us-funding-drawdown-111827>

Nearly half — 49.2% — of young people aged 15 to 35 in Zimbabwe are not engaged in education, employment, or training, according to the country’s latest labor force survey.

The sudden withdrawal of U.S. funding stalled youth employment programs, cut counseling services, and pushed community organizations into survival mode. For young people navigating unemployment, addiction recovery, and poverty, the consequences were immediate.

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## **12. To Develop a Continent, Africa Must Nourish Its Children**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/02/to-develop-a-continent-africa-must-nourish-its-children/>

As lead for the Food Security, Nutrition and Health Program at the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Mercy Lung'aho', a certified nutritionist and researcher with more than 20 years of championing development, is advocating for an integrated approach combining agri-food and health systems for food and nutrition security on the continent.

In a continent where one in three children are stunted, providing nutritious food is urgent for the development of Africa. For Lung'aho, nutrition research is everything. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), approximately 307 million people in Africa were undernourished in 2024.

Despite its vast arable land and abundant water resources, Africa is a net food importer. Africa is off the mark on SDG2 and SDG3 relating to zero hunger, health and wellbeing. Projects indicate that nearly 60% of all chronically undernourished people will be in Africa by that time. It gets worse; Africa is the only region where the number of children under five suffering from chronic malnutrition is increasing.

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## **13. Why Ending Child Marriage is Key to Advancing Africa's Economic Development**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/02/why-ending-child-marriage-is-key-to-advancing-africas-economic-development/>

The statistics paint a concerning picture. According to the World Bank, four out of ten girls aged 15 to 19 in Africa (excluding North Africa) are not in school and not working, or are married or have children, compared to just slightly above one out of ten boys. On average, nearly one-third (32 percent) of young women (ages 15–24) are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), compared with 23 percent of boys in that age range.

From an economic perspective, the case for investing in girls is compelling. Analysis consistently shows that investments in girls' education and health yield high returns, raising lifetime earnings, boosting productivity.

Ending child marriage practice will not, on its own, ensure that Africa will reach its development goals. However, unless addressed, this structural barrier will continue to hamper productivity, competitiveness, and the delivery of the Agenda 2063.

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## **14. This is Africa's most consequential decade: nothing will ever be the same again**

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/jan/30/seven-10-africans-under-30-leadership-young-people-leadership>

For the first time in our history, more than 70% of sub-Saharan Africans are under the age of 30. This, with entrenched inequalities, poverty, unemployment and socioeconomic fault lines, is reshaping how our societies interact with one another and the world.

By 2050, more than 25% of the world's people will be African. The continent's population will approach 2.5 billion and, by the end of the century, half of the world's children will be African.

In practice, a youthful population means exponential demand for healthcare, schooling, jobs, basic services and infrastructure – everywhere, at once. Without deliberate investment in leadership, institutions and systems, our demographic edge could become our most destabilising liability.

The task for leadership is to meet this energy by creating dignified work that is future-ready, aligning education with emerging industries and ensuring that health systems empower individuals and strengthen societies.

The truth is that a youthful population without opportunities does not stay quiet. But the reverse is also true: when states credibly expand opportunities, a youth-majority population becomes a national advantage.

The countries that intently and strategically invest in youth now will be the ones that define global innovation and competitiveness in the coming era.

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## **15. Women make up only 35 percent of science graduates worldwide**

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/204413/women-girls-in-science-dismantling-barriers-closing-gaps>

Although women are more likely than young men to pursue higher education, they make up only 35 percent of science graduates, according to UN Secretary-General António Guterres. Across the world, a significant gender gap persists at all levels of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics disciplines due to lack of research funding, gender stereotypes, and discriminatory workplace practices. The gap is particularly pronounced in technology, where women represent just 26 percent of the workforce in data and artificial intelligence, and 12 percent in cloud computing.

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## **16. Latvia Leads the EU in Women Scientists and Engineers**

<https://labsoflatvia.com/en/news/latvia-has-the-highest-share-of-women-scientists-and-engineers-in-the-eu>

In Latvia, 50.9% of scientists and engineers are women — the highest proportion among European Union countries, according to the latest data from Eurostat. The share of women in science in Latvia is 10% higher than the EU average (40.5%).

The number of women working as scientists and engineers in the European Union has risen from 3.4 million in 2008 to 7.9 million in 2024. Across all sectors, women comprised 40.5% of the scientific and engineering workforce in 2024.

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## **17. Winning project by Antigonish student highlights women's work in farming**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/antigonish-family-farm-national-award-pei-antigonish-9.7086884>

An Antigonish, Nova Scotia, 10-year-old girl is one of four winners of the 2025 Heritage Fair National Showcase in Ottawa for a project about the role women played on her family's potato farm in North Lake, Prince Edward Island.

Cora Lukeman said she wanted people to learn that women always had a role in farming, but they didn't always get credit. She said women in her family have always been part of the work in the fields, keeping the books and making decisions. She interviewed her aunt, Keisha Rose Topic — who is the current president of the P.E.I. Federation of Agriculture — as well as her grandfather. She said her grandfather told her women make good farmers because "they're smart" and "they care about the land."

Lukeman said one of the most interesting things she learned was that 50 per cent of new farmers in Atlantic Canada are women and a third of all farmers in Canada are women.

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## **18. Top-hiring sectors in international development in 2025**

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/204246/top-hiring-sectors-in-international-development-in-2025>

An analysis by DevelopmentAid.org – the world’s largest database of international development information – indicates that the number of open vacancies for aid sector professionals dropped by nearly 22.5% from over 138,000 to 106,000 in 2025.

This decrease is mirrored by shifting labor demand patterns. Under pressure, donors increasingly require project managers, monitoring and evaluation specialists, and auditors, while the demand for macro-economists, statisticians, and public fiscal management specialists has declined.

Our analysis identifies the 2025 development industry hotspots and the sectors that continue to seek experts despite tighter funding.

See the article for bar graphs showing the top 10 hiring demands and the geographic areas where these jobs were located

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## **19. When Drought Steals Childhood: How Climate Shocks in Northern Kenya Are Testing the SDGs**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/02/when-drought-steals-childhood-how-climate-shocks-in-northern-kenya-are-testing-the-sdgs/>

A widening crisis is taking place across Kenya’s Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), where prolonged drought is reversing hard-won gains on poverty reduction, food security, health, and education — core pillars of the sustainable development goals (SDGs).

According to Kenya’s National Drought Management Authority (NDMA), Mandera remains in the alarm phase, following repeated rainfall failures that saw the October–December 2025 short rains deliver just 30–60 per cent of the long-term average. Water pans have dried up, pasture has collapsed, and households dependent on pastoralism are rapidly losing their main source of food and income.

National food and nutrition security assessments show that more than 2.15 million people in Kenya’s ASAL counties are currently in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, while over 800,000 children aged 6–59 months require treatment for acute malnutrition. County health officials in Mandera report rising admissions to Outpatient Therapeutic Programmes (OTPs) as families exhaust food reserves and milk production from livestock dwindles.

The crisis is not confined to Kenya. Across the Horn of Africa, the United Nations estimates that nearly 24 million people in Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia are facing acute water insecurity, following years of recurrent drought and climate shocks. UNICEF warns that 2.7 million children across the region are already out of school due to drought-related displacement, with another 4 million at risk if conditions persist.

In Mandera North, schools sit at the front line of the crisis. Teachers describe classrooms thinning out as families migrate in search of pasture and water, taking children with them. Others remain behind but struggle to concentrate amid hunger and exhaustion. Attendance in some drought-affected schools has dropped sharply, with girls disproportionately affected as water collection and household responsibilities fall on them first.

For development experts, the implications go beyond short-term learning loss. Interrupted education weakens human capital, undermines long-term economic productivity, and reduces communities' ability to adapt to future climate shocks — a direct setback to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 1 (No Poverty).

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## 20. SDG 1: End Poverty in all its Forms –Everywhere

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/02/goal-1-end-poverty-in-all-its-forms-everywhere/>

Extreme poverty, defined as surviving on less than US\$3.00 per person per day at 2021 purchasing power parity, has witnessed remarkable declines over recent decades.

However, in 2025, 808 million people – or 1 in 10 people worldwide – were living in extreme poverty, an upward revision from earlier estimates because of the updated poverty line. If current trends continue, 8.9 per cent of the world's population will still live in extreme poverty by 2030.

A shocking revelation is the resurgence of hunger levels to those last observed in 2005. Equally concerning is the persistent increase in food prices across a larger number of countries compared to the period from 2015 to 2019. This dual challenge of poverty and food security poses a critical global concern.

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## 21. De-mining organisations forced to cut staff

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/jan/28/zimbabwe-mine-clearance-women-aid-cuts-lost-jobs-fearful>

The Zimbabwe-Mozambique frontier is littered with millions of landmines, which were laid between 1976 and 1979 by the former Rhodesian regime during the country's liberation war. In some areas, there are believed to be 5,500 mines for every kilometre. More than 1,500 people have been killed or maimed by mines since Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, while farmers have lost an estimated 120,000 animals.

Most of the international organisations clearing landmines included women in their workforce. Most were single mothers and widows, and the job gave them status as well as financial security.

For some of the women, clearing landmines is personal because it is women and girls who are often most at risk as they are usually the people tilling the land and fetching firewood on farms.

Apopo, which says it received 90% of its income from the US state department's weapons removal office, sent most of its staff home last February after the Trump administration halted funding. It shut down completely in June. Funding from other donors, particularly European countries, was also cut.

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## 22. Many kids feel hopeless about climate change. Here's what helps

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/climate/what-on-earth-kids-climate-9.7074061>

A 2023 study published in The Journal of Climate Change and Health found that at least 56 per cent of Canadian youth respondents feel afraid, sad, anxious and powerless when it comes to climate change. And 78 per cent reported that climate change impacts their overall mental health. One way to shift that mindset is to talk about it.

Catherine Malboeuf-Hurtubise, a professor at Université Laval and a Canada research chair in art-based and existential interventions in youth mental health, says kids need to be included in conversations about climate, as they will be the ones suffering the most consequences of climate change.

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## 23. Protecting his California farm community – and his own mother – from ICE

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2026/feb/20/ice-cesar-vasquez-santa-maria-california>

Cesar Vasquez is an 18-year-old son of undocumented immigrants. In his hometown of Santa Maria, a small farming town on California’s central coast where over 80% of farm workers are undocumented, Vasquez has become both a crucial community lifeline and a known target of federal immigration enforcement.

Built on an economy of strawberries, lettuce and wine grapes, Santa Maria has long depended on undocumented labor while rendering those workers largely invisible. Many arrived during waves of Mexican migration in the 1980s and 90s, settling into a community where immigration enforcement and workplace exploitation became routine.

But since 2025, enforcement has intensified dramatically with rapid-response trackers documenting more than 620 immigration arrests across Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties, with Santa Maria often at the center of daily apprehensions.

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## 24. World Bank: Women's economic rights laws only half-enforced worldwide

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/204829/world-bank-report-finds-womens-economic-opportunity-laws-half-enforced-globally>

Laws designed to give women equal economic opportunities are only half-enforced on average around the world, according to a new report by the World Bank. The findings, published in the latest *Women, Business and the Law* study, paint a sobering picture: even if all existing laws were fully applied, women would still hold barely two-thirds of the legal rights that men enjoy, and only 4% of women globally live in countries that come close to full legal equality.

The report, which covers 190 economies across ten areas including employment, safety, childcare, entrepreneurship and asset ownership, shows a sharp gap between laws on paper and reality on the ground.

Safety from violence stands out as one of the weakest areas. Access to affordable childcare is another critical gap.

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## 25. Abortion in Africa: Where the law ends and inequality decides who lives safely

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/204532/abortion-in-africa>

Key reasons to read this article:

- Money, not the law, often determines women’s safety in Africa.
- Even where abortion is legal, thousands still risk their lives because rights on paper do not translate into access in reality.
- Millions of abortions occur annually in Africa, most of them unsafe, with the death toll increasing to tens of thousands.
- The daily wage of US\$4 often turns abortion into a life-threatening gamble.
- Decisions made on other continents can determine whether a rural clinic survives or whether women are forced to face danger.

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## 26. Taliban birth control ban

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/jan/29/afghanistan-taliban-women-birth-control-contraceptive-ban-lethal-pregnancies-miscarriages-violence>

Since the Taliban's informal birth-control ban began spreading across Afghanistan in 2023, the country's reproductive health system has gone into freefall. Contraceptives have disappeared, clinics have closed and complications are going untreated.

In interviews with the Guardian and Zan Times, women from seven provinces have explained the same traumas: pregnancies they cannot prevent, miscarriages they cannot treat and violence they cannot escape.

According to the United Nations and the World Health Organization, more than 440 hospitals and clinics have closed or reduced their services since international funding was cut last year.

For women in rural provinces, the closure of clinics means hours of walking or giving birth at home, often alone. In villages isolated by mountains and mud roads, midwives say women can bleed for days before they reach a clinic. Before the informal ban on contraceptives, rural clinics held regular sessions on spacing out births. Now those programmes have all been stopped.

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## 27. Influencers, misinformation and aid cuts: the fight to halt polio in Malawi

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2026/feb/23/influencers-misinformation-and-aid-cuts-the-fight-to-halt-polio-in-malawi>

The effort to stem an outbreak of polio in Malawi, one of the world's poorest countries and badly hit by the aid cuts, has seen an astonishing 1.3 million children already vaccinated against the disease in just four days after emergency supplies were airlifted in by the World Health Organization (WHO) just over a week ago.

In Malawi, as community health workers visited nursery, primary schools and homes in Ndirande township, Blantyre, the Guardian spoke to six young mothers aged between 21 and 31. Half knew nothing about the disease, while the other three were wary of allowing their child to receive the vaccine.

Malawi's communities have stepped up in this campaign, with social mobilisers, health workers, religious leaders and traditional authorities all giving advice and working to correct misinformation and reassure families.

Their efforts worked: in Ndirande, a township on the outskirts of Blantyre, of 84 households that were initially reluctant, 45 then accepted thanks to this targeted engagement.

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## 28. The race to save rare plants in Ukraine as Russian troops advance

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2026/feb/02/ukrainian-botanists-rare-endangered-plants-russian-occupation-biodiversity-aoe>

While the country's eastern regions now under Russian occupation are primarily industrial areas, the southern expanse of Crimea and Kherson has historically been central to agriculture, botany and biodiversity. Although Ukraine covers less than 6% of Europe's landmass, it is home to about 35% of the continent's biodiversity. Many of the country's rare and endemic species are located in the steppe zone and along Crimea's coasts and mountains.

The country's largest national parks and reserves, including one of the world's oldest steppe reserves, Askania-Nova, are primarily in that zone and have fallen under occupation.

## 29. Feminist advocacy is essential for civilian protection in Ukraine

<https://odi.org/en/insights/feminist-advocacy-essential-civilian-protection-ukraine/>

Ukrainians’ ongoing struggles to strengthen democracy, human rights and equality then stand in stark contrast to Russia’s anti-LGBTQI+ laws, the pronatalist push against sexual and reproductive rights, and oppression of civil society and human rights defenders.

This war against an anti-gender and anti-democratic aggressor is, therefore, fought not only on the battlefield. It is also fought through policies, which must ensure that all civilians in their diversity receive the protection they need.

## 30. Manitoba Canola Growers recognize Dori Gingera-Beauchemin with 2026 Canola Award of Excellence

<https://canolagrowers.com/manitoba-canola-growers-recognize-dori-gingera-beauchemin-with-2026-canola-award-of-excellence/>

The Manitoba Canola Growers Association (MCGA) is proud to name Dori Gingera-Beauchemin recipient of the 2026 Canola Award of Excellence, recognizing her long-standing support for agriculture in Manitoba and her lasting contributions to the canola industry.

Dori was selected for her leadership as assistant deputy minister of agriculture and later as deputy minister of agriculture, and her generosity in sharing her time and expertise with farmers. Born and raised in rural Manitoba, Dori spent 43 years with Manitoba’s Department of Agriculture and remains closely connected to the industry. She and her husband farm south of Winnipeg, growing canola, cereals and other oilseeds.

## 31. Surge in giant sinkholes threatens Turkey’s farmers

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/feb/28/i-live-in-constant-fear-surge-in-giant-sinkholes-threatens-turkeys-farmers>

Meanwhile, Dr Ece Onur, lovingly referred to in Turkish media as the country’s “most colourful farmer” due to her tendency to wear striking dungarees, is reviving ancient dry-farming practices. Leaving behind a career lecturing military anthropology at Indiana University to return to her ancestral homelands in Burdur, she started a female-led cooperative and also trains growers from across the country.

Dry farming uses no irrigation, instead preparing the soil and encouraging plants to dig their roots deep to draw on natural water reserves. She grows roses and medicinal plants and says these sorts of crops could be vital to Turkey’s future.

### Reports, Publications, Resources

#### 1. Gendered social norms and climate resilience in West Bengal, India

<https://hdl.handle.net/10568/181389>

*Abstract/Description*

This report analyzes the pivotal role of gendered social norms in shaping women’s empowerment and climate resilience in rural India, with a focus on the learning lab participants to implement the socio-technical innovation bundles (STIBs) in the

two rural and peri-urban communities of West Bengal, India. Gendered norms around labor, mobility, and decision-making often restrict women’s access to resources, leadership, and adaptive opportunities. However, the unique knowledge and skills they hold enable women to play key roles in resilience-building when barriers are reduced. Evidence shows that promoting gender equity strengthens both individual empowerment and collective adaptive capacity. While some shifts toward greater acceptance of women’s leadership are evident, persistent patriarchal attitudes, safety concerns, and limited rights remain significant barriers. The report highlights that changing restrictive social norms—alongside inclusive innovation—is essential for advancing gender equality and climate resilient communities.

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## 2. Pathways to better funding for women-led organisations

<https://odi.org/en/publications/pathways-to-better-funding-for-women-led-organisations/>

Women-led organisations (WLOs) are indispensable humanitarian actors whose proximity, trust and gendered analysis enable them to reach people and fulfil priorities that other actors simply cannot. While they share many strengths with other local and national actors, they also have particular strengths rooted in their leadership as women, girls and gender-diverse people who face marginalization around the world.

The objective of this project is to provide insights and recommendations to help achieve a pluralistic, symbiotic and mutually beneficial ecosystem of humanitarian funding. Not unlike the humanitarian reset, meaningful change for WLOs must be at the same time both incremental and transformational, recognising the complex pressures, constraints and incentive structures facing all actors in this space. Our goal is not to centre any one funding modality or mechanism, but rather to provide concrete pathways towards a more inclusive, accessible and efficient funding ecosystem that works for the diversity of WLOs and funders working on humanitarian response – and ultimately for crisis-affected people.

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## 3. Video: Integrating Gender and Social Considerations in the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process

<https://youtu.be/LCDMq1evlCI>

The impacts of climate change affect everyone, but not equally. This video introduces the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process and explains how integrating gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) into NAP processes leads to more just and effective climate change action.

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## 4. What Else Can We Do? The Thirteen Intentions of Philanthropy

<https://ssir.org/articles/entry/thirteen-intentions-of-philanthropy>

American philanthropy is animated by at least 13 intentions, each with its own view of success and moral logic of what good looks like. The author has outlined the 13 intentions, including their definitions, examples, and common tactics, and visions of success, in a table. (See a modified version in the article. Download the full table.) They are clustered into four families—communitarian, transformative, declarative, and humanitarian—that illustrate their connections.

- Communitarian | “We want to...”
- Transformative | “We hope to ...”
- Declarative | “We feel compelled to ...”
- Humanitarian | “We’re called to ...”

The table’s typology of intentions does more than clarify and decode different approaches to philanthropy; it also offers a broader and better approach to understanding and assessing “effectiveness.” It suggests that the term “effective” is inherently contextual and helps avoid the category error of foisting one intention’s vision of success onto another’s. It

highlights that the best way to judge the effectiveness of an act of service or philanthropy is to ask why it was undertaken in the first place and what it sought to achieve.

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## 5. VeraSol Product Database

<https://verasol.org/database/>

VeraSol is a leading independent source for trusted product performance data on certified solar energy kits and off-grid appliances. Our product database allows users to quickly identify and compare hundreds of high-quality off-grid solar solutions on a single platform. The VeraSol Product Database is new and improved. With trusted performance data on hundreds of solar energy kits and independently tested off-grid appliances, the database allows users to easily find and compare products and identify high-quality technologies with confidence.

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## 6. Video: What we're meant to be - Voices for Change 2026

[https://youtu.be/rMkplOQ\\_bDY](https://youtu.be/rMkplOQ_bDY)

Ali, Sami and Tobi are three thoughtful high school students in Manitoba, Canada with a strong message to share.

Under the guidance of a spoken word poet and mentor, the three young men came together to write an original spoken word poem titled "What we're meant to be". This poem is a journey across the globe from Afghanistan to Palestine to Canada.

Ali, Sami and Tobi debuted this piece at MCIC's International Development Week 2026 Launch to a captivated audience of guests, MLAs, and dignitaries held at the Manitoba Legislative Building.

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## 7. The Aid Report

<https://www.theaidreport.us/>

Devex's new editorial and data project tracks how U.S. foreign aid cuts are reshaping programs and services on the ground. Our goal is to inform the debate about the future of U.S. international aid. This editorially independent journalism is funded by the Gates Foundation. The Aid Report combines original reporting with crowdsourced and aggregated data to provide real-time, evidence-based insight into what's happening on the ground. It is part of a broader constellation of efforts to track the effects of U.S. aid cuts. Every two weeks (or faster when news warrants it), we spotlight one theme and share the most revealing pieces of reporting or research behind it.

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## 8. My Farm Trees Project

<https://alliancebioiversityciat.org/tools-innovations/my-farm-trees>

This digital platform encourages farmer- and community-led tree-based restoration of degraded landscapes, empowering resilience through restoration. It promotes tree cover using native species and ensures thorough documentation, verification, and quality control.

The platform uses mobile technology and blockchain to create a transparent information link from seed collection to tree growth, enabling digital payment transfers as incentives for restoration efforts led by smallholders, community groups, and schools. These efforts aim to improve livelihoods, food security, and climate mitigation.

MyFarmTrees integrates app-based solutions, including GeoFarmer, Diversity4Restoration, MyGeoTree, and MyGeoNursery. Funded by the Global Environment Facility, the platform is implemented by IUCN and executed by the Alliance. Pilots have been successfully conducted in Kenya and Cameroon, with current scaling efforts underway in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

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## 9. Mental health crisis in Canadian agriculture

<https://www.deeprootedfilm.ca/>

The trailer for the film *Deep Rooted* explores the overwhelming mental health crisis facing farmers and agricultural producers across Canada. Resources are also available on the website.

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## 10. Drinking Water Supply Challenges and LifeStraw Use in Rural Zimbabwe

<https://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/view/2448/787>

*Abstract*

The lack of access to safe and clean drinking water plays a significant role in the rising burden of waterborne diseases. On the other hand, rapid climate variability patterns cumulatively lead to the present-day climate change status quo, which has accelerated the burden of disease (i.e., cholera and diarrhea). This study sought to investigate the significance of Life Straw use in order to eliminate pathogens, reduce turbidity, and safeguard human health. Convenience sampling was utilised by selecting 68 participants (Mudanda village residents, trainers, Non-Governmental Organisations[NGOs], and medical personnel). Data was collected through self-administered questionnaires, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Field Observations (FO). Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21 and interpreted using descriptive statistics. The findings showed that more females participated in the study (64.2%), were more knowledgeable about Life Straw use (67.8%), and were concerned about waterborne diseases (67.7%) and clean-up campaigns (77.1%). A key observation by the majority (79.1%) was the reduction of turbidity after Life Straw use, as well as cleanliness and wholesomeness for consumption (92.5%). Engagements at the knowledge and attitude levels revealed a poor understanding of device use and functions (82.1%), leading to a medium level of adoption impact (53.7%). Furthermore, there is a need to improve education and awareness of Life Straw use in schools (98.5%) and rural areas (98.5%). Again, knowledge levels significantly decreased with increasing age ( $P \leq 0.05$ ). The study recommends increased use of borehole water, Participatory Health and Hygiene Education (PHHE) sessions, and public awareness campaigns to ensure access to safe drinking water and to improve the regular use of Life Straws, including strategies for adaptation and adoption.

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## 11. Designing and Implementing an Intervention Rooted in Cultural Knowledge to Reduce HIV-Related Stigma in Ugandan Schoolchildren

<https://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/article/view/2753/791>

*Abstract*

Cultural appropriateness and contextual relevance are key considerations for designing effective interventions to reduce HIV-related stigma. In this article, we outline a comprehensive approach used in the development and implementation of a population health intervention that harnesses traditional knowledge rooted in culture to reduce HIV-related stigma among schoolchildren in Omoro District, Northern Uganda. The intervention was grounded in the values of the Luo people as a vehicle to reduce stigma and enhance HIV outcomes for young people, including those

affected by or living with HIV. The development and implementation of the HIV-related stigma intervention incorporated community-based participatory research principles to ensure the intervention was culturally appropriate and relevant. Various stakeholders shared ideas about how to use traditional knowledge alongside contemporary biomedical approaches, with the goal of addressing stigma in the school community. Particular attention is paid to the role of Elders in curriculum development and classroom implementation. This paper contributes practical insights into designing and implementing culturally responsive stigma reduction interventions, showing how collaboration across generations and knowledge systems can be mobilized to address complex health challenges.

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## 12. Metis History and Agriculture

<https://exploresaskag.ca/metis-agriculture-history/>

Agriculture in the Classroom Saskatchewan has launched a NEW section on our ExploreSaskAg.ca website recognizing Metis history and agriculture. This addition acknowledges the Metis people, communities, and traditions that have influenced our food systems and agriculture here in Saskatchewan.

Historically, Métis women grew gardens to provide food for the Hudson’s Bay Company posts, which prevented starvation among fur traders.

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## 13. Masterclass: From Gender-Responsive to Gender Transformative Research

<https://youtu.be/ZHXoloLv30A>

Dr. Millicent Liani is a gender and social inclusion research specialist working with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, commonly known as IITA. She is based out of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. By the end of the webinar, we should be able to distinguish between the responsive approaches and also the gender transformative approaches, and how do we actually do gender responsive and transformative research. We'll also be able to comprehend why do we really need to move towards these gender transformative approaches and then be able to also understand some of the potential tools. There could be frameworks, approaches that we actually use in terms of conducting effective gender transformative research within agricultural food security.

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## 14. Equity in Practice: Tools to Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Nonprofits

<https://imaginecanada.ca/en/research/equity-guides>

Imagine Canada, in collaboration with Saltwater Learning and Consulting Group, has developed two practical new tools to support organizations that are sustaining and deepening their equity efforts: *Equity as a Practice: From Audits to Action* and *Building Together: Equity Working Groups*. Designed for nonprofits and charities that understand equity as an ongoing practice grounded in learning, reflection, and collective action, these resources offer practical ways to stay anchored in values of fairness, respect, and belonging - whether you are strengthening existing initiatives or beginning your journey.

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## 15. Generative AI as a partner for teachers in building personalised learning paths for students with ease in Tanzania

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25304/rlt.v34.3594> and <https://journal.alt.ac.uk/index.php/rlt/article/view/3594>

*Abstract*

This study examines how generative artificial intelligence (AI) can assist secondary school teachers in Tanzania to create personalised learning paths more efficiently and effectively. Many educators face overcrowded classrooms and limited resources, making it challenging to meet the diverse needs of their students. To address this, 120 Dar es Salaam and Dodoma teachers tested AI-driven tools like ChatGPT and Grok for lesson planning, assessments and adaptive content delivery. The results indicated significant improvements in student engagement and academic performance while reducing teacher workload. Teachers found these AI tools intuitive and beneficial, especially for customising instruction and saving time. However, challenges such as inadequate training and infrastructure continue to pose significant obstacles, particularly in rural areas. The study concludes that generative AI offers a scalable and inclusive solution for enhancing teaching and learning when paired with proper support. It recommends strategic investments in professional development and digital infrastructure to fully realise generative AI’s educational potential and address existing equity gaps across Tanzanian schools.

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## **16. AI in Ag: What 450 Farmers Taught Us About Digital Advisory at Scale**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLkIT1Vsh1Y>

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

Join 60 Decibels and Digital Green for a deep dive into the findings from our study on FarmerChat, an AI-powered advisory tool reaching farmers across Kenya. We explore what’s working, where there’s room to grow, and how farmer feedback is shaping the future of digital agtech. Data on women farmers is provided.

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