



Forsythia 'Northern Gold' in bloom. Photo courtesy of D. Ceplis.

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

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

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

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## Opportunities and Coming Events

### 1. Lessons from Four Organisations That Unlocked Scale

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_-dEUemLQTSiTWPqofaGiQ#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_-dEUemLQTSiTWPqofaGiQ#/registration)

How do you expand your reach by stepping back? How do you make adoption the rational choice for a government with competing priorities and limited bandwidth? How do you build evidence that answers the questions your next adopter is actually asking?

These are the questions that sit behind significant scale breakthroughs in global health innovation. In this webinar, Spring Impact and Grand Challenges Canada will be joined by four organizations who answered them. Be Girl, Community Empowerment Lab, Healthy Entrepreneurs, and Karma Healthcare have reached tens of millions of people collectively.

Together, we'll explore the strategic choices, mindsets, and funding approaches that actually worked to unlock impact at scale, and what that means for how funders should think about their role. **Jun 2, 2026 08:30 AM in Central Time (US and Canada).**

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### 2. From Intention to Action: Emerging Guidance on Locally-Led Development

<https://app.glueup.com/event/bridging-the-gap-launching-a-practical-guide-to-locally-led-development-181020/>

Join us for the closing event of Bridging the Gap Between Communities and Funders in Locally-Led Development — a five-session learning journey co-hosted by Cooperation Canada and Salanga — as we officially launch *From Intention to Action: A Practical Guide to Locally-Led Development*, a sector resource co-created by the 2026 cohort of Canadian international development practitioners. Whether you were part of the cohort or are new to the conversation, this is an opportunity to explore practical guidance for organizations ready to move beyond intention — and into action.

*From Intention to Action* synthesizes the insights, strategies, peer exchanges, and promising practices from five sessions of collective learning into actionable guidance for organizations working toward locally-led development. It is aimed primarily at Global North-based intermediary organizations—whether NGOs, consulting firms, funders, or faith-based organizations—that hold power in the development system and are seeking concrete ways to shift it toward local actors.

**June 4.**

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### **3. Coming Soon: Online course on gender equality and social inclusion in adaptation planning**

<https://napglobalnetwork.org/resource/online-course-gesi-nap-processes/>

While most countries’ national adaptation plans (NAPs) identify women as particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts, only a less than half of the documents submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (as of April 2026) position them as agents of change in adaptation processes. There is also limited mention of the differential impacts that climate change has on people of various ages, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, classes, and other social groups.

These figures reveal a stark reality: decision-making remains unequal—especially in the face of climate change. But how to shift this trajectory and foster a more inclusive and gender-responsive NAP process in your own country? The NAP Global Network’s self-paced online course will help you strengthen your own work by unpacking how gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) components are integrated in the NAP process. This self-paced course **launches in June 2026**.

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### **4. Just transition for agrifood systems: decent livelihoods, women empowerment and climate resilience**

<https://odi.org/en/events/just-transition-for-agrifood-systems-decent-livelihoods-women-empowerment-and-climate-resilience/>

Agrifood systems sit at the heart of the climate and development challenge. Yet they remain largely absent from global just transition frameworks. This omission is especially significant for rural communities, informal workers, women and small-scale producers, who are among the most exposed to climate and economic shocks while often excluded from social protections, finance and decision-making processes.

During London Climate Action Week 2026, this public dialogue, co-convened by ODI Global and The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), will elevate agrifood systems within global just transition debates.

This event, being held on **June 26 online and in-person**, will feature three strategic dialogues, followed by Q&A.

- Panel 1: Why Just Transition Must Include Agrifood Systems
- Panel 2: Women, Informality and Justice in Agrifood Systems
- Panel 3: Just Transition Across Agrifood Systems: Whose Pathways, Whose Priorities?

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## **This Month’s News**

# 1. Advancing gender equality in science for sustainable development in Africa

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/207218/advancing-gender-equality-in-science-for-sustainable-development-in-africa-report>

<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/advancing-gender-equality-science-sustainable-development-africa>

On 27 April 2026, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched a continental report titled “Investing in Women in Science: The Economic Impact of Public Funding in Africa”, marking a shift from advocacy to evidence-based policy discourse on women in STEM, according to a press release by UNESCO. The event convened Member States, regional institutions, and partners around the recognition of women in science as a central pillar of Africa’s development agenda. It introduced an econometric framework quantifying the economic value of gender parity in science. The launch positioned women’s participation in science as a prerequisite for sovereign economic survival. The report calls for urgent reforms in science, technology, and innovation (STI) investment across the continent.

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# 2. UK Foreign Secretary launches new International Coalition to End Violence against Women and Girls

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/foreign-secretary-launches-new-international-coalition-to-end-violence-against-women-and-girls>

Women and girls across the globe will be better protected from violence and abuse, as the UK spearheads a new international effort to drive progress, to be announced by the Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper today at the Global Partnerships Conference in London.

The new coalition brings together eight countries to work together to prevent violence so that women and girls can live free from fear, no matter who or where they are. Member states will drive practical action to prevent domestic abuse and sexual violence, which affects 1 in every 3 women globally, as well as tackling online abuse, which is on the rise around the world. Founding members are the UK, South Africa, Brazil, Morocco, Spain, Jamaica, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Australia.

The launch comes alongside the publication of the UK’s new International Strategic Framework on Women and Girls, which sets out how the UK will defend the rights of women and girls across the world, embedding this across diplomacy, trade, security, and development, using UK partnerships and resources to drive progress.

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# 3. I Love Farming. Why I May Have to Quit.

<https://thetyee.ca/Opinion/2026/04/23/BC-Has-Farming-Problem/>

Farmers across the spectrum in B.C. are in trouble. Young, old; small, large; organic, conventional. Established farmers are struggling to pass on their farms, and new farmers are struggling to enter — and stay in — the game. Yet the next generation of farmers — passionate, hard-working people who truly want to do this work — is out there.

The economics of farming are getting harder to make work for many reasons for all farmers, but far and away the biggest reason in B.C. is the cost of farmland itself — and this disproportionately affects new or young entrants into agriculture. There are fewer farmers in B.C., and they’re aging.

According to Farm Credit Canada, farming is not financially viable when the cost of farmland exceeds \$80,000 an acre, particularly in southern B.C.

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## 4. From innovation to investment: How a science-based Agribusiness Accelerator reached over 700,000 farmers in Zambia

<https://aiccra.cgiar.org/news/innovation-investment-how-science-based-agribusiness-accelerator-reached-over-700000-farmers>

AICCRA’s Agribusiness Accelerator put science-based support at the heart of scaling 19 small- to medium-sized agribusinesses in Zambia, directly reaching over 718,000 smallholder farmers (43% women) with bundled climate-smart solutions, and seeing a 26 percent adoption rate of those solutions for tackling interconnected farming challenges.

When the program launched in 2022, it became a living lab for addressing farmers’ challenges including: lack of financing for irrigation, fragmented aquaculture value chains, poor soil health, and inefficient livestock production practices. It aimed to demonstrate how science-driven innovation can unlock private investment in climate-smart agriculture (CSA) and climate information services (CIS).

We focused on five bundles [a connected group of climate services, enabling mechanisms and technologies that work together to holistically support farmers]:

- Sustainable finance for off-grid solar irrigation
- Promoting integrated aquaculture-agriculture systems
- Scaling climate-smart inputs and practices
- Diversified integrated chicken/goats and legumes
- Gender equity and social inclusion

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## 5. Breaking Cultural Barriers to Equip Marginalised Kenyan Girls With Entrepreneurial Skills

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/05/breaking-cultural-barriers-to-equip-marginalised-kenyan-girls-with-entrepreneurial-skills/>

For generations, communities in Kenya’s arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) have viewed girls through the lens of marriage, with some being married at 11 in exchange for livestock or soon after secondary school, denying them opportunity for further education and skills training.

On April 15, at the Perur Rays of Hope, a local community-based organisation in Morpus village, 156 girls from different ASAL regions, some of whom were holding their babies, paraded in colourful gowns during a graduation ceremony after completing a one-year entrepreneurial skills training through a programme known as HER Lab.

The programme (HER lab) is a skilling and entrepreneurship curriculum, largely supported by the Mastercard Foundation and implemented by the Global Give Back Circle through organisations such as the Perur Rays of Hope. It targets young women from hard-to-reach counties, offering support services like mentorship, reproductive and mental health care, and confidence building, among others, with a goal of improving the social and economic status of marginalised adolescent girls and rural young women and their communities, promoting better, equitable opportunities for all.

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## 6. Endangered Butterflies Are Thriving Behind Bars

<https://reasonstobecheerful.world/prison-conservation-butterflies/>

Prisoners in Washington state are helping raise endangered butterflies, frogs and turtles through an initiative that aims to restore both people and rare species. In the tender, methodical work of rescuing an imperiled butterfly species, incarcerated women are finding a sense of purpose. What happens inside the program is therefore both rescue and rehabilitation, an effort to restore a butterfly population while also restoring the people who care for it.

Since its early years, the program has helped raise and release 80,000 caterpillars into restored prairie habitats. But the deeper aim is twofold: to recover a species that can no longer survive without intervention, and to offer incarcerated women a form of education and engagement that is rarely available behind bars.

The program includes an educational component in partnership with The Evergreen State College, allowing participants to earn college credits in fields like ecology and animal husbandry.

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## 7. Public health at risk across Asia as Iran crisis sends price of cooking gas soaring

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2026/may/13/public-health-risk-asia-firewood-cooking-gas-price-air-pollution>

But as the crisis in the Middle East has choked India's vital supplies of imported liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) – used by more than 60% of the country's population for cooking – refills have been scarce and prices have risen far beyond what is widely affordable. Growing numbers of people in India and more widely across Asia, have been forced to cook with crude, dirty fuels such as firewood and coal in order to survive.

The return to fuels such as firewood and coal is not only deepening the economic strain of the war on ordinary civilians in countries across Asia, but raising concerns about public health, air pollution and the fragility of the energy transition.

Women and children, widely responsible for household chores such as cooking or collecting firewood, are the most vulnerable.

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## 8. US aid cuts hit Nepal's farmers

<https://www.devex.com/news/i-had-no-choice-but-to-go-abroad-us-aid-cuts-hit-nepal-s-farmers-112338>

In rural Nepal, women farmers once supported by Feed the Future now navigate farming without reliable seeds, markets, or guidance. For some, leaving the land is becoming the only option.

According to the 2021 population census, nearly 1.8 million Nepali men were living abroad — likely as labor migrants — a shift that has left women managing much of the country's farmland. The latest Feed the Future programs had targeted these women, promoting mechanization and supporting them with tools such as mini tillers that are easier to maneuver.

As farming becomes more difficult — particularly during the dry season when irrigation is limited — some women are now leaving their children behind to seek work across the border in India or further abroad.

Only about 200 municipalities have access to improved seeds, and access to irrigation technology remains limited. According to Shrestha, the state has been unable to provide these services across the country due to limited capacity, and local governments do not fully implement federal agricultural plans.

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## 9. Why caring for the climate is not 'unmanly'

<https://www.dw.com/en/who-says-caring-about-the-climate-is-unmanly-not-this-ex-fighter-pilot/a-76779473>

A widely recorded phenomenon known as the green gender gap has been reported -in short, the idea is that women are more concerned about the climate than men. Amanda Clayton, a University of California political scientist found during her research on the topic, "the gender gap grows as a function of country wealth."

As countries get richer, it is more likely that women will be the ones expressing greater concern about climate change. But not because they are suddenly more concerned. "It's actually that men tend to decrease their concern about climate change as countries become wealthier," Clayton said. "The growing gender gap is actually men's growing skepticism."

Psychologist Vidar Vetterfalk is working to get underneath this thinking. In his role with MÄN, a Swedish organization that engages men and boys to challenge stereotypical masculinities, he asks groups of males to express what they like about the natural world and their worries for its future.

Mike Smith believes down-to-earth, blame-free conversations can go a long way to engaging men on why caring about the planet matters. And he has found his own background as a former fighter pilot t be useful here.

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## 10. African farmers shift to biofertilizers as Iran war spikes prices

<https://www.devex.com/news/african-farmers-shift-to-biofertilizers-as-iran-war-spikes-prices-112577>

Sub-Saharan Africa imports some 80% of its fertilizer. The Gulf region accounts for a substantial export share of the world’s urea, phosphate, and ammonia — key elements for synthetic fertilizers. Global urea prices, a key fertilizer benchmark, rose 85% between December and March, according to Mercy Corps. And smallholders are shouldering much of the burden on their own.

A growing number of smallholder farmers are adopting organic fertilizers and other environmentally friendly farming methods amid global price and supply shocks. Meanwhile, government officials are trying to boost local fertilizer production.

If farmers cannot afford fertilizer or fuel, harvests will shrink. If families cannot keep up with rising costs, meals will be skipped. The disruptions are also expected to lower milk and meat production, according to Tilahun Amede, director of climate change, sustainable productivity, and resilience at AGRA.

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## 11. Iran war poses new threat to harvests in hunger-stricken Sudan

<https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/iran-war-poses-new-threat-harvests-hunger-stricken-sudan-2026-05-25/>

Farmers across Sudan say the hike in global fuel and fertilizer costs resulting from the Iran conflict will force them to cut back on planting this summer, restricting food production in a country where war has caused acute hunger.

Eight farmers from different parts of Sudan, as well as experts working in the sector, told Reuters that fuel and fertilizer price increases would compound problems caused by a civil war, hitting staple domestic crops such as sorghum and millet as well as exports like sesame.

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## 12. Connecting the Dots: Quality Seed, Resilient Food Systems and Good Health

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/05/connecting-the-dots-quality-seed-resilient-food-systems-and-good-health/>

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) emphasises that “we cannot have good crops if we do not have quality seeds”, a principle that underpins global efforts to improve food and nutritional security. It may thus be safe to conclude that seed is the foundation of good health.

Seed innovations alone account for 74 percent of the yield gains observed in crops in the European Union, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights. However, the global system of crop variety development depends heavily on cross-border trade, with the typical novel varieties bred, tested, produced, and distributed across multiple countries before they reach a farmer’s hands.

In the wake of increased climate-induced extreme weather events, one of the key innovations in seed breeding has been ‘climate-resilient seed’ to withstand not only intensified droughts but also the increased prevalence of pests and diseases

related to drought conditions. But the World Bank believes breeding seed that could go beyond being drought tolerant to high nutritional value could be a game changer.

A quick search on post-harvest losses in Africa reveals that it ranges between 20 and 40%, especially in crops such as maize, cassava, cowpea, and bananas, some of the continent’s staple crops. Losses are largely attributed to pests, diseases, poor storage and climate stress. While technological advancement is a critical means of enhancing agricultural productivity and improving food and nutrition security in many low- and middle-income countries, it has been slow to gain traction in Africa.

Thus, one of the innovations being tried is to breed crops that resist the noted stresses and reduce losses before they happen.

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### **13. How the Global Anti-Rights Movement Is Targeting Women’s Rights in Africa Through Family Laws**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/05/how-the-global-anti-rights-movement-is-targeting-womens-rights-in-africa-through-family-laws/>

African countries have made laudable advances in legal rights for women and girls, but many laws governing marriage, divorce, child custody, and inheritance remain stubbornly unequal.

Equality Now’s report from 2024, *Gender Inequality in Family Laws in Africa*, documents how legal frameworks continue to subordinate women within the family. Women face intimate partner violence; some laws permit child marriage; customary and religious marriages frequently operate outside formal legal protections, leaving wives without legal safeguards; divorce settlements do not recognise women’s unpaid domestic work; and custody laws favour paternal authority over equal parental rights.

Reform remains slow, uneven, and increasingly obstructed by a coordinated anti-rights movement that includes transnational ultra-conservative Christian organisations, populist political actors from the Global North, billionaire-funded conservative foundations, and right-wing think tanks and legal advocacy groups. They have found fertile ground in Africa, forging alliances with conservative organisations, religious leaders, and politicians who promote illiberal agendas.

Operating in plain sight and dressed in the language of culture, tradition, and sovereignty, these groups target parliaments, constitutional drafting processes, and regional human rights bodies. They draft model legislation, deploy strategic litigation, lobby policymakers, and cultivate relationships with heads of state and cabinet ministers.

They infiltrate international and regional human rights spaces to weaken protections, and run expensive communications campaigns while channeling cross-border funding to local organisations to portray coordinated efforts as grassroots.

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### **14. Tea’s Future Depends on Its Farmers**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/05/teas-future-depends-on-its-farmers/>

Smallholders account for about 60 percent of global tea supply. The industry built on their labor is worth US\$19.5 billion a year and supports the economies of some of the world’s poorest countries. Yet the conditions that sustain that work – ecological, economic and climatic – are under growing pressure.

The sector’s nominal value has expanded, while the real purchasing power of many producers has stagnated. FAO has documented what this means at the household level: when farmgate prices fall, smallholder families reduce spending on food, education and health care.

Smallholder producers also face limited market access, inadequate extension services, weak access to credit and technology, and persistent asymmetries in how value is distributed across the supply chain. As production costs rise and

price increases transmit unevenly through markets, many farming families struggle to generate sufficient returns to reinvest in farm renewal, climate adaptation or productivity improvements. These pressures heighten income volatility and make long-term planning increasingly difficult.

Tea production and processing are major sources of employment and income for women across East Africa and South Asia. When smallholder tea farming families prosper, women’s economic participation will determine whether that prosperity and stability hold. Programmes that support women directly through training, market access and financial resources consistently produce stronger outcomes for both households and communities. In many tea-growing regions, women sustain not only household economies, but also the continuity of the knowledge and labor on which the crop depends.

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## **15. Closing the digital gender divide through education in Ghana and Tanzania**

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/206543/closing-the-digital-gender-divide-through-education-in-ghana-and-tanzania>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), together with Beijing Normal University (BNU), the UNESCO International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED) and the governments of Ghana and the United Republic of Tanzania, is rolling out a joint project to narrow the digital gender divide in education, according to a press release by UNESCO. Titled “Closing the digital divide: Ensuring gender-transformative digital education for women and girls,” the initiative was highlighted on 27 April 2026. Its main objective is to deliver teacher training on gender-transformative pedagogy. Approximately 60 ICT teacher educators in each country will be reached, who will in turn pass on this knowledge to current and future ICT teachers. In addition, 500 girls in the United Republic of Tanzania and 240 girls in Ghana will be supported to build digital skills and confidence.

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## **16. Climate-Driven Disruptions to Education in Africa Raise Protection Risks for Millions of Children**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/04/climate-driven-disruptions-to-education-in-africa-raise-protection-risks-for-millions-of-children/>

The escalating global climate crisis has led to an increase in the frequency of climate-induced natural disasters, affecting millions worldwide. As governments struggle to keep up due to persistent funding shortfalls and inadequate preparedness and response mechanisms, education systems in Eastern and Southern Africa continue to deteriorate, pushing millions of children into displacement and poverty, further deepening long-term inequalities.

These are detailed out in a April 20 policy brief from UNICEF and global consulting firm Dalberg, titled Protecting Children’s Learning Futures: Quantifying Climate-Related Loss and Damage in Eastern and Southern Africa. The report analyses data from Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Zambia, examining how increasingly destructive climate shocks are destroying educational infrastructure and limiting growth opportunities for the most vulnerable populations, including girls, children with disabilities, and other marginalised communities.

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## **17. My Farm Trees**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/05/from-seed-to-canopy-how-a-gef-funded-smallholder-project-is-restoring-the-environment-building-livelihoods/>

My Farm Trees is a digital platform developed by the Alliance of Biodiversity International and CIAT with the aim of restoring the environment by encouraging smallholder farmers to take up tree planting alongside their daily activities. By

doing this, local communities are able to promote climate change mitigation while also improving their lives through the initiative.

Piloted in Kenya and Cameroon, the project has already supported the restoration of thousands of hectares of once degraded land and trained community members and is now scaling globally, giving smallholder farmers essential tools and knowledge for effective, science-based landscape restoration.

The platform works by combining capacity building, monitoring, verification and providing incentives to empower smallholder farmers to take up tree-based restoration projects. In return, the farmers are rewarded with both short-term benefits (direct digital payments enabled by the platform) and, eventually, the long-term benefits of restored landscapes for improved agricultural productivity, water regulation and climate resilience.

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## **18. Afghan women and children face mounting malnutrition crisis as funding declines**

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/207003/afghan-women-and-children-face-mounting-malnutrition-crisis-as-funding-declines>

Afghanistan is already facing near-record malnutrition, with nearly five million mothers and children affected. Pressures are mounting due to the closure of the border with Pakistan, repeated floods and earthquakes, and a steep drop in humanitarian funding. The crisis is further compounded by spillover from the Middle East conflict. Soaring global fuel prices and disrupted supply routes are pushing WFP’s severely underfunded operations in Afghanistan to the brink. Thousands of mothers and children are being left without the support they urgently need.

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## **19. B.C. report reveals systemic abuse of immigrant women farmworkers**

<https://vancouver.citynews.ca/2026/05/20/systemic-abuse-of-immigrant-women-farmworkers/>

On paper, British Columbia’s agricultural sector operates under clear labour protections. But step onto a farm field far from public view, and a different reality emerges, one where the province’s most vulnerable workers say exploitation is deeply embedded in the system.

Behind B.C.’s farms, many South Asian immigrant women say their work comes at a cost, facing exploitation, insecurity, and silence as they navigate life and labour far from home.

A new report by BC Policy Solutions, Growing Justice: Health, Safety and dignity for South Asian farmworker women in British Columbia, adds to a growing body of evidence pointing to systemic problems faced by South Asian immigrant women working in agriculture, documenting wage theft, a lack of basic sanitation, and gruelling, unpredictable hours.

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## **20. Saskatchewan Horticulturist Jacqueline Bantle**

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

Bernadette Vangool of the Saskatchewan Perennial Society wrote a farewell to horticulturist Jackie Bantle. “On April 20 the Saskatchewan horticultural community lost a dear friend, organizer, writer, volunteer and musician – Jacqueline Bantle. ...After graduating, Jackie worked as a technician in a variety of areas and eventually put her focus on vegetable growing. She enjoyed sharing her knowledge with others and always seemed to make it an effortless and fun experience for all. Her latest position with the University was as manager of the Agriculture greenhouses, which also included the horticultural field lab as well as the Beamish Conservatory in the Agriculture Building. During her 30-year tenure with the University,

other horticultural opportunities presented themselves, some of which she tackled on a purely voluntary basis. These included her regular contributions to the Saskatchewan Perennial Society weekly column, which was published in Bridges in Saskatoon and in other weekly papers across the province. ...Another venture was her involvement with the Saskatchewan Horticultural Association (SHA) of which she became the treasurer in 2019. ...Jackie was on the board of the Saskatchewan Greenhouse Growers Association, the advisory board of Gardenscape and The Gardener for Canadian Climates, where she also contributed as a writer.”

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## Reports, Publications, Resources

### 1. The end of Pearson’s dream: The devastating impact of federal cuts on international aid

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/the-end-of-pearseons-dream-the-devastating-impact-of-federal-cuts-on-international-aid/>

Former Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson’s 1969 vision was for Canada to contribute 0.7 per cent of its Gross National Income (GNI) to international assistance. This goal, adopted in 1970 by the UN for all developed countries, defined Canada as a “helpful fixer” on the global stage. This analysis examines how the November 2025 budget cuts dismantle that legacy.

For example, Loss of key spending items:

- Climate finance: International Climate Finance Initiative will drop from \$846 million in 2025-26 to zero the following year.
- Program funding for international development: GAC will cut \$862 million by 2028-29 from its contributions to international development. Projects will be sunset without renewal or extension.
- Refugee & asylum assistance: The program helping to house asylum seekers in Canada’s big cities will be eliminated by 2027-28. Settlement assistance spending will also fall.
- Ukrainian aid: Non-military aid for Ukraine was an important contributor to ODA in 2024-25 but dried up the following year.

The next three years of planned cuts will fundamentally shift Canada’s foreign policy focus away from peacekeeping and development to self-interested trade and defence. It is the end of Pearson’s dream.

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### 2. Scaling up what works: The future of child care in Canada

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/scaling-up-what-works-the-future-of-child-care-in-canada/>

If child care is a public good, it must be treated like one. Funded like one. Managed like one. Just like public education. Every province and territory already knows how to do this. What is required now is political will. The benefits are clear. Over time, every child can be included. The economic penalties faced by mothers will be reduced. Public investments will be recouped—through higher tax revenues and lower social costs.

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### 3. Living wage efforts in banana supply chains of Dutch and German supermarkets

<https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/policy-practice-oxfam-org-resources-paid-up-living-wage-efforts-in-banana-supply-chains-of-dutch-and-german-superma-621799/>

DOI 10.21201/2026.000128

## Overview

Bananas are a staple on supermarket shelves across Europe, but the workers who grow, harvest and pack them often earn wages that fall short of what they need to live with dignity. This report examines whether major Dutch and German supermarkets are delivering on their commitments to close living wage gaps in banana supply chains. Drawing on new research with workers and trade unions in Ecuador and Costa Rica, it finds a troubling gap between promises made and reality on the ground. While many retailers have taken initial steps, living wage gaps persist, trade unions are frequently sidelined, and workers are not aware of payments meant to top up wages. The report shows that voluntary contributions alone are not enough. To ensure living wages become a reality, supermarkets must change how they work in partnership with workers and their representatives.

*Pg. 15: Gender discrimination is prevalent in the banana industry – also regarding wages. Therefore, any living wage intervention by supermarkets needs to be gender responsive. Women constitute roughly 13% of the workforce in the export banana industry in Latin America<sup>57</sup> and continue to be systematically paid less than men. For example, figures from the Dutch retailer working group show slightly higher average living wage gaps for women. Banana plantations are characterized by a pronounced gendered division of labour. Women are primarily employed in packing plants, while men are more commonly engaged in field work. Tasks in the field tend to be better paid. Research by Banana Link in Ecuador revealed that women make up about 80% of the lowest-paid workers, and men are twice as likely as women to obtain contracts. This means that women are systematically employed in lower paid and less secure jobs.*

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## 4. Be Girl Menstrual Health

<https://www.grandchallenges.ca/story/be-girl/>

Initially, Be Girl focused on designing appealing, cost-effective reusable sanitary pads and building a distribution business model. But user feedback made it clear that a product alone wouldn't tackle the economic losses, missed school and health risks caused by period poverty, stigma, and inadequate sanitation.

In response, Be Girl evolved their approach and integrated product, curriculum, training and technical assistance into a single model that meets an array of needs. See the Case Study. Scale breakthrough:

- 1 million+ reusable menstrual products distributed.
- 500,000+ adolescents reached with menstrual health education.
- 3+ national menstrual health curricula adopted (Angola, Mozambique, Côte d'Ivoire, with Zimbabwe also in progress).

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## 5. Fund for Innovation and Transformation

<https://www.fit-fit.ca/funded-innovations/results> and <https://youtu.be/LhPpmWOwYEO>

Through the FIT program Canadian SMOs and partners tested innovative solutions for a more inclusive, accessible and compassionate future. Learn more about the 62 projects that were completed over the course of FIT's 7 years.

Filmed during the 2026 FIT Innovation Exchange, this video highlights the impact of the FIT Program and what SMOs and local partners have achieved.

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## 6. Community finance and agroecology build climate resilience in East and Central Africa

<https://www.diis.dk/en/research/community-finance-and-agroecology-build-climate-resilience-in-east-and-central-africa>

### Key Messages

- Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) are critical yet underutilised institutions that build household and community resilience through financial inclusion and social organisation.
- Integrating VSLAs with climate-sensitive agriculture, including agroecology, enables households to move from short-term coping strategies toward longer-term, sustainable resilience.
- Recognising and supporting VSLAs within national adaptation and social protection frameworks can connect communities to policy, markets and climate finance.

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## 7. Global Issues

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/147458/top-10-world-problems-and-their-solutions>

This article identifies the top 10 world problems and their solutions. Q: What is the world’s #1 problem in 2026?

A: Climate change remains the most universal threat, since it exacerbates almost every other global crisis, including hunger, poverty, displacement, and disease.

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## 8. Gender equality funding in Canada: One step forward, two back

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/gender-equality-funding-in-canada-one-step-forward-two-back/>

On October 29, 2025, the Carney government blinked. New funds were announced for the three grants and contributions programs hosted by Women and Gender Equality Canada WAGE: the Women’s Program (including the Women’s Economic and Leadership Opportunities Fund); the Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Program (including the 2SLGBTQI+ Community Capacity Fund); and the Gender-based Violence Program—a total of \$660.5 million to be spent over five years, with \$132.1 million ongoing.

With the publication of the 2026-27 Departmental Plan in March 2026, we now have a better understanding about how these funds are being allocated, including the monies being set aside for grants and contributions in support of organizations working to advance gender equality. In late May, Minister for WAGE, Rechie Valdez, announced a one-year project funding extension for almost 400 organizations.

At the same time, while the government has renewed investments in groups working to advance gender equality, it’s hard not to question the government’s commitment to gender equality as dozens of programs such as pharmacare, long term care, and child care are on the chopping block, set to quietly expire in the next couple of years. There was no word on the fate of these programs in the Spring Economic Update (SEU) released on April 28th—or on the National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence and the Federal 2SLGBTQI Action Plan. Meanwhile women and gender diverse people continue to wait.

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## 9. What cuts to insect scientists tell us about federal austerity in Canada

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/what-cuts-to-insect-scientists-tell-us-about-federal-austerity-in-canada/>

Within Agriculture Canada alone, seven research sites are to be closed. A report from the House of Commons Standing Committee On Agriculture and Agri-Food has already recommended that these closures be reversed.

The recent cuts to staffing within Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada include the scientists and their support staff working on flies (Diptera Unit). This gutting of a whole unit will leave a substantial gap in our capacity to identify flies in Canada.

What is at stake here is the continued existence and further development of a core scientific capability: the ability to document, identify, curate, and interpret insect biodiversity in support of biosecurity, health, conservation, environmental policy and economic pursuits (like agriculture, forestry, etc.).

Reducing bloat in the federal government should not result in a loss of vital scientific capacity. We need evidence-based information to guide us through the coming years, and firing scientists and their support staff is not the way to proceed.

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## **10. AI’s climate consequences: why AI governance needs to confront climate injustice**

<https://odi.org/en/publications/ai-climate-consequences-why-ai-governance-needs-to-confront-climate-injustice/>

Key insights from an ODI Global roundtable on AI governance, energy, and justice. The insights from this roundtable highlight the urgent need to bring climate justice, resource governance and equity to the centre of AI policy debates and to move beyond siloed approaches that separate digital governance from green and just transitions. The full roundtable summary explores these tensions in greater depth, capturing the range of perspectives, risks and policy questions raised by participants. Read the full summary report to better understand what a just and climate-aligned approach to AI governance could and must look like.

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## **11. 80 Percent of Rural Households Without Direct Water Access – World Water Report**

<https://www.ipsnews.net/2026/03/80-percent-of-rural-households-without-direct-water-access-world-water-report/>

Report <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/united-nations-world-water-development-report-2026>

A new United Nations report has warned that global water inequality remains one of the most pressing development challenges of the decade, with billions still lacking safe drinking water and sanitation – while women and girls continue to bear the heaviest burden of water insecurity.

The United Nations World Water Development Report 2026, titled Water for All People: Equal Rights and Opportunities, was released March 19, 2026 by UNESCO in New York. The report has highlighted how unequal access to water resources intersects with gender inequality, poverty, and climate change. The report argues that achieving water security is inseparable from advancing gender equality and inclusive governance.

According to the report, access to safe water and sanitation remains far from universal. As of 2024, around 2.1 billion people still lack safely managed drinking water services, while 3.4 billion people lack safely managed sanitation and 1.7 billion people lack basic hygiene services at home.

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