



Women disproportionately bear the burden of food insecurity. It affects every country on earth, and the gendered reality of food insecurity transcends borders.

When times are tough, gender discrimination means women and girls may be the first to eat less, even as they work harder to secure food for their households. For pregnant and lactating women, inadequate food and poor nutrition imposes a risk of anemia, a leading cause of death during childbirth.

Through ACWW policy, educational and development projects, we help rural women access and control productive resources to increase their income security and sustain higher agricultural productivity. We use our advocacy opportunities to advance gender and climate-smart agricultural policies, encouraging governments to engage with Indigenous communities and their vast experience of sustainable land management and food production, and advocate for food sovereignty.

A Case Study from Uganda

Promoting Food Security & Regenerative Farming for Refugee Women takes place in the Mubende District of Uganda and is delivered with local organisation Youth Initiative for Community Empowerment (YICE). 50 women refugees in Nakivale settlement are participating.

Ms R's Story

Ms R* lives in the settlement with her two daughters. She joined the project recently and our project partners report: "Ms R was among the first farmers to join the group meeting. We introduced our regenerative farming project – and mentioned that already 38 farmers in the refugee settlement had enrolled in the program. Ms R attended alongside 13 refugees from her community and was keen to listen and learn, and immediately when the training dates were set, she promised to attend all the trainings!

After five days of training, it was time for Ms R to put the knowledge and skills learnt in class into practice in her garden. "I have cleared my garden but it is so dry to enable me establish the garden (double dug) I set up; I am disappointed; I need you to visit my garden" Ms R informed our field team in a sad tone!

As part of our program approach, after group trainings, our field trainers' follow-up on all the farmers to ensure that they adopt the regenerative knowledge and skills learnt, and help them solve any challenges they have on their garden. The field team felt Ms R needed a visit immediately and give support for her garden.

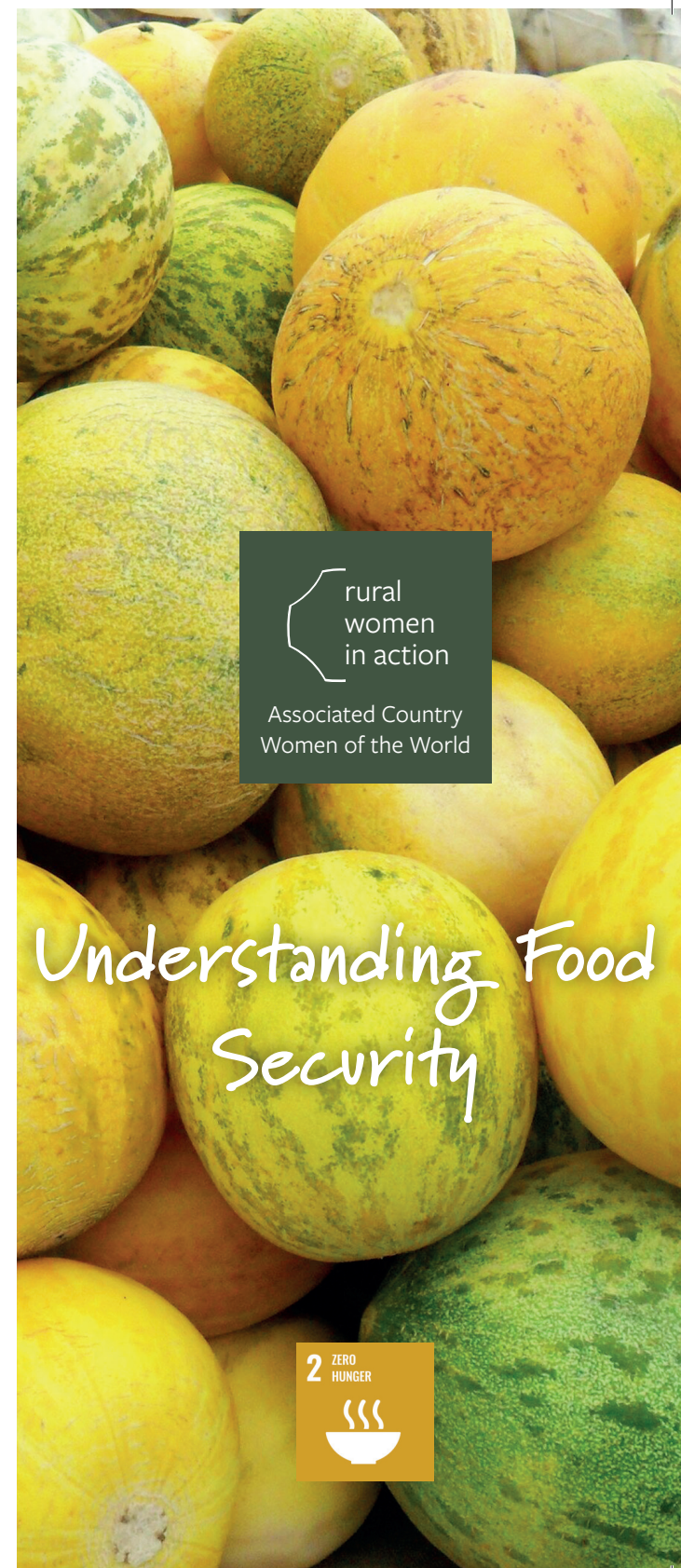
"Girls, please join us, you need to learn how to set up and manage this garden. It will feed all of us here".

We were amazed at how she wanted her children to participate in the farming activities. We later learnt that one daughter had completed secondary school a year ago, and spoke really good English. Her sister is only 9 but very excited about farming too.

"YICE's work and guidance in my garden has been tremendous; our household has learnt new farming methods and we are able to produce enough food for us to eat and sell the rest" she excitedly informed a group of 17 new farmers in a recent meeting."

This is an excerpt from a longer case study which is available on ACWW's website at www.acww.org.uk

* Participant's names have been changed to protect their privacy and safety.



What is Food Security?

Food security is the ability to access safe, nutritious, and sufficient food at all times. It means having access to plenty of food sources for a well-balanced diet to achieve a healthy life. It includes physical, social, and economic access to food supplies.

Food security is a pressing global problem that affects billions around the globe. The most recent data from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) shows that nearly one in three people don't have access to sufficient food supplies. Because of this, **food security is a vital component of Goal 2 (Zero Hunger)** of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



1 in 3 people face food insecurity. In 2/3rd of the world, women are more likely than men to struggle to eat daily

Food security also results in better health outcomes. Good food strengthens the body, replenishes energy, and provides nutrients - contributing substantially to overall health and well-being. Healthy diets help reduce the risk of malnutrition, heart disease, cancer, and other diseases.

Lastly, food security contributes to economic well-being. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) estimates that around 4.5 billion people rely on agriculture and food systems for their livelihood. This sector provides jobs for the community, enabling them to sustain themselves in the long run. This is particularly true for rural women. Globally, almost one third of employed women work in agriculture, not accounting for self-employed and unpaid family workers. Yet, only 13% of women are landholders.

828 million people experienced severe food insecurity in 2021 - and the figures for 2022 and 2023 are likely to be worse across the world.

4 Pillars of Food Security

1. Access

This covers a variety of issues - from adequate supply and location of food, to household finances and the price of goods. Education also plays a role, and there is a critical need for healthy options; cheap food tends to be less healthy, and the availability of cheap, unhealthy options often relates to socio-economic class in certain regions.

2. Availability

This covers food production, storage, distribution, and food aid. A food-secure community has a steady and reliable source of food for everyone.

3. Utilization

Food intake - Food with good nutritional value is critical, and this includes how we prepare food, to ensure safety and healthy living. Sufficient calorific and nutrient intake by individuals is possible when there is good feeding practices, diversity of diet and informed balance of food at the intra-household level. This also applies to food waste in our homes and communities.

4. Stability

Is the food resource reliably available? Or does it fluctuate during sudden shocks? Food-secure communities must have a steady flow of food supplies enough to feed everyone. They must also prepare food stocks in case of emergencies. However, many factors can affect food supply.

Critical Factors

Food security at a global and individual level is impeded by multiple, long-term challenges which fluctuate over time and geographical region. These factors worsen existing intersecting inequalities, further reducing women's equitable access to food. Each of these critical factors shows why we need genuine change in our systems, and focus on more equitable control over food systems.

The next panel looks at these critical factors:

Climate Change

Extreme weather events, drought, and seasonal changes reduce yield growth, productivity, and availability of food supplies. Thus, food production systems need measures in order to adapt to climate change.

Energy Security

Agriculture requires intensive energy use. Therefore accessible and affordable energy is required to strengthen agricultural food supply chains. Energy is also vital for the consumption of food.

Conflict

From WW2 to the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, wars continue to harshly impact food production systems around the world. These two countries produce a quarter of the global wheat supply, making them the largest suppliers of grains around the world. Ukraine, for example, delivers 40% of wheat and corn to Africa and the Middle East. Because of the halt in grain supply, those regions face food shortages and food price hikes. Population displacement, violence, and conflict-related ill-health also play a major role.

Water Security

Water, just like energy, is essential to food security. It is necessary for growing crops and raising livestock. Recent data show that agriculture is the largest water user on the globe. This sector consumes almost 70% of freshwater reserves for human use. Moreover, UN estimates show by 2050 water consumption will increase significantly.

Want to know more? Join ACWW and join a global Association taking action for change!



Associated Country Women of the World

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