

FOOD SECURITY, GENDER EQUALITY AND PEACE-BUILDING

Gender inequality is a major cause and effect of hunger and poverty; it is estimated that 60 percent of the world's chronically hungry people are women and girls; 20 percent are children under 5. Achieving gender equality remains crucial to reach the poverty and hunger goals of the Millennium Declaration (2009 WFP Gender Policy).

Women and girls worldwide face many inequities and constraints, often embedded in norms and practices and encoded in legal provisions. Some laws, such as those governing access to land, include inequitable and exclusionary provisions, thus institutionalizing discrimination. Where such legislative measures are not in place, customary rules and practices often have restrictive consequences for women limiting their access to key resources such as land and credit, and affecting household food security and nutrition. Not only are women and girls affected directly, but members of their households and communities are also affected inter- and intra-generationally. To proceed, Women individually and collectively contribute to peace-building in many ways. Yet, their contributions are often overlooked because they take unconventional forms, occur outside formal peace processes, or are considered extensions of women's existing gender roles. Conflict and its aftermath affect women's lives and men's lives in different ways. However, the women and men together play an inevitable role in food availability and consequently affordability through contributions at all levels like; the production level (agriculture), transportation and delivery level (commercialization of farm products) and at the preparation level to make raw food ready for immediate consumption.

In a working visit, the Center for Communication and Sustainable Development for All (CECOSDA) visited a women agricultural group (Group Agric-Revolution) which executes projects in the domain of agriculture and serves as a strong pillar combating food security in Cameroon (pictures below).

At the end, food security is a very important aspect in the realization of peace building in any Nation, be it developed, developing or underdeveloped. This can be seen in the 2008 world food crisis which greatly affected Cameroon; World food prices increased dramatically in 2007 and the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2008 creating a global crisis and causing political and economic instability and social unrest in both poor and developed nations. In Cameroon the rioting started on February 27 reportedly “paralyzed” the Cameroon capital of Yaounde, following four days of rioting in several western towns and in the wake of a taxi drivers’ strike from February 25-28 (Reuters, 2008).



Pic 1: Women Agricultural group in Yaounde, Cameroon



Pic 2: CECOSDA Visits a women Agricultural group on a working visit