

SAVING
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GENDER WFP Myanmar

Gender and Hunger

The way people experience hunger is intrinsically linked to their identity. The underlying causes of food insecurity and malnutrition, such as inequalities in access to education, healthcare, and sanitation as well as limited access to need-based information as a form of aid impact women and men differently.

Achieving Zero Hunger is only possible if all women, men, girls, and boys with and without disabilities have equal opportunities, equal access to resources, and equal participation in decision making based on meaningful, consultative approaches.

WFP addresses these distinct needs in order to effectively target and deliver equitable aid, empower women and girls, and reach the Sustainable Development Goal 2 of eliminating hunger by 2030.

Gender Situation in Myanmar

In Myanmar, gender inequality remains a significant barrier to human development, with progress to be made in reducing the gender gap and increasing women's participation at all levels of socioeconomic and political decision making.

According to the 2018 Human Development Report, Myanmar's ranking on the Gender Inequality Index has dropped from 85th out of 187 countries in 2014 to 106th of 189 countries in 2017. Although more women (60%) have received higher education, the female labor force participation rate is lower than male (47.1% : 81.7%), and women rarely rise to positions of power. The inclusion of gender equality in the national agenda is crucial to ensuring that both men and women benefit equally from reforms and economic growth.

The government, led by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement and in collaboration with international and national stakeholders, has developed the National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013 – 2022, which aims to strengthen women's rights and equal access in all spheres of society, including in emergency preparedness and response.

Gender equality is the state in which women and men enjoy equal rights, opportunities and entitlements. For WFP, promoting gender equality means providing food or cash assistance in ways that assign equal value to women and men while respecting their differences. The treatment of women and men should be impartial and relevant to their respective needs.

WFP Gender Policy and Gender Action Plans

WFP Gender Policy 2015-2020 aims to integrate gender equality, women's empowerment and do no harm approaches into all activities and processes. The policy establishes four objectives: i) food assistance adapted to different needs, ii) equal participation, iii) increased decision-making by women and girls, and iv) gender and protection.

WFP Myanmar Country Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and the Integrated Road Map emphasize gender transformative programming throughout WFP's three strategic pillars, allocating a five-year gender budget to implement coordinated actions with the Government and other partners. The Gender Action Plan is developed annually and brings in WFP staff members from all offices to form

Photo: WFP staff members in Kachin State launched a campaign against gender-based violence

the Gender Results Network and Gender Focal Team that implement targeted actions to facilitate the empowerment of vulnerable groups and respond to their unique needs. As an example, prior to the implementation of community asset creation activities, WFP staff members consult with the community to ensure that pregnant and lactating women are considered for light work and receive equal wages. Similar consideration is given to people with disabilities and other needs.

WFP also collects sex- and age-disaggregated data for targeted assistance and information on the potential impact of assistance on women, men, boys and girls. The findings help WFP better understand the gender roles of the beneficiaries it serves and to adapt programmes accordingly. In 2019, WFP developed an integrated approach to gender, protection and disability mainstreaming which is reflected in work planning processes and engagement with inter-agency partners. WFP is also implementing its gender policy in recruitment efforts, targeting a three percent annual increase in women among national staff members to achieve workplace gender parity by 2021.

WFP Gender and Age Marker

In WFP, the Gender and Age Marker (GaM) became officially operational in June 2018 as a corporate tool that codes - on a scale from 0 to 4 - the extent to which gender and age are integrated into the design and monitoring of a WFP activity. The coding of 0 indicates that a project being evaluated does not address gender and age at all while the coding of 4 indicates that the project integrates all required actions to address gender- and age-related differences in programming. WFP Myanmar's Country Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022 achieved the coding of 3 for its programme design. WFP activities implemented in 2018 achieved the average coding of 3 as evaluated through WFP GaM monitoring online platform.

Women's empowerment is the process through which women achieve agency, power, and control in their own lives. To be empowered, women must not only have equal access to resources and opportunities, but also the ability to exercise their rights to make choices and decisions as full and equal members of society.



Photo: Nutrition beneficiaries at an IDP camp in Kachin State

Opportunities for Women's Empowerment through WFP Assistance

WFP's women's empowerment activities target females from internally displaced populations, especially those heading households. WFP ensures that women beneficiaries are fully informed of their entitlements and their rights to participate and take leadership roles in WFP's activities, such as in food management committees and asset creation project management committees. In 2018, the participation of women in general food distributions increased to 50% (from less than 30% in 2017) in IDP camps and resettled places in central Rakhine.

Women at the village level are empowered through community assets creation projects which provide them with the same wages as men. These efforts reduce gender differences in access to economic opportunities as the entry point, enabling women to access other small livelihood activities. Broader knowledge on household economic management coupled with psychosocial support increase women's decision-making power at both household and community levels. As a result, the proportion of households assisted by WFP where women make decisions on the use of cash or food has increased to 75 percent in 2018 from 60 percent in 2017 in Kachin and northern Shan states.

Preventing Gender Based Violence (GBV)

In Myanmar, GBV is widespread, and often underreported and unacknowledged. Social exclusion, discrimination and a weak legal system exacerbate the consequences of GBV. Women and girls from ethnic and religious minorities are particularly vulnerable, especially in emergency and conflict situations.

WFP actively engages in the annual global campaign *the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence* where WFP offices across the country reaffirm their commitment to preventing GBV and to supporting GBV survivors in the workplaces and communities they serve. Through this and other campaigns, WFP contributes to financing and providing technical support to the Government and the National Gender Network on prevention and protection of violence against women and girls, with the aim to ensure the sensitivity of service providers and law enforcement, and encourage safe environments for survivors to report and seek justice.

Partnerships

Government Partners

- Ministry of Health and Sports
- Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement

Network for Gender

- Gender Equality Network

Partnering UN Agencies

- UNWOMEN
- UNFPA