



International Women's Day

8 March 2013

Women, Violence and Food Security

10 Facts About Women and Hunger

Women are often victims of hunger. They also have a crucial role to play in defeating hunger. As mothers, farmers, teachers and entrepreneurs, they hold the key to building a future free of malnutrition. Here are ten reasons why empowering women is such an important part of WFP's work.

- 1** In developing countries, 79 percent of economically active women spend their working hours producing food through agriculture. Women are 43 percent of the farming work force.
- 2** Yields for women farmers are 20-30 percent lower than for men. This is because women have less access to improved seeds, fertilizers and equipment.
- 3** Giving women farmers more resources could bring the number of hungry people in the world down by 100-150 million people.
- 4** Surveys in a wide range of countries have shown that 85-90 percent of the time spent on household food preparation is women's time.
- 5** In some countries, tradition dictates that women eat last, after all the male members and children have been fed.
- 6** When a crisis hits, women are generally the first to sacrifice their food consumption, in order to protect the food consumption of their families.
- 7** Malnourished mothers are more likely to give birth to underweight babies. Underweight babies are 20 percent more likely to die before the age of five.
- 8** Around half of all pregnant women in developing countries are anaemic. This causes around 110,000 deaths during childbirth each year.
- 9** Research confirms that, in the hands of women, an increase in family income improves children's health and nutrition.
- 10** Education is key. One study showed that women's education contributed 43 percent of the reduction in child malnutrition over time, while food availability accounted for 26 percent.

Sources:

Women in Agriculture: Closing the Gender Gap for Development, FAO, March 2011 (Facts 2, 3, 9, 10)

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Committee on Food Security, FAO, 2011

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/023/mc065E.pdf> (Fact 5, 6)

Progress for Children: A World Fit for Children, UNICEF, 2007 (Fact 7)

The Female Face of Farming, FAO, 2012 (citing Smith and Haddad 2000). <http://www.fao.org/gender/infographic/en/> (Facts 1, 8)



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