Left Out and Left Behind: Ignoring Women Will Prevent Us From Solving the Hunger Crisis

Policy Report

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Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic is unfolding in a world that is already experiencing a hunger crisis, one in which 2 billion people—one in every four people—do not have reliable access to enough nutritious and safe food.[1] At the start of 2020, 690 million people were undernourished or chronically hungry, and UN agencies estimate that that figure could increase by over 130 million because of COVID-19. *Severe* food insecurity or a food crisis could nearly double to affect 270 million people by the end of the year.

Food insecurity is already increasing around the world. The population of people experiencing food insecurity in Latin America has tripled, and West and Central African food insecure populations have more than doubled. In Southern Africa, the food insecure population has increased by as much as 90%. 85% of people involved in CARE's work in Lebanon already indicated that they had been forced to reduce the number of meals they ate even before the recent explosion rocked Beirut. Ethiopia estimates that 9 million more people will need food assistance. Wealthy nations are not immune to food insecurity either. In the U.S., at least 6 million people have registered for food benefits since the start of the pandemic. In the UK, one in four adults are struggling to access affordable food.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are exposing the existing flaws in food systems, many of which stem from gender inequalities and the unfair treatment of women and girls. Women and girls are the majority of food producers and food providers for their households, but their contributions are frequently unseen. Too often, women eat last and least. Prior to the explosion in Beirut, 85% of women CARE surveyed in Lebanon were already eating smaller portions, compared to only 57% of men. In Afghanistan, women and men are both missing meals, but women are missing one more day of meals each week than men.

Women lack the access, information, and inputs they need to fight food insecurity and malnutrition. In Mali, curfews related to the COVID-19 pandemic restrict the times women work in the fields, but not the hours men work, so women disproportionately struggle with food production. In Northeast Nigeria, women have lost access to the cash for work programs that allowed them to buy seeds and grow crops. In Morocco, women cannot even register for COVID-19 safety net programs unless they are widowed. In Vietnam, women are struggling to buy protein and vegetables to make a balanced diet.

Rising hunger and food shortages are also putting additional burdens on women, from mental health risks to gender-based violence. As one district commissioner in Uganda said, "There is food crisis everywhere, and this is even causing violence in families." Experts around the world are noting that women increasingly turn to transactional sex and families resort to child marriage to cope with COVID-19-related food shortages.

These inequalities are no less true on the global level. Whether intentionally or by omission, global responses to COVID-19 and related hunger crises are either ignoring women and girls or treating them as victims who have no role in addressing the problems they face. CARE's new analysis of 73 global reports proposing solutions to the hunger pandemic shows that:

- Nearly half of the reports—46%—do not refer to women and girls at all.
- None of the reports consistently analyze or reflect the gendered effects of the pandemic and hunger crises.
- Only 5 reports—less than 7%—propose concrete actions to resolve the gender inequalities[2] crippling food systems. The rest overlook or ignore women and girls.

Despite the many barriers they face, women and girls are instrumental to food systems and are already leading the charge to meet COVID-19-related challenges. Women leaders at all levels are finding solutions: from planting crops during curfew to keeping markets open, to supporting the poorest people in their communities. Addressing gender inequalities will help deconstruct the barriers these women face, boosting productivity, promoting good nutrition, and leading to better outcomes for women, girls, and their communities.

Involving women and girls isn't just good for food systems, it's good for pandemic responses generally. Countries with female leaders have suffered one-sixth the number of COVID-19 deaths as those led by men and are expected to recover sooner from recession.[3] More importantly, gender equality is a human right and an impactful way to fight poverty around the world. It must be a key part of the solution to the hunger pandemic.

To curb the hunger pandemic and address its disproportionate effects on women and girls, CARE recommends:

- Governments immediately scale up gender-responsive social safety nets and minimize disruptions to agriculture and markets with a specific focus and measurable targets on women food producers and female-headed households.
- All donors, UN agencies, and governments publicly commit that all funding supports gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment, and at least half of food and nutrition security funding supports women and girls directly.
- Governments include at least one gender expert on all of their COVID-19 response teams—at national and local levels—and ensure that all decisions and data in these committees are based on solid gender analysis and meaningful engagement with women and girls.
- All COVID-19 coordination, planning, and priority-setting platforms be gender-balanced, with representation from local women-led and women's rights organizations.
- All donors, UN agencies, and governments support much needed transformations in food systems; most importantly, to recognize women and girls as leaders in food systems and to ensure that they have equal rights and equal access to crucial resources as producers and consumers.

- The UN Secretary General's Policy Brief on the Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition be updated to include gender inequality and make clear recommendations to address it in the COVID-19 response and recovery.

Governments and the entire international community are struggling to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, its impact on the global economy, and a worsening hunger crisis. While responses to the pandemic are well underway, there are significant gaps. The response must be locally- and women-led, informed by, and explicitly address gender inequality. So long as it fails to do that...the response will fail to end the hunger pandemic.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has touched every country and every person. Mitigating its toll has tested the limits of even the wealthiest countries, and some continue to struggle with the health crisis while others have begun shifting their attention and resources toward recovery.

This crisis is unfolding in a world that is already experiencing a hunger pandemic, one in which 2 billion people—one in every four people—do not have reliable access to enough food that is nutritious and safe.[4] Even before COVID-19, the hunger pandemic was growing worse. The number of severely food insecure people around the world has risen nearly 70% over the past four years.[5] An estimated 690 million people were chronically hungry or undernourished at the beginning of 2020, with 135 million experiencing crisis-level food insecurity or worse.[6] More than 20% of children ages five years and younger are too short for their age because of malnutrition.[7] Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was already facing climate change, conflict, environmental degradation, a growing locust infestation, faltering food systems, gender inequality, racism, and weak political systems. These global numbers obscure gender inequality, since global reports typically do not show the difference between men's and women's experiences.

Term	Definition
Hungry/Undernourished	A person going without enough safe, nutritious food to lead an active and healthy life.
Food Insecure	A person who is without reliable access to enough safe and nutritious food and is uncertain where and how they will get enough food. People—especially adults—eating less food or less nutritious food than they need to stay healthy.
Food Crisis or Severely Food Insecure	A person who has run out of food, gone at least one day without eating, or made other harmful choices to get food.
Malnourished	A person who has not been able to eat enough food or eat a diverse and healthy diet with the right nutrients in the right amount (not too much or too little) to fulfill their needs.
Stunted	A person who has suffered permanent damage to their growth because they were not able to get enough nutritious food while they were a child.

Now, the number of hungry people in the world could reach unprecedented heights sooner than expected. Severe hunger could ravage 270 million people by the end of 2020—an 82 percent increase since before COVID-19[8]—and 132 million more people could become undernourished this year due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.[9] Since the start of the pandemic, the number of people receiving food assistance in Latin America has nearly tripled. In West and Central Africa, food insecurity has jumped 135%, and 90% in Southern

Africa.[10] Hunger hotspots—such as South Sudan and Afghanistan—are already seeing exponentially accelerating food crises.

95% of health centers in Bangladesh do not have the supplies they need to treat severe malnutrition, and Haiti has stopped malnutrition treatment at health centers as part of their efforts to stop the spread of COVID

Food security is not just an issue in the global south. The United States enrolled more than 6 million new recipients for food assistance benefits within the first three months of the pandemic.[11] About one out of every eight Americans now receives food benefits.[12] In the UK, one in four adults are struggling to access affordable food.[13] In May of 2020, Canada saw the number of people living in food insecure households at 4 percentage points higher than in 2018.[14] Like the long-term numbers, global data about hunger and the COVID-19 pandemic lacks information on how many women will be hungry relative to men.

Since the pandemic began, CARE has assessed the myriad ways that people are experiencing changes in their foodscapes as a result of COVID-19. What follows is a summary of findings.

Food Production and Livelihoods: Business closures, mobility restrictions, and social distancing related to the pandemic are affecting every aspect of food production and distribution. Access to fields, pasture, and water sources is limited, while economic restrictions mean that resources—such as seeds and fertilizers—are in short supply.[15] In Northeast Nigeria, women cannot access the cash for work programs that allowed them to buy inputs and grow crops.[16] In Mali, women cannot access their fields because curfews prevent movement in the times women would normally farm.[17] In Nepal, CARE's experts and partners report that, without access to other food, families have had to eat the seeds that they would normally have planted for next year's crop, foreshadowing drops in food production.[18] Around the world, markets are closed or operating on a limited basis, to the financial and nutritional detriment of sellers and buyers, and border closures and restricted transport have stymied the movement of goods.[19] Meanwhile, remittances are projected to decrease by 20%, further straining household finances for families in more than 125 countries.[20]

"Prices soared and panic overtook people after the first news of lockdown. Before even infecting anyone in Afghanistan, the virus had spread its fear. Then, when it came and infected and killed people, it also lowered our spirits. Everyone is afraid. We don't know how long it will stay, how many people are going to get infected, and how we will survive."

— Zainab, Kabul, Afghanistan

In Palestine, 1 in 2 women reports that she has lost all of her pay due to COVID

...compared to 1 in 3 men who have experienced complete income loss

Nutrition: In the face of mobility restrictions and lost income, people around the world are struggling to access enough food and diverse, quality diets. This lack of nutrition compromises their immune systems.[21] Pregnant and lactating women and girls have specific nutritional needs that may go unmet during COVID-19.[22] Global school closures mean that 368 million children have lost access to school feeding programs, a crucial safety net for families worldwide.[23] In Vietnam, women say they have enough rice but can only buy meat and vegetables for their children—not for the whole family—because of price spikes.[24] In Bangladesh and Haiti, governments are struggling to provide health services to treat malnourished children.[25,26] 74% of people in Iraq are already eating less food and less nutritious food than they were before COVID-19.[27]

These changes do not affect all groups equally, because food and nutrition security are not gender-neutral or apolitical issues. Decisions regarding who produces, provides, and consumes food, and who has a voice in shaping food policies and food systems are based on prevailing gender inequalities that overwhelmingly disadvantage women and girls.[28] Women and girls are the majority of food producers and food providers for their households, but too often eat last and least.[29]

CARE has consistently demonstrated that crises exacerbate gender inequalities, and the COVID-19 pandemic is no different.[30] This report demonstrates how women and girls are disproportionately affected—as producers, providers, and consumers of food—and systemically excluded from response reports and plans related to food and nutrition security during the COVID-19 pandemic. Women and girls are already responding to the hunger pandemic, but these responses are often with limited resources and support. To effectively fight hunger and malnutrition, the international community must acknowledge and support women and girls, and they must do it now.

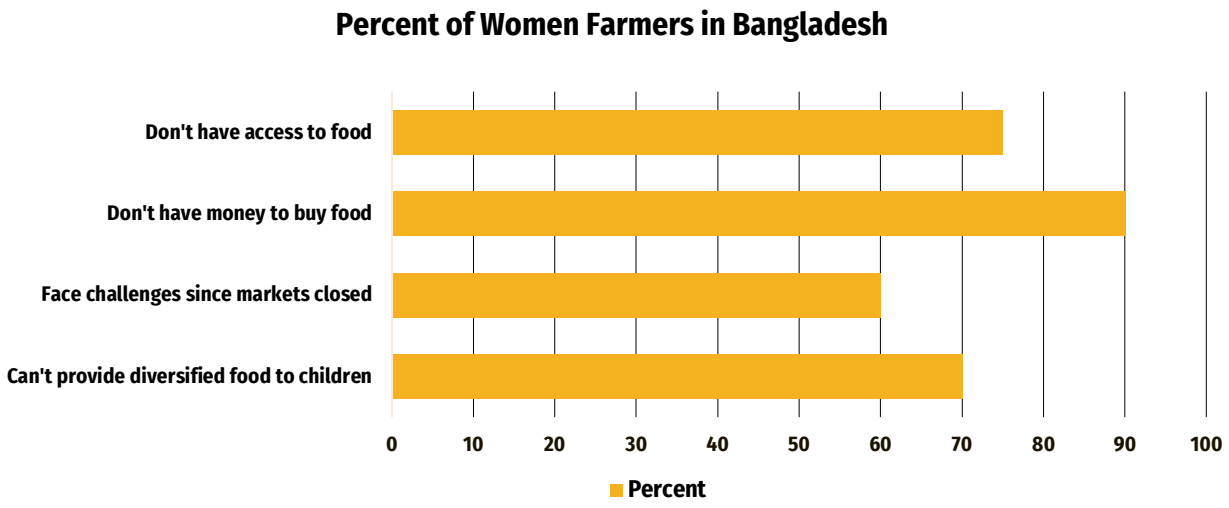
"Food security is important for women because women are at a higher risk in any crisis. If women have food security, they have the mental strength to protect their families in any sort of emergency. They can share their courage with everyone."

— Shadhona Rani Shutradhar, Bangladesh

The Gendered Effects of the Hunger Pandemic

Women and girls make up 60% of the population facing chronic hunger, and moderate and severe food insecurity are higher among females than males.[31, 32] The gender gap in food and nutrition security is even greater among women and girls who are poorer, less educated, unemployed, or otherwise marginalized. Gender inequalities shape food dynamics at the household and community levels in ways that affect women's and girls' production of, access to, ability to afford, and consumption of food, which makes women, girls, and female-headed households particularly vulnerable to food crises. Previous health emergencies have demonstrated that when food becomes scarce, women and girls, who are already disadvantaged in food systems, face increased challenges.[33]

In Bangladesh, **women make up over 50%** of the agricultural labor force.



Women and Girls Produce Food

Women and girls are the majority of the world's food producers.[34] Women and girls make up 43% of the agricultural workforce in the global south.[35] In Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa, women and girls produce nearly 70% of the region's food crops by volume.[36] But this labor does not mean that women and girls have equitable access to the information and resources that they need to produce or sell food; instead, gender inequalities often constrain their access. This is particularly true for women and girls living in rural areas, who must contend with difficulty transporting their food commodities to market over long distances, low commodity prices and/or limited access to markets, and the frustration of trying to obtain agricultural inputs—such as seeds and tools—suitable for small-scale farmers rather than industrial farms.[37] Even where women and girls can get the resources they need, few of them actually own the land they work on. If they do own the land, it may be owned jointly with a man.[38]

Women's and girls' work as food producers is further complicated by disparities in access to information. Lower functional literacy levels and less access to technology such as radios or telephones leave many women and girls reliant on in-person information networks, which are more limited than those men have access to, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.[39] This ease of informational access enables men to more easily obtain information on farming techniques or even weather or market forecasts that can boost their agricultural productivity and enhance their incomes. Coupled with unequitable gender norms that prevent women and girls from making decisions about their

"With the lockdown affecting people's ability to sell their products, and with the lack of food," says Um Muhammed, "I launched an initiative with the women of Jalamah. It started as an ad hoc WhatsApp group, where I offered to exchange extra fertilizer for pesticide for my tomatoes. In no time, women started to follow, offering other inputs and suggesting exchange of produce too!"

"The initiative has created a sense of community," she continues. "The WhatsApp group has become a source of information, knowledge and experience. And we [provide] social support. With the no-human-to-human interaction, the group has bonded and become a platform for sharing thoughts and feelings, something that's of huge importance during a crisis."

— Um Muhammed Shabaan, Palestine

work, this lack of equal access to resources and information means that women produce 20-30% less than men do.[40]

Women's and girls' roles as primary food producers make them particularly vulnerable to the pandemic's threats to agricultural production, while the constraints they face limit their ability to adapt. Social distancing measures and lockdowns are affecting female farmers who normally rely on in-person networks to exchange information. Market closures have limited women's and girls' abilities to access agricultural supplies and to sell their produce, decreasing their productivity and income.[41] Some women and girls have already been forced to use their financial and seed reserves, as in Afghanistan, where 25% of people surveyed had already sold or consumed their assets in order to eat, while 40% have spent down their savings.[42] Evidence from past emergencies demonstrates that depleting reserves can negatively affect agricultural production for years to come, and could set female farmers even further back.[43] There is also a grave and credible risk that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic will lead to losses in women's and girls' autonomy and rights in ways that will also affect their ability to produce food. CARE's previous research on nutrition programs in Ethiopia and Zimbabwe showed that gains in women's and girls' household decision-making power regressed when crises occurred.[44] And women and girls were the first to lose access to land during crises in Mali and Niger.[45] In many regions, COVID-19 and associated movement restrictions are making it difficult for women and girls to continue income-generating activities.[46] Where women and girls are less able to contribute financially to their households, they are less likely to be involved in decision-making or control of resources.[47] This is a denial of women's and girls' rights that could affect their ability to produce food and could have consequences for them and other household members.

Women and Girls Provide Food

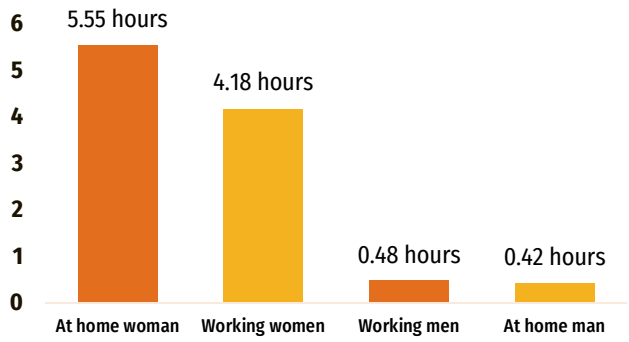
In addition to producing food, women and girls are also the primary providers of food to their families: globally, females are responsible for 85-90% of household food preparation and most of the food shopping.[48] Women and girls are responsible for more than 75% of the world's unpaid care work, including food provision and preparation.[49] Women and girls are also more likely to spend a greater proportion of their income on food than

"Because of the lockdown measures," Amalia says, "my husband is not able to farm in the rice fields, and we are not able to sell our produce at the local market. So we do not have a stable income."

"Most of the people in our community have lost their jobs, especially construction workers and office workers. Some farmers and fisherfolks have limited sources of income because they can no longer sell their harvest. The price of basic commodities has spiked, and...consumers have shifted to buying cheaper, unhealthy food such as noodles and canned goods. These are also the basic commodities provided by the government in food packages. However, in times of pandemic, these are not wise choices and cannot provide the nutrients the body needs to strengthen its immunity."

— Amalia Batallones, San Dionisio, Philippines

Morocco: Number of Hours of House Work



men do, even though women and girls commonly earn less than men.[50] Women's and girls' unequal access to technology, such as smartphones, means they are less likely to have access to the financial assets and safety nets that can be essential to food security.[51]

The COVID-19 pandemic is magnifying women's and girls' work as food providers and caregivers. The closure of food markets, as well as supply chain and livelihood interruptions, are making it more difficult for women and girls to afford and acquire food. In addition, women and girls whose households rely on remittances are losing that income as migrant family members lose their jobs and even return home. Such is the case in the Mekong region, where more than a quarter-million workers have returned to their countries of origin from Thailand.[52] The need to compensate for lost income could place women and girls at a higher risk of sexual exploitation and abuse.[53]

Meanwhile, the COVID-19 disease itself is increasing the likelihood that women and girls may have to spend additional time caring for ill family members. Available data suggests that COVID-19 is more likely to cause severe physical symptoms in males, pushing tasks generally performed by men onto women and girls.[54] These additional responsibilities make it difficult for women and girls to find the time they need to engage in agricultural activities and will reduce productivity.[55] In places where feeding one's family is considered a profound part of a woman's worth, the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic is placing on a woman's ability to provide could increase domestic and other forms of violence against women and girls.[56] As primary food providers, women and girls play a critical role in maintaining food and nutrition security, a role that the COVID-19 pandemic is dramatically affecting to the detriment of individuals, households, and communities.

As food quantity and quality decrease and stress increases, women and girls may be forced to resort to high-risk coping strategies, including transactional sex, and families increasingly resort to child marriage, particularly of girls. One woman in Afghanistan said, "The pandemic has increased the number of child marriages; small-aged girls are married to older men as a second or third wife for money."[57]

Women are also facing higher risk of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation, especially when many men consider inadequate food preparation a justifiable reason to abuse their wives.[58, 59] The increased risk and incidence of gender-based violence as a result of lockdowns and quarantines has prompted warnings of a shadow pandemic—violence against women. This signals yet further erosion and violation of women's and girls' rights.

"With family members staying home, the workload has doubled due to constant needs and demands, especially with the kids around. But by the second week of lockdown, family members started to support [me], at least on the farm. We divided tasks between me, my husband, and [my] eldest son."

— Um Muhammed Shabaan

Women and Girls Consume Food

Women and girls are critically important to maintaining or improving food and nutrition security, but their value is not reflected in their consumption patterns. Instead, women's and girls' food consumption is shaped by gender norms. In many households, these norms dictate that women and girls eat last, eat little, and eat the least nutritious foods.[60] This gendered eating pattern negatively affects women's and girls' nutrition and places them at higher risks of malnutrition and anemia, which can be especially damaging to women and girls who are pregnant or lactating and therefore have higher nutritional needs.[61]

In Afghanistan, women are eating fewer meals at least 4 days a week

In Afghanistan, men are eating fewer meals at least 3 days a week

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated issues related to food and nutrition for women and girls, as well as creating a number of new challenges. Mobility restrictions and market closures, increasing food prices, and decreasing food availability are all reducing households' access to nutritious foods.[62, 63] A recent CARE assessment found that 33% of female respondents in Bangladesh had made the difficult decision to cut down on their own food consumption in an attempt to maintain their savings for the benefit of themselves and their families.[64] In Afghanistan, male and female assessment respondents reported eating fewer meals at least 3 days a week and less nutritious diets 5 days a week, but females were skipping one more day of meals each week than males.[65] Even before the Beirut explosion, a full 85% of the people CARE surveyed in Lebanon were reducing the number of meals they ate.[66] This decrease in consumption is not equal: 85% of females surveyed were also eating smaller portions, compared with 57% of men.[67] In addition, many households have lost nutritional support from school feeding programs.[68] Some governments are providing food assistance to families who previously relied on these programs but are distributing uncooked ingredients. This means that ingredients may be divided among all family members, rather than reserved for children. Because the provided food may be eaten during family meals, the food may be distributed according to gender norms that dictate women and girls eat last and least, denying them necessary nutrition.[69]

"Most importantly, we are able to eat our own produce, and we can save for more important needs. Since we have our own crops in our backyard, we still eat three times a day. We give our extra supply of vegetables to our neighbours if we know they have limited resources for that day." — Amalia Batallones

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted how essential women and girls are to food and nutrition security—and how important it is to not squander their agency and leadership or violate their rights—while intensifying the challenges they face in producing, providing, and consuming food. Available data on the dual COVID-19 and hunger pandemics fail to sufficiently examine the experiences and needs of women and girls. This failure must be addressed in order to find solutions to the food crisis.

In Lebanon **85%** of women are eating smaller portions already—compared to only **57%** of men. Women are also the first to give up eating more diverse foods. **66%** of women have already made this shift, compared to **43%** of men.

Existing thinking around the hunger pandemic ignores gender

Policy strategies and responses to hunger, malnutrition, and COVID-19 are failing women and girls. By replicating the gender inequalities and assumptions that made existing food systems so fragile and inefficient, these responses are further widening gender inequalities, setting in motion repercussions that will last for decades. In overlooking the leadership of women and girls, such responses are also failing to solve the hunger pandemic.

CARE reviewed 73 publicly available policy statements, guidance documents, and COVID-19 response strategies that address the COVID-19-induced food crisis.[70] These documents are the public commitments of the most powerful actors shaping and driving the global response to COVID-19 and hunger: UN agencies, the World Bank, and key global development donors including the governments of Australia, Canada, the European Union, the UK, and the United States. They include key strategies or statements from regional policymakers in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America.[71] CARE selected these documents by searching the websites of these powerful actors for statements and guidance on the intersection of hunger, malnutrition, and COVID-19 relating to policy and program responses for food, agriculture, nutrition, and hunger. Collectively, this group is influential in making decisions regarding funding for, and implementation of, programs to end the COVID-19-related food crisis and avert a full-fledged hunger pandemic.

CARE found that these policy and program responses fall woefully short of a vision for gender equality where women are at the center of solving the COVID-19 hunger crisis. They do not disaggregate data in a way that allows policy makers to understand what women need, and how those needs differ from men's needs. The strategies and plans dictated by these programs are critical to the way that the world will handle the hunger pandemic as they help determine funding and response actions around the world. Their policy and program documents fail to account for the capabilities, needs, and rights of women and girls. When women and girls do not appear in core strategic documents and recommendations, they are unlikely to be included in the response in meaningful ways. The lack of attention to women and girls in these high-profile policies and programs all but ensures that governments and humanitarian responders will continue to overlook women's rights.

Invisible Women and Girls: How Women and Girls Show Up, or Not, in COVID-19 and Hunger Reports[72]

Ignore Women and Girls	Treat Women and Girls as Victims	Target Women and Girls as Vulnerable	Propose Concrete Actions to Address Gender Inequality
34 documents	27 documents	13 documents	5 documents
46%	36%	18%	7%

Ignoring women and girls. Nearly half (34) of the documents fail to mention women and girls at all. Not a single document in this group provides gender-disaggregated data on the hunger pandemic that would remind policy makers that females and males have different needs and capacities, and that different response measures are required to provide for different genders.

Treating women and girls as victims. More than one-third of the reports (27) mention women and girls only as vulnerable populations—victims who are often characterized as important because they bear children, and malnourished women and girls give birth to malnourished babies. While this acknowledgement of women's existence is somewhat better than failing to recognize women at all, it plays into stereotypes that reinforce the concept of women's roles as passive, unequal, and valuable only as the "bearers of children." Yet even

when women's and girls' wider roles are recognized, they are seen as "targeted beneficiaries"—passive recipients—rather than as agents of change. Only two reports, from the World Bank and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), mention females as leaders who are capable of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and the hunger crisis. Both of these documents highlight that women and girls are working through their collective community groups to respond to these crises.

"We [the savings group] purchased 300 kilograms of rice, 300 kilos of maize, and 200 kilos of millet, using money from our cash box. Each member took home 15 kilos of rice, the same amount of maize, and 10 kilos of millet. That's enough for three meals a day, for between 20 days and two months, depending on the size of the family. We also produced soap and ointment and distributed it among all members. This really helped, especially the group members who were most vulnerable financially."

— Aichatou Chitou, Maradi, Niger

Missing the underlying problems. Only 7 reports mention gender inequality at all, more often than not painting women as largely passive. For example, the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2020 report notes that "the need for a deeper understanding of the forms of discrimination that make access to food more difficult for women, even when they have the same income and education levels and live in similar areas as men."[73] There is already a wealth of research explaining these barriers, and the SOFI report misses the opportunity to learn. It fails to draw from decades of evidence and program implementation showing that unless we address fundamental gender inequalities—such as gender-based violence, the lack of men's engagement to address social norms that hurt women, and women's lack of access to the broader decision-making system—we fail to provide sustainable gains in food security. To hide behind the notion that the international community lacks research or requires deeper understanding of the issues, or to fail to propose action to address inequalities directly, is to delay necessary action and to perpetuate the harm women and girls already face.

Failing to propose concrete actions. Support for women and girls and gender equality is most glaringly absent in the recommendations. Not a single report proposes measurable, transparent commitments to support women and girls, ensure their meaningful participation in decision-making processes, recognize their leadership, secure their rights, or address gender inequality. Without these discrete targets, women and girls will never be able to hold policy makers accountable for progress on the COVID-19 and hunger pandemic responses. A staggering 78% of these documents make no recommendations of any kind to support women and girls. Just 17% mention women and girls in any capacity in their recommendations, but only as a group to target with assistance and safety nets. None of the reports propose actions to engage men, boys, and other power holders to change the fundamental assumptions that lock women out of equal participation in food systems. Reaching women and girls with aid packages is an important start but still does not address the core problems—until women and girls have equal access to resources, information, and, most critically, decision-making power, global food systems will remain broken, the hunger pandemic will continue, and women and girls will still disproportionately lose out.

Only five policy reports—the Food and Agriculture Organizations' Gender Brief[74] and Gender Guidance[75], a brief from the International Food Policy Research Institute[76], a European Union policy document[77], and the UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19[78]—make recommendations that address fundamental underlying gender inequalities as a way to solve the COVID-19 crisis. These documents propose concrete recommendations anchored in existing evidence to address the hunger pandemic, in part by addressing the fundamental gender inequalities that deepen and are likely to prolong the hunger pandemic.

The majority of these documents have one other thing in common: they come from the gender department of the organization that published them and ***are not incorporated in the overall guidance for that agency's COVID-19 response.*** This reinforces women's and girls' persistent invisibility and makes it unlikely that these recommendations will inform either high-level funding decisions or day-to-day response work on the ground. Gender equality must be at the core of COVID-19 response, not an afterthought or side note.

There are two notable exceptions to this trend. The UN Global Humanitarian Response Plan (July 2020 version)[79] and EU's Council Conclusions on the Global Response to COVID-19[80] do provide specific recommendations and proposed action points to promote gender equality. They specifically include the need to engage women's and girls' groups and address the underlying biases and obstacles that women and girls face. Regrettably, the major actors responsible for addressing the hunger pandemic—regional policy makers, the world's richest donors, and the technical agencies responsible for guiding the food response—have not lived up to this high-level commitment and vision.

Tackling gender inequality and ensuring women and girls can meaningfully participate in decision-making at all levels needs to be at the core of the response to the COVID-19-induced food crisis. Women and girls make up half of the world's population. To not openly discuss the importance of addressing the systemic gender inequality that half of the world's population faces is a recipe for disaster in the context of COVID-19 response and recovery.

The failure to explicitly call out gender inequality is perhaps most glaring in the UN Secretary General's Policy Brief on the Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition.[81] The Secretary General's admirable commitment to putting women and girls at the center of the COVID-19 response from higher-level documents and statements did not carry through into a robust gender analysis on food systems, hunger, malnutrition, and the impact of COVID-19. Although the policy brief warns that women and girls are vulnerable to the impacts of growing food and nutrition insecurity, it misses the opportunity to remind governments of the commitments they have made to advance gender equality, or to remind them that they should be proactively supporting and enabling women and girls to be part of the solution at local, national, and global levels. If the international community continues to leave women and girls out of the responses to the pandemic, experience shows that they will be left behind and failed yet again. As the highest-level UN document on the COVID-19 hunger crisis, this brief fails to set the necessary tone for the global community.

Despite Challenges, Women and Girls Are Already Leading the Response

It isn't just COVID-19-induced food and nutrition security response plans from which women and girls are being excluded—they have been and are being systematically excluded from decision-making positions in their households, communities, and countries. A recent CARE report found that, on average, women and girls made up just 24% of national-level COVID-19 response teams, even though women and girls make up half of the world's population as well as more than 70% of the world's health and social care workforce.[82] Women and girls are similarly shut out of many local-level decision-making bodies—an analysis of four district-level COVID-19 task forces in Uganda found that women made up an average of 22.5% of members, and that men held the most influential positions.[83]

Ignoring and silencing women and girls reinforces perceptions that they are weak and voiceless, "vulnerable" groups that are affected *by* events without having any power to affect events in return. These perceptions flout reality. Women and girls are powerful, active agents who can bring welcome change to their

communities. Experience shows that investing in women and girls yields high returns for them and their communities—a UN Women report on funding for gender equality in humanitarian programming shows an average return of $8 for every $1 spent on gender equality.[84]

Additionally, women and girls report that CARE's Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) provide opportunities to enhance their self-confidence, open avenues to express their independence, and reinforce their belief that they can change things in their own lives.[85] Women and girls are quick to transform this increased self-confidence into social solidarity and to help their communities prepare for potential emergencies.[86] When WFP was late with food distributions in Chad, women and girls worked through VSLAs to help bridge the gap and buy food for their community.[87] In Niger, communities decided to put VSLAs in charge of all of the food aid distribution from the government because, as the village chief noted, "it is obvious that they have more management capacity than us men and are better able to maintain social cohesion."[88]

Gender inequality, the COVID-19 pandemic, and increasing food insecurity and malnutrition have not stopped women and girls from engaging in collective advocacy and mutual aid to support their own and other families. In Bangladesh, when social distancing made it impossible for VSLA members to engage in income-generating activities, the group decided to arrange a share-out—i.e., to distribute a portion of the group's savings to each member. The members, who reported they had not received any help from the Government of Bangladesh or NGOs, used the money to support their families during the pandemic.[89] Some women, such as Um Muhammed Shabaan in Palestine, have created networks for women and girls to swap essential goods, and the groups quickly became about more than just commodities. "The...group has become a source of information, knowledge and experience," says Shabaan. "We [provide] social support. With no human-to-human interaction, the group has bonded and become a platform for sharing thoughts and feelings, something that's of huge importance during a crisis."[90]

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"The insurgence in of the coronavirus in Ghana brought a lot of challenges but the Market Queen, Nana Kyeiwaa, was very helpful. She ensured the market women adhered to the protocols instituted by the government. Nana Kyeiwaa herself went to the extent of standing at one of the entrances to make sure that those protocols were observed." Akua Duruwaa, egg seller, Rail Cross Market, Kumasi, Ghana

"One major initiative of the Market Queen during this period was the extension of the market space. Before the coronavirus, the market was not as large as it is now. She made sure that more of the land was given to us so we can have enough space to practice the social distancing. Now the market is very spacious and it is even looking nice. There was also no light in the market so thieves used to worry us a lot but the due to the leadership of the queens we were able to acquire lights for the market and this has eased the theft cases here."

— Akua Serwah, onion market head, Rail Cross Market, Kumasi, Ghana

Women and girls are also using their leadership roles to find safe ways to keep food markets functioning. In Ghana, "market queens" oversee entire marketplaces, including "market heads," who specialize in specific commodities.[91] Market queens and market heads have tremendous influence on the quality, supply, distribution, and pricing of goods, as well as on overall market functioning.[92] Market queens are so influential

that they have been able to work with market heads and vendors to ensure that markets continue functioning safely during the pandemic. In Ghana's Kumasi town, Market Queen Nana advocated with the government to expand the size of the market.[93] She worked with market heads to put vendors on a rotating schedule and organized food deliveries from rural areas to allow for social distancing. She also enforced mask regulations at market entrances to help keep vendors and customers safe.[94]

As the COVID-19 pandemic has upended economies, raising basic commodity prices and causing job layoffs around the world, women and girls are finding new ways to earn money and feed their families. In the Philippines, Amalia Batallones has been growing vegetables at her home for years, but she and her family never needed to depend on them.[95] However, since the pandemic has prevented her husband from tending his fields and closed markets, their vegetables have become an important food source—one that allows her family to continue eating three meals a day and even to share food with their neighbors.[96] In Afghanistan, Zainab became her family's sole earner after the pandemic prevented her husband from working as a laborer.[97] Providing literacy classes and selling eggs are allowing Zainab to continue buying the food her family needs. In Niger, Aichatou Chitou—who is also the president of her VSLA—organized the purchase and distribution of food aid for group members. She also helped her association pivot to mask production.[98] The group has made more than 10,000 masks to date.[99]

"I'm able to help my husband with household finances. In fact, I'm now buying the family's food, especially the rice. I give pocket money to my husband and can help my children with what they need."

— Aichatou Chitou

Recommendations

Governments and the entire international community are struggling to respond to the COVID-19 health crisis and its impact on the global economy. Yet these crises aren't the only ones the world will face this year, or next. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the widening cracks in global food systems. A hunger crisis is here and is one of many factors threatening decades of progress toward ending poverty. Women and girls are fighting it with their ingenuity, solidarity, adaptive capacity, and deep knowledge based on their central role in food systems. But they can't fight this crisis on their own–nor should they have to.

Global and national actors face an urgent reality: minimizing the scope and intensity of hunger and malnutrition. This unprecedented crisis also affords an opportunity to create gender-equitable, sustainable food systems that put women and girls at the forefront of decision-making and meet future needs for healthy diets. Governments and global bodies must ensure that the response is transformative; that it anticipates food systems and social systems in which all people can equally participate and equally benefit.

Hunger Was Here Before COVID-19, and It Isn't Going Away

To prevent further erosions in food and nutrition security and to speed up post-pandemic economic recovery for all people, governments must address people's loss of income and reduced access to food. They must provide food assistance as and where it is needed, taking into account gender, age and other key characteristics. They must protect livelihoods so that people can buy food and other necessities now while continuing to participate in agricultural activities as safely as possible. Across these actions, governments must adopt a gender-responsive approach.

- The hunger pandemic is here now. Governments must immediately **scale up and support gender-responsive safety net programs. Gender-responsive safety nets must:**

- **Apply gender analysis** to identify the best responses, whether they be cash, voucher, or in-kind food assistance, and to respond to the different needs and preferences of women, men, boys, and girls.
- **Prioritize the people most at-risk**, including women and girls, small-scale farmers, refugees and displaced people, and pregnant or lactating women.
- **Support nutrition** by helping people access diverse foods, especially nutritious food, which is typically more perishable and more expensive.
- **Use unconditional transfers** to avoid creating additional burdens on families, and particularly on women.
- **Mitigate risks—including gender-based violence and protection risks**—during food, cash, or other emergency assistance delivery and during recovery and development efforts.

- The COVID-19 response must **minimize disruptions to markets and support agricultural livelihoods** by ensuring that small-scale farmers, especially women and girls, can access key resources such as inputs, information, storage, and market linkages. To do so, **governments must:**
  - **Work with women's farmer and market groups** to understand their needs and the barriers they face accessing extension services, input supplies, and markets.
  - **Address current gender inequalities**, including women's unequal access to land tenure, inheritance, and credit.
  - **Prioritize reaching women** who produce food with price supports or input subsidies that include crops women traditionally grow and through directly targeting aid to women farmers.

- The needs around hunger are urgent and the response requires significant investment. **All actors must deploy and scale up funding as quickly as possible—and ensure funding reaches women and girls.** Failing to act now will make recovery infinitely more difficult. **All funders and implementers must:**
  - **Promote coordinated, joined-up food and nutrition security planning, assessments, coordination, and programming** to ensure that COVID-19 responses, as well as other humanitarian and development actions, are complementary, to avoid gaps and duplication and to achieve shared outcomes
  - **Use humanitarian and development funding concurrently.** The crisis at hand requires coordination across and use of humanitarian and development funding to meet the complex and growing challenges around hunger and the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - **Increase official development assistance and current budget allocations** for agriculture and nutrition and **rationalize appeals among UN agencies**.

If You're Not in the Report, You're Not in the Response

The COVID-19 pandemic response is well underway, yet there are significant gaps. Responses—whether policies or program interventions—must be locally- and women-led, and must be informed by, and explicitly address, gender inequality. This requires addressing the gendered roles, disproportionate caregiving burdens, and unequal responsibilities and rewards in food systems, from production through to consumption. Reporting must be transparent, sex- and age-disaggregated and comprehensive to promote accountability for gender-responsiveness.

- **The UN Secretary General's Policy Brief on the Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition must be updated to discuss the causes and impacts of gender inequality** and make clear recommendations to address it in the COVID-19 response and recovery.

- **Addressing women's and girls' needs in COVID-19 response and recovery requires humanitarian and development actors to prioritize their responses based on gender analysis and sex- and age-disaggregated data.** Situational analysis must include sex- and age-disaggregated data and plan for regular updates in order to capture the gendered impacts of COVID-19 and the differing needs of women, girls, men and boys.

- **A women-led response, with gender at the center, requires ensuring that women have a seat at decision-making tables** from local to global levels, including national policy and budget setting processes, humanitarian clusters, COVID-19 response and recovery teams, and donor priority-setting processes.
    - COVID-19 coordination and planning platforms must be gender-balanced. Actors should hold themselves accountable to the IASC Interim Guidance on Localization and the COVID-19 response[100] that calls for women to have a seat at the table in humanitarian coordination platforms. The guidance should inform other priority-setting and planning bodies responding to COVID-19 and the hunger pandemic.
    - At least half of the strategic partners engaged in planning and funding strategies should be local women-led and women's rights organizations.
    - Governments should commit to including at least one gender expert on national and international COVID-19 response teams and must consult with women's groups in setting priorities and designing the COVID-19 response.

- **All donors, UN agencies, and governments should commit that all funding support gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment** and should be evaluated against that criteria**. At least fifty percent of funding for food and nutrition security should support women and girls directly,** including local women-led and women's rights organizations. Funding must also support their meaningful participation in decision-making platforms.

- Lack of transparency around funding at the UN and within the international community means that COVID-19 health and hunger responses lack adequate support for women and girls. **All donors, UN agencies, and governments should report publicly on the gendered impacts of their COVID-19 strategies and responses, as well as on their progress toward gender commitments** across all programs, including humanitarian response, safety nets, agriculture, nutrition, markets, and livelihoods.
    - All actors must report into OCHA's Financial Tracking Service[101] to promote transparency and accountability for the funding needed and received, remaining gaps, and expenditures. This also includes transparency around structures funding civil society groups engaged in ensuring that women and girls have a voice in the assistance they receive, and disaggregation of data by sex.
    - In particular, the WFP, FAO, and IFAD must be clear that all of their plans and policies are based on analysis of gendered impacts, including but not limited to ensuring that women and girls have a say in the assistance they receive, transparency about how much funding is reaching women and girls, and about what percentage of those benefiting from their programs are women and girls.

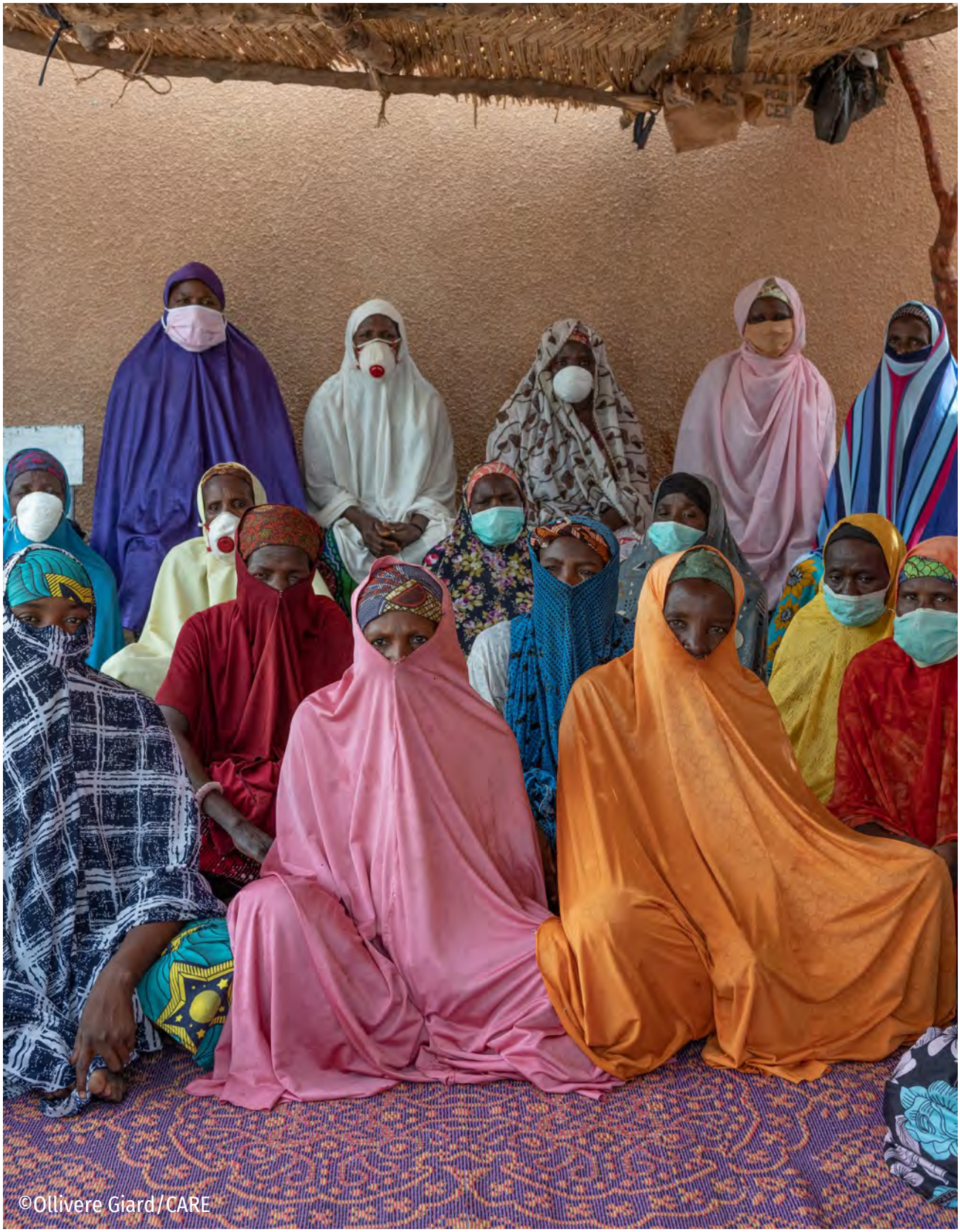
Creating Equal Food Systems

Pandemic response and recovery measures provide an historic opportunity to repair broken food systems and ensure they better reflect the needs and contributions of all people, including women and girls.

- COVID-19 recovery plans must support transformations needed in food systems. Most important is the recognition of women and girls as leaders in food systems and their equal access to crucial resources as producers and consumers.
    - This means engaging men, women, boys, and girls in the exploration of social norms and the resulting gendered roles in food systems. It also calls for addressing the systemic inequality women face, whether in social norms or national laws, related to land rights, access to credit, extension systems designed to meet their needs and priorities, and in access to information, including through digital means.

- COVID-19 recovery plans present opportunities to create food systems that ensure small-scale food producers, including women and girls, have a voice in shaping the systems they engage with, from policies and programs to fields and markets.
    - Key stakeholders—small-scale and women farmers, women's farmer groups, women-led organizations, and women's rights organizations—should be at the table in setting policy and funding priorities. Just as in the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, transformations in food systems must be locally- and women-led.

- The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit is a prime moment to make clear that food systems must be gender equal. As such, the UN should appoint a women's rights group to the Advisory Committee for the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021. The committee currently does not include any representation from women's groups.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Annex 1 Policy Documents, Public Statements, and Strategies Reviewed for this report

Document	Organization	Date
2020 Global Report on Food Crises	World Food Programme	April 20, 2020
Adding a gender lens into Food and Agriculture Organization's response to COVID-19 - Programme guidance	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 01, 2020
Addressing the impacts of COVID-19 in food crises	Food and Agriculture Organization	May 01, 2020
Afghanistan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation April-May 2020 and Projection for June-November 2020	IPC	May 01, 2020
African Ministers for Agriculture (Virtual) Meeting on the impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition in Africa	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 16, 2020
Government of Australia- Japan Joint Ministerial Statement in Response to the COVID-19 pandemic	Government of Australia	May 18, 2020
Government of Australia stepping-up to address COVID-19 in the Pacific	Government of Australia	April 10, 2020
Government of Australia supports COVID-19 response in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh	Government of Australia	July 03, 2020
Burkina Faso: Acute Malnutrition Projection Update April-July 2020	IPC	June 01, 2020
Burundi: Acute Food Insecurity Situation May 2020 and Projection for June-August 2020	IPC	May 01, 2020
Canada is first to commit funds to IFAD facility created to help avert food crisis	Government of Canada	June 10, 2020
Central African Republic: Acute Food Insecurity Projection May-August 2020	IPC	May 01, 2020
Communication on the Global EU response to COVID-19	European Union	April 08, 2020
Council conclusions on Team Europe Global Response to COVID-19	European Union	June 08, 2020
COVID 19: safeguarding food systems and promoting healthy diets	GLOPAN	June 01, 2020
COVID-19 and Nutrition: SUN Movement Advocacy & Communication Strategy	SUN	May 20, 2020
COVID-19 and the promise of food system innovation	International Food Policy Research Institute	June 18, 2020

COVID-19: Potential impact on the world's poorest people A World Food Programme analysis of the economic and food security implications of the pandemic	World Food Programme	April 15, 2020
COVID-19: Shocks on Nutrition and Potential Mitigation USAID Guiding Principles and Recommendations	USAID	June 01, 2020
Crop calendars and recommended actions during the Covid-19 outbreak in the Africa region	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 12, 2020
Economic and food security implications of the COVID-19 outbreak	World Food Program	July 11, 2020
Food and Agriculture Organization COVID-19 Response and Recovery Programme	Food and Agriculture Organization	July 15, 2020
Food and Agriculture Organization needs $350 million to avert rising hunger as countries reel from COVID-19 pandemic's impact	Food and Agriculture Organization	May 18, 2020
Feed the Future's Response to COVID-19	USAID	June 02, 2020
Food Security and COVID-19	World Bank	July 08, 2020
Gendered impacts of COVID-19 and equitable policy responses in agriculture, food security and nutrition	Food and Agriculture Organization	May 15, 2020
Gender-sensitive social protection: A critical component of the COVID-19 response in low- and middle-income countries	International Food Policy Research Institute	May 01, 2020
Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19	United Nations	April 01, 2020
Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 Update	United Nations	July 17, 2020
Guidance on Supporting Safe and Functioning Food Markets USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security	USAID	June 01, 2020
Honduras: Acute Food Insecurity Project update June-August 2020	IPC	June 06, 2020
How Much Does Reducing Inequality Matter for Global Poverty?	World Bank	June 01, 2020
How nutrition can protect people's health during COVID-19	World Bank	May 13, 2020
How to ensure effective government responses as COVID-19 spreads to rural areas	International Food Policy Research Institute	June 22, 2020
Hunger amid plenty: How to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the world's most vulnerable people	World Bank	May 01, 2020

Impact of COVID-19 outbreak on supply chains, regional trade, markets and food security in East Africa	World Food Programme	May 08, 2020
International COVID Response Oral Statement, Secretary of State Rt. Hon Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP makes an Oral Statement in the House of Commons	Government of the United Kingdom	May 06, 2020
Intra-African trade, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the COVID-19 pandemic	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 12, 2020
Joint Statement by Brazil, Canada, Italy and Egypt following the Extraordinary High-Level Meeting of the Group of Friends of Food Security and Nutrition on the Impact of COVID-19 on Food Availability and Supply	Canada	April 21, 2020
Joint Statement by Food and Agriculture Organization, IFAD, World Food Programme and the World Bank on COVID-19 Impacts on Food Security and Nutrition on the occasion of the Extraordinatry G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting	United Nations	April 20, 2020
Joint statement on nutrition in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Asia and the Pacific	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 17, 2020
Keeping Africa's food supplies strong during COVID-19: Lessons from past crises	World Bank	May 15, 2020
Madagascar: Acute Food Insecurity Projection update April-July 2020	IPC	April 01, 2020
Measures For Supporting Domestic Markets During the COVID-19 Outbreak in Africa	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 12, 2020
Meeting of African Ministers for Agriculture Declaration on Food Security and Nutrition During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 16, 2020
Mozambique: Acute Food Insecurity Situation in Maputo and Matola June-September 2020	IPC	July 01, 2020
Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19): America Acts, leading the global fight against COVID 19	USAID	April 01, 2020
Parliamentary Front Against Hunger open letter on COVID-19 and the fight against hunger	Parliamentary front Latin America and the Carribean	April 28, 2020
Partnering with our neighbours to respond to COVID-19	Government of Australia	May 29, 2020
Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on Food Security and Nutrition	United Nations	June 10, 2020

Poverty and food insecurity could grow dramatically as COVID-19 spreads	International Food Policy Research Institute	April 16, 2020
Q&A: Global EU response to the coronavirus pandemic	European Union	April 08, 2020
Rapid Evidence Review Policy interventions to mitigate negative effects on poverty, agriculture and food security from disease outbreaks and other crises	Government of the United Kingdom	May 20, 2020
Responding to COVID-19 in Africa: Using Data to Find a Balance	Africa CDC	May 01, 2020
Responding to COVID-19 in Africa: Using Data to Find a Balance	United Nations	May 05, 2020
Responding to the development emergency caused by COVID-19 World Food Programme's medium-term programme framework	World Food Programme	June 01, 2020
Safeguarding input supply chains for small-scale agricultural producers in the context of COVID-19 in Africa	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 12, 2020
Social protection: ensuring effective response and inclusive recovery in the context of COVID-19 in Africa	Food and Agriculture Organization	April 12, 2020
Statement of ASEAN Ministers on Agriculture and Forestry in Response to the Outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) to Ensure Food Security, Food Safety and Nutrition in ASEAN	ASEAN	April 16, 2020
Sudan: Acute Food Insecurity Situation June-September 2020 and Projection for October-December 2020	IPC	June 01, 2020
The COVID-19 nutrition crisis: What to expect and how to protect	International Food Policy Research Institute	April 23, 2020
The Impact of COVID-19 on Global Food Security and Nutrition: Preventing a Health Crisis From Becoming a Food Crisis	United Nations	April 17, 2020
The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World	Food and Agriculture Organization	July 13, 2020
Tri-national Border of Rio Lempa: Acute Food Insecurity Projection Update June-August 2020	IPC	June 06, 2020
Government of the United Kingdom leads global fight to prevent second wave of coronavirus	Government of the United Kingdom	April 12, 2020
Update: The United States Is Continuing To Lead the Response to COVID-19	US Department of State	May 01, 2020
Updated estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty	World Bank	June 08, 2020
World Food Programme COVID-19 Response Common Services Plan	World Food Programme	April 03, 2020

World Food Programme: Hunger could double in East Africa and the Horn in months as coronavirus spreads	World Food Programme	May 19, 2020
What Would it Cost to Avert the COVID-19 Hunger Crisis?	Ceres 2030	July 14, 2020
Why gender matters in COVID-19 responses - now and in the future	International Food Policy Research Institute	April 22, 2020
Yemen: millions of children facing deadly hunger, amidst aid shortages and COVID-19	United Nations	June 26, 2020

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Acknowledgements: Lucy Beck, Susannah Friedman, Rachael Leman, Hannah McNeish, Ezra Morris, Sarah Lynch, Hilary Matthews, Praise Perry, and Mary Kate Wilson

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[1] All statistics and sources in this executive summary are fully cited in the main body of the report.
[2] See Annex 1 for the full list of documents reviewed
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[28] This report refers generally to women and girls, but it is important to note that these are not homogenous groups. Women's and girls' intersectional identities will affect their experiences during the COVID-19 hunger and health pandemics. The international community must be aware of this and plan for this. Intersectionality is a term coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw that refers to "the complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups." Merriam Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectionality. Further intersectional analysis, beyond the scope of this report, is required to assess the additional barriers that women and girls face in food systems.
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