



Child Hunger, Gender Inequality, and Violence

We know that chronic hunger can lead to compromised physical and cognitive development in children and leaves them weakened and more vulnerable to disease. And yet, these harms are not the whole story. Hungry children are vulnerable in many ways. Consider these broader consequences for hungry children around the world:

- When food is scarce, there is increased tension and conflict within households, resulting in more reports of violence in the home.
- Nutrition and gender are intimately interconnected. Gender relations in some cultures can influence which children go hungry, as families forced to ration meals may favour boys, who are seen as future breadwinners, over girls, who are considered burdens on the family until they marry and leave.
- Hungry children, very often girls, may be taken out of school to save on school fees or to put them to work when their families come under economic strain. These children then suffer the lifelong socioeconomic impact of never completing their education.
- Hunger can drive children into dangerous situations:
 - Families may 'sell off' girls into early marriage simply because it is one less mouth for them to feed.
 - Children may be forced into survival sex that puts them at risk of HIV and violence.
 - Girls and boys may be forced into begging, dangerous labour situations, or into the arms of radical insurgent groups that can offer them food.
- Widespread food insecurity and hunger drives mass migrations of people. Refugee children are at great risk of violence, abuse, exploitation, and neglect, including human trafficking and forced recruitment into armed groups.

The Power of Food

Food security may not be the first solution you might think of to help end gender-based violence and violence against children. And yet, it is clear that ensuring access to adequate food is fundamental in protecting many of the world's hungry children from further harms. Every action we take towards ending child hunger is also a powerful lever against gender inequality and gender-based violence.

Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN) is focused on child hunger this year in our advocacy on the Right to Food. You can sign up at <https://grandmothersadvocacy.org/ways-get-involved> to receive email updates on upcoming learning events, advocacy actions, and news articles on child hunger. Let's do this work together.