

# The Featureza

November 2023

Magazine

## TRAFFICKING

fight for your  
freedom and justice

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## SEX WORK

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## WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS

fight for your freedom and  
justice



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# EDITOR'S NOTE



*Women's rights are human rights*

*Women's rights are human rights*

*Women's rights are human rights*

**W**

we are incredibly grateful for all the support you have shown us throughout the year. As a team, we sat down and pondered how we could make this November edition different,

while also giving back to our community in some way. After hours of brainstorming and ideation, we are thrilled to present an issue that may look a little different from what you're used to.

This month, we want to convey a powerful message as you digitally flip through our pages: Women's rights are human rights, and human rights should always be universal. Our November issue of The Feature Magazine is dedicated to celebrating and educating the world about the importance of human rights.

Human rights have been enshrined into constitutions globally for a reason. They have allowed us to learn from the evils of our past and understand that all life is sacred, from the most vulnerable person on the street to the incredible women who run their own homeless shelters.

In this issue, you'll find three thought-provoking articles that delve into human rights topics, leaving us with ethical quandaries that demand answers. We believe it's crucial to address these questions and spark meaningful conversations.

Moreover, we have included a series of eye-opening statistics that shed light on the importance of human rights and how they are often overlooked in the 21st century. It's time to bring these issues to the forefront and create a world where everyone's rights are respected.

To further support this cause, we have also featured organizations that tirelessly fight for the concept of human rights. Their dedication and passion inspire us, and we hope they will inspire you too.

The world has come a long way since its inception, and it's essential to embrace and internalize these human rights. You are more than entitled to them; they were ordained from the very first breath you took and will accompany you until your last.

Let us come together as a community and champion the celebration of human rights. Together, we can make a difference and ensure that every individual's rights are protected and respected.

Thank you for being a part of this journey with us. We hope this issue touches your heart and ignites a fire within you to stand up for what is right.

**With love and gratitude,**

*The Feature Magazine Team*



# GENDER INEQUALITY

Gender inequality is a major cause and effect of hunger and poverty: it is estimated that 60 percent of chronically hungry people are women and girls.

SOURCE:  
WFP GENDER POLICY AND  
STRATEGY

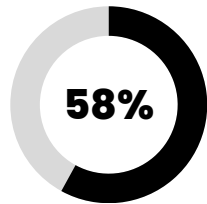


# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

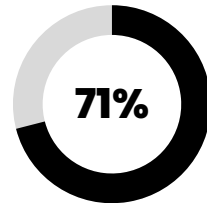
FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TO TRADITIONAL HARMFUL SOCIAL PRACTICES AND SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS HAPPENS ALL OVER THE WORLD

**1 OUT OF 8**

Around the world experience violence



Women murdered in 2017 were killed by an intimate partner or a family member



All human trafficking involves women and girls – mainly for sexual exploitation

Around  
**650 Million Women**

across the globe were married before the age of 18

Over  
**200 million women and girls**

in 30 countries have undergone female genital mutilation

WOMEN AND GIRLS SUFFER THE MOST DURING VIOLENT CONFLICT DUE TO INEQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION. THEY ARE MORE AT RISK OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE, EXPLOITATION AND TRAFFICKING DURING WAR.

**1 IN 5**



female refugees and internally displaced people (someone who is forced to leave their home but remains in their country) have experienced sexual violence in countries affected by conflict

*The Significance of*

# HUMAN RIGHTS

*Recognizing and Upholding Equality*



In today's world, we are fortunate to experience a level of peace and stability that our predecessors did not have. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that human rights play a vital role in shaping our society and how we perceive the world. Looking back at history, we can see that human rights either did not exist or were manipulated to favor specific groups. Unfortunately, many people today are still unaware of what these rights entail and how they should be integrated into their respective societies.

Human rights are moral principles and norms that establish standards for human behavior. They are protected by both domestic and international laws. Beyond legal protection, human rights promote equality among all individuals, ensuring that no one's rights supersede another's. Some may argue that human rights are abstract concepts, making them difficult to define. However, this misconception arises from taking these entitlements for granted. In reality, human rights are concrete concepts that are safeguarded by laws, and violations can result in punishment.

Nevertheless, the interpretation of human rights as abstract ideas does hold some validity, as their implementation varies depending on the societal and political climate of each nation. Unfortunately, there are instances where human rights are ignored or disregarded by those in power.

*Woman's rights are human rights*

*Woman's rights are human rights*

*Woman's rights are human rights*

The beauty of human rights lies in their universal application, regardless of age, gender, or race. They exist to protect the sanctity and dignity of humanity in all aspects of life. Human rights also contribute to the functioning of democratic and just societies. However, it is a mistake to assume that every nation upholds the same standards of human rights or allows them to function in the same manner. For example, the right to safe abortion is recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proposed by the United Nations, but the United States has chosen not to adopt this right. Similarly, theocratic nations may face negative interpretations of human rights, such as Islamophobia, which hinders the celebration of religion without discrimination. However, upon closer examination, Islamic states consider human rights an integral part of their overall order, and it is incumbent upon Muslim governments and society to implement them faithfully.

To understand the significance of human rights, it is essential to trace their origins back to a time when the evils of humanity overshadowed the goodness of the human spirit. Initially, human rights were merely discussed concepts, with little action taken to recognize their importance on a global scale. It was not until the end of World War II, with the atrocities committed by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime, that the world realized the necessity of incorporating human rights into international consciousness. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was created by the UN General Assembly in 1948 as a response to the mass evil witnessed during the war. However, there was still much work to be done to ensure that human rights were protected and cherished worldwide.

South Africa serves as an example of a nation that initially lacked a standard for human rights. The Apartheid government, which came into power around the same time as the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, chose not to align with international human rights standards. Instead, the government violated human rights through state-sponsored authoritarianism, racial discrimination, detention without trial, torture, and restrictions on movement. However, the turning point for South Africa came with the Soweto uprising, which exposed the harm inflicted upon innocent children. This led to international economic sanctions and eventually paved the way for South Africa's transition to democracy. In 1996, human rights were codified into the South African Constitution through the Bill of Rights. Despite this progress, there are still challenges to overcome, particularly for marginalized communities and women.





For individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, there may be some access to universal rights, but the question remains whether these rights are truly realized. For instance, while the Water Service Act guarantees access to sanitation and water for all, a significant portion of South Africa's population still lacks proper facilities. Similarly, although the majority of the population has access to electricity, there are disparities based on location. Women, in particular, face gender and racial discrimination, as well as threats to their lives. While legally protected, women's rights are not always fully realized. Period poverty, lack of access to sanitary products, workplace discrimination, and sexual harassment are persistent issues that infringe upon women's rights to dignity, reproductive healthcare, and a safe workplace. The LGBTQIA+ community also faces discrimination, with documented cases of violence and corrective rape.

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However, women in South Africa have a history of fighting for their rights. From the struggle for suffrage in 1930 to the Women's March of 1956, women have united to challenge oppressive regimes and advocate for their rights. Today, women continue to fight against femicide and work towards a society where every woman can determine her own life. While there is still work to be done, progress has been made, and the future holds limitless possibilities when we utilize this progress.

In conclusion, human rights play a crucial role in our society, ensuring equality and protecting the dignity of every individual. They have evolved over time, with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights serving as a turning point in recognizing their significance. South Africa's journey from a lack of human rights to codifying them in the Constitution demonstrates the importance of upholding these rights. However, challenges remain, particularly in realizing women's rights and addressing disparities faced by marginalized communities. By acknowledging the progress made and continuing to advocate for human rights, we can create a future where freedom and respect for others thrive. As Nelson Mandela wisely said, "To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others."

*Women's rights are human rights*

*Women's rights are human rights*

*Women's rights are human rights*

# POVERTY AND HUNGER

## **Agricultural Labour**

On average, women make up about 43 percent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries. Evidence indicates that if these women had the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20 to 30 percent, raising total agricultural output in these countries by 2.5 to 4 percent. This would reduce the number of hungry people in the world by around 12 to 17 percent.

Women in sub-Saharan Africa collectively spend about 40 billion hours a year collecting water. Per week, women in Guinea collect water for 5.7 hours, compared to 2.3 hours for men; in Sierra Leone women spend 7.3 compared to 4.5 hours for men; and in Malawi this figure is 9.1 compared to 1.1 hours. This significantly impacts women's employment opportunities.

Research indicates that when more income is put into the hands of women, child nutrition, health and education improves. In South and Central America, rural children are about 1.8 times more likely to be underweight than their urban counterparts. Other regions do not fare much better.

# WOMEN'S ECONOMIC RIGHTS

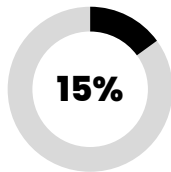
WOMEN DON'T HAVE THE SAME ECONOMIC RIGHTS AS MEN. UNPAID CARE WORK, LACK OF FAIR PAY AND JOB SECURITY, POOR WORKING CONDITIONS, AND LIMITED OPPORTUNITY TO OWN LAND AND INHERIT PROPERTY ARE ALL UNDERMINING WOMEN'S RIGHTS. WOMEN CAN'T EARN A LIVING AND TAKE CONTROL OF THEIR LIVES.

WOMEN SPEND AT LEAST TWICE AS MUCH TIME AS MEN ON DOMESTIC WORK, AND WHEN ALL WORK – (PAID AND UNPAID) – IS CONSIDERED, WOMEN WORK LONGER HOURS THAN MEN

Over  
**2.7 billion women**

don't have the same work opportunities as men, with laws restricting the types of jobs they can do

LESS THAN



of landholders worldwide are women, despite most women in the global south working in agriculture

NEARLY

**82 million women**

around the world don't have any legal protection against discrimination in the workplace

IN 2018, THE ESTIMATED GLOBAL GENDER PAY GAP WAS 22%, WITH WOMEN EARNING AROUND 78% OF WHAT MEN ARE PAID



# Employment

In most countries, women in rural areas who work for wages are more likely than men to hold seasonal, part-time and low-wage jobs. Women also receive lower wages for the same work.

(Source: FAO, 2011. "The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture, Closing the Gender Gap for Development.")

Men's average wages are higher than women's in both rural and urban areas. Rural women typically work longer hours than men, due to additional reproductive, domestic and care responsibilities.

In Benin and Tanzania, women work 17.4 and 14 hours more than men per week, respectively.



# Decision-Making

A large gender gap remains in women's access to decision-making and leadership.

Women make up fewer elected representatives in most rural councils. In Asia, this ranges between 1.6 percent in Sri Lanka and 31 percent in Pakistan.

Women's participation as chairs or heads in rural councils is also much lower than men's, as seen in Bangladesh (0.2 percent) and Cambodia (7 percent).

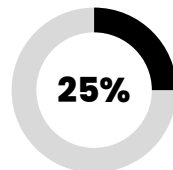
Educated women are more likely to have greater decision-making power within their households.



# WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

DISCRIMINATION, VIOLENCE AND INEQUALITY STOP WOMEN FROM SPEAKING UP ABOUT THE DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR LIVES.

WOMEN MAKE UP JUST



OF PARLIAMENTARIANS  
WORLDWIDE

In January 2019, there were

**11 women**

serving as Head of State and

**10 women**

as Head of Government

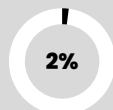
IN JANUARY 2019,

**1 IN 5**

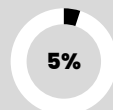


GOVERNMENT MINISTERS AROUND THE WORLD WERE  
WOMEN

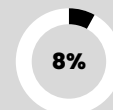
BETWEEN 1990 AND 2019 WOMEN MADE UP



MEDIATORS



WITNESSES  
AND  
SIGNATORIES



NEGOTIATORS

IN MAJOR PEACE PROCESSES WORLDWIDE

# Trafficking.



In our interconnected world, where people can easily cross borders and collaborate regardless of their geographic location, there are unfortunate instances where issues arise. One such issue is human trafficking. Human trafficking involves the illegal trade of individuals for forced labor or sexual exploitation. The United Nations on Drugs and Crime expands on this definition by including the unlawful holding and procurement of individuals through deception, coercion, threat of violence, or force. While sexual exploitation is the aspect of human trafficking that receives the most media attention, there are other insidious methods that make one question the motives of humanity. Forced labor without any financial compensation, bonded labor to repay debts, domestic servitude, and the exploitation of children as soldiers or for sexual purposes are all forms of human trafficking. Additionally, there is the horrifying practice of trafficking individuals for organ harvesting, which generates billions of dollars annually on the black market.

It is important to recognize that human trafficking is not a new concept. Although the term itself is relatively recent, human trafficking has existed since the days of slavery. The earliest recorded mention of slavery dates back to 3500 BC in Mesopotamia. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that slavery was not solely an African experience, as it is often portrayed. The digital age has both exposed and facilitated human trafficking. Certain adult content websites contribute to the problem by allowing content of questionable origin and performers. Social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram have also been used to groom potential victims and lure them into the web of human trafficking.

Fortunately, there are numerous organizations dedicated to dismantling the scourge of human trafficking, such as S-CAPE. However, it is essential to understand that human trafficking is essentially modern-day slavery. South Africa, in particular, struggles with this issue, and efforts by organizations and the South African Police Services are being made to combat it.

South Africa serves as a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking, with Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal having the highest rates. According to a report by the US Agency for International Development, from January 2018 to December 2021, out of 754 adult victims from over 30 countries, 445 were South Africans. The highest number of trafficked children also came from South Africa, with 59 out of 98 cases. South Africans accounted for 59% of the people trafficked in the report, while children made up 60%. Human traffickers employ subtle schemes that can deceive even the most cautious individuals. For example, false job advertisements target unemployed individuals desperate for legitimate employment. Traffickers may also exploit familial or friendly relationships to sell individuals into slavery. Perceived romance is another tactic used to groom targets with promises of a better life, only to lead to abduction. False immigration claims also play a role in human trafficking.

There are signs that someone may be a victim of trafficking, but keen observation is crucial to saving their lives. Trafficked individuals are closely monitored and lack freedom of movement. During conversations, they may defer to their captors out of fear or language barriers. Their documentation is controlled by their captors, and there may be signs of physical or substance abuse, as well as a general mistrust of strangers. However, human trafficking can be prevented, and it is a violation of human rights.

Human trafficking goes against fundamental human rights, but it is not easy to fully comprehend the extent of the rights that are violated. Adults who are trafficked have their right to movement and safety taken away, along with their dignity in all aspects. Women who fall victim to human trafficking often find themselves in dangerous situations they did not choose, which deprives them of their right to safety and healthcare. Most importantly, human trafficking undermines the fight to abolish all forms of slavery. While the battle against human trafficking may seem daunting, there is hope for a better future if South Africa and the world unite. Currently, only one out of every 100 victims is rescued, but with continued efforts, this figure can triple. The internet age has educated people about their rights and acts as a watchdog to ensure that victims are seen, heard, found, and liberated.

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*Women's rights are human rights* |

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# Maternal Health

Between 1990 and 2008, the proportion of rural women receiving prenatal care at least once during pregnancy grew from 55 to 66 percent

However, only one-third of rural women receive prenatal care compared to 50 percent in developing regions as a whole.  
(Source: United Nations, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010 and 2011, available from [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/reports.shtml).)

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*Women's rights are human rights* |

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## Violence against Women

More rural women experience domestic violence, and yet few seek services, according to a multi-country study by the World Health Organization (WHO). In Peru, less than 5 percent of the total amount of rural domestic violence survivors (60 percent) sought help, compared to approximately 16 percent of urban women (out of 49 percent).



# FUNDING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS

History has shown that women's rights organisations and movements are a vital catalyst for gender equality and the realisation of women's rights. From grassroots organising to advocacy and campaigning, women's rights organisations are uniquely placed to mobilise and empower women to come together to know and claim their rights. Women's rights organisations have the knowledge and legitimacy to represent women's concerns and priorities. Their very existence affirms women's leadership and participation.

Yet many women's rights organisations around the world are chronically underfunded. They urgently need flexible, long term and core funding that meet their vision of achieving a gender equal world.

Only  
**1% of aid**

supporting gender equality went to women's rights organisations in 2016-2017, despite governments around the world committing an extra \$1bn to gender equality initiatives globally

With only seven years remaining, a mere

**15.4 per cent of  
Goal 5**

indicators with data are "on track"

**61.5 per cent**

are at a moderate distance

**23.1 per cent**

are far or very far off track from 2030 targets

# SEX WORKERS

If someone were asked about the oldest profession in the world, they might struggle to come up with a definitive answer. Some argue that the oldest occupation is that of building structures, as humanity has always needed shelter. However, the earliest documented profession is highly debated due to its negative connotations: sex work. Dating back to 2400BC in ancient Babylon, sex work is the first concrete mention of a profession, encompassing various sectors such as escorts, exotic dancers, and webcam models. In South Africa, sex work is primarily seen as either prostitution or exotic dancing, but there is a lack of consensus on the definition. Despite the ethical quandary surrounding sex work in South Africa, it is important to recognize the rights and safety of sex workers.

Sex workers face discrimination and threats to their lives, which has led to a movement advocating for their rights. Amsterdam's red light district is often cited as a model that ensures the safety of sex workers. While it may be unlikely for South Africa to adopt a similar approach, understanding the importance of safety measures is crucial. Statistics show that sex workers have their human rights violated in various ways.

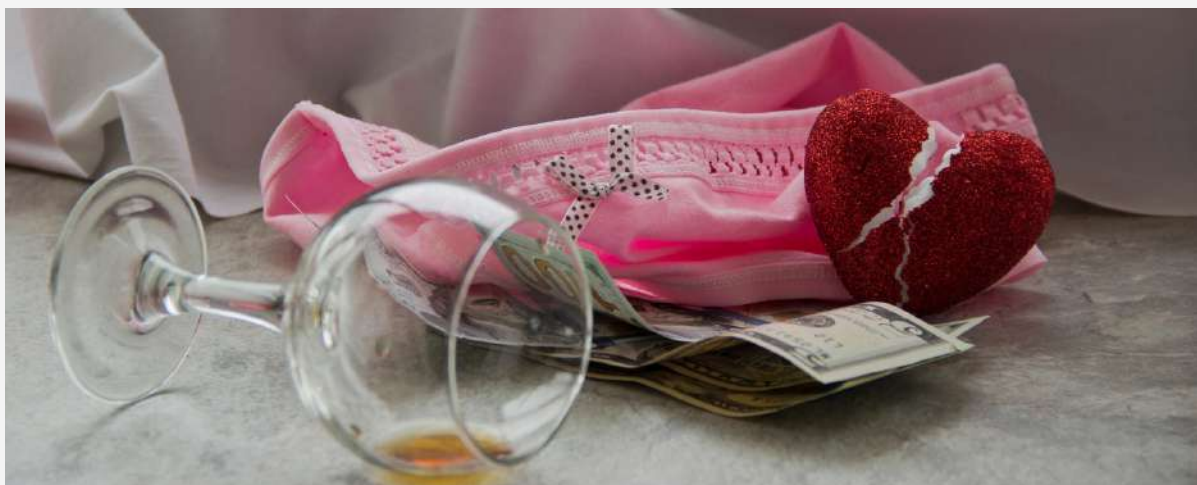


From a societal perspective, women in sex work are more likely to experience physical harm, contradicting the notion that they willingly put themselves in harm's way. Violence against women is prevalent in various walks of life, and sex workers are no exception. They face a higher risk of violence due to factors such as substance abuse and working on the streets. Shockingly, a significant portion of violence against sex workers is perpetrated by the police, who are supposed to protect all members of society. This violence includes beatings, coercion, and theft of earnings.

Furthermore, sex workers also face violence from their clients, but due to their contentious relationship with law enforcement, these incidents often go unreported. Health care workers and the community also contribute to the harm experienced by sex workers through discrimination and isolation. The path of a sex worker can be lonely, and the lack of community support exacerbates feelings of hopelessness.

Despite these alarming statistics, there is a growing push to protect the rights of sex workers and recognize their humanity. Organizations like Sisonke and SWEAT are actively advocating for the rights of sex workers in South Africa. Additionally, there are calls for the decriminalization of sex work, which would provide legal protection and safer conditions for sex workers. Decriminalization would also allow for access to healthcare without judgment, the reporting of police brutality and sexual assault, and the formation of unions to protect the rights and safety of sex workers.

It is essential to remember that sex workers are people deserving of the same rights as anyone else in society. Their lives should be protected, and their cases should be given the attention they deserve in the event of violence or death. Every individual, regardless of their occupation, deserves to be seen and recognized as a human being.



# HIV and AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases

Rural women understand less about how HIV spreads compared to urban women; WHO figures from 25 countries indicate the margins of understanding between the two to be between 20 and 50 percent. Bolivia, Egypt, Indonesia and India are among the countries with the wider of such gaps.

HIV exacerbates property insecurity, especially for widows whose husbands have died from AIDS-related causes, but who may not have rights to inherit or own their land.

The burden of care is also carried by women. Women and girls account for 66 to 90 percent of all AIDS care givers; conditions are most difficult for women and girls in rural areas, and this can increase their own vulnerability to infection.



## Environmental Sustainability

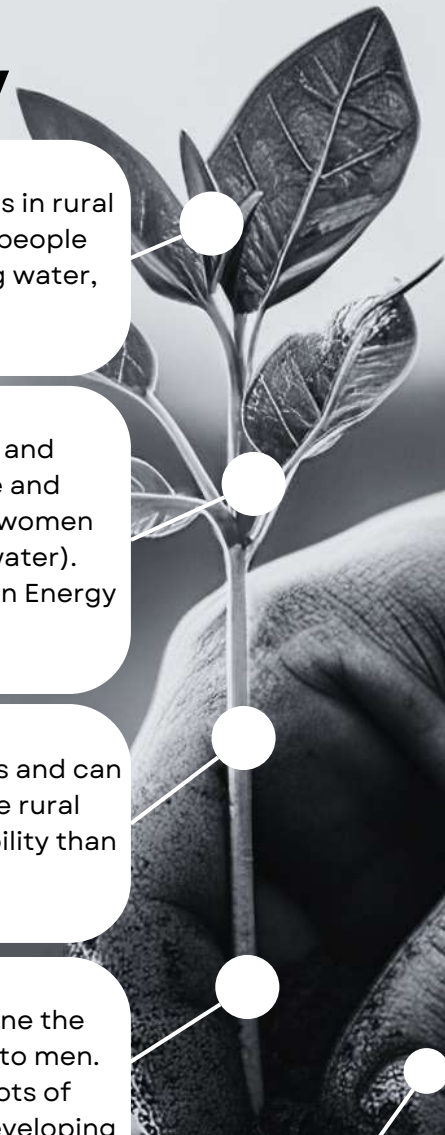
There is still far less access to clean or improved water sources in rural areas than in urban areas. In 2008, an estimated 743 million people living in rural areas relied on unimproved sources for drinking water, compared to 141 million in urban areas.

People in the least developed countries rely on open fires and traditional cooking stoves (for example, wood, crop waste and charcoal) to earn a living and feed their families. It is usually women who walk the long distances every day to collect fuel (and water). (Source: UNIDO, 2011. Contribution to the LDC IV Conference on Energy Access.)

Environmental degradation has an impact on natural resources and can affect rural women differently from men. For example, since rural women tend to have fewer occupational options and less mobility than men, many rely on natural resources from forests.

Natural disasters, climate change and conflict can undermine the health, education and livelihoods of rural women, differently to men. For example, although women usually manage the small plots of agricultural land in each family for income or sustenance in developing countries, land titles are most likely to be held by the men. This means that following a disaster, many women cannot independently claim state-offered reconstruction funds. Women can also be more at risk of harm during flooding in countries where boys are taught to swim at an early age, but girls rarely are.

Evidence from 25 developed and developing countries indicates that countries with higher female parliamentary representation are more likely to set aside protected land areas.





# WOMEN'S HELP *Non-Profit Organizations*



Women For Change (WFC) is a non-profit organisation that advocates for the constitutional rights of women and children in South Africa. It was founded in 2016 by Catch Me If You Can, the country's largest running community for women. WFC educates, advocates, and campaigns on Gender-Based Violence & Femicide (GBVF), Human Rights, and Gender Equality daily. We engage the general public through our social media pages, which currently reach up to 10 million people per month. We influence policymakers and public opinion.

WFC assists victims and families daily with resources such as medical assistance, legal assistance, counsellors, information about GBVF and how to handle each case.



**Rape Crisis**  
**Cape Town Trust**  
[www.rapecrisis.org.za](http://www.rapecrisis.org.za)

**Call our 24 hour helplines or text our WhatsApp line.**

Afrikaans **021 633 9229**  
isiXhosa **021 361 9085**  
English **021 447 9762**  
WhatsApp **083 222 5164**

## VISION

We have a vision of a South Africa in which women are safe in their communities and where the criminal justice system supports and empowers survivors of rape and other sexual offences and acts as a deterrent to perpetrators of crime.

## MISSION

Our mission is to promote safety in communities, to reduce the trauma experienced by rape survivors, to encourage the reporting of rape and to work actively to address flaws in legislation.

# Agricultural Labour

Women make up more than two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterate people.

According to global statistics, just 39 percent of rural girls attend secondary school. This is far fewer than rural boys (45 percent), urban girls (59 percent) and urban boys (60 percent).

Every additional year of primary school increases girls' eventual wages by 10-20 percent. It also encourages them to marry later and have fewer children, and leaves them less vulnerable to violence.

While progress has been made in reducing the gender gap in urban primary school enrolment, data from 42 countries shows that rural girls are twice as likely as urban girls to be out of school.

In Pakistan a half-kilometre increase in the distance to school will decrease girls' enrolment by 20 percent. In Egypt, Indonesia and several African countries, building local schools in rural communities increased girls' enrolment.