

# Women in Food Security in Yemen

## Conflict Deepens Women's Food Security Crisis in Yemen

Food Insecurity in Yemen: Displaced Women Hit Hardest

Women Farmers: The Cornerstone of the Local Economy and Family Livelihood

# WDP

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Yemeni Women Plagued  
by Malnutrition Diseases,  
Urgent Interventions  
Needed



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Gender Challenges and their Implications on Food Security in Yemen

## Women in Sustainable Agriculture: A Key Indicator for Food Security and Economic Growth

*Après de nombreuses années de conflit au Yémen, les sociétés yéménites sont devenues de plus en plus dépendantes des femmes, qui sont souvent devenues le seul soutien de famille. Les femmes yéménites, en particulier les rurales, font face à de nombreuses difficultés pour assurer leur propre subsistance et celle de leurs familles en aggravant leur souffrance et leur isolement. Le changement climatique est l'un des principaux obstacles qui se dressent sur leur chemin, ce qui les oblige à fournir des efforts supplémentaires qui dépassent leurs capacités.*

By: **Afrah Borji**  
Women in Development and Peace

Sustainable agricultural development programs are among the key sectors that provide employment opportunities for women at both the local and international

levels and are considered one of the main sources of income for women compared to men in most countries around the world.

According to Engineer Fathia Arshad, an agricultural advisor in Lahj Governorate, Yemeni women, particularly those in ru-

ral areas, are active partners in the country's agricultural development. They undertake a wide range of household and agricultural responsibilities, including crop cultivation, food preparation, livestock care, water collection, childcare, and family manage-

ment.

Arshad highlights the various sustainable agricultural programs implemented by women, such as cultivating perennial trees like mango, orange, apple, and coffee on farms. Additionally, there are programs for vegetable cultivation in agricultural reserves, home gardens, and the cultivation of medicinal and surgical trees, agricultural crops, and grains. Livestock programs also play a role, involving the distribution of sheep, goats, cows, and poultry to impoverished families, along with the necessary support and supplies to

ensure the success of these initiatives.

Arshad further emphasizes that sustainable agricultural programs for women aim to improve their well-being and that of their families, addressing hunger, increasing income, enhancing resilience, and empowering them in the agricultural sector. These efforts play a crucial role in achieving economic and social outcomes.

**Technical & Intellectual Challenges**

Arshad examined the various challenges that *continue ....page2*



confront women in agriculture. She highlighted, “Female farmers encounter a multitude of obstacles, including escalating expenses for essential production elements like seeds and fertilizers, surging fuel prices, and the exorbitant costs associated with irrigation networks. Furthermore, there exists a dearth of knowledge and experience among female agricultural workers concerning modern agricultural technologies. Moreover, they are excluded from reaping the benefits of the support extended to protected greenhouse cultivation of vegetables. Additionally, there is an absence of facilities for locally available fruit crops to be utilized in juice production, as well as inadequate spice production facilities, particularly for red pepper, which is abundant in our nation. Furthermore, citrus farming has experienced limited expansion due to tree infections and the lack of adherence to proper pruning practices, which are instrumental in enhancing the nutritional equilibrium of citrus trees.”

### Community Challenges

Mr. Shaher Saad, the Director of Media at the Ministry of Agriculture, highlighted the challenges faced by sustainable agricultural development programs carried out by women, including limited resources, technical and knowledge capabilities, and insufficient support for female farmers. However, he also emphasized that there are additional societal challenges hindering women in agriculture, with the lack of gender equality being the most significant one. Despite being active partners in the agri-

cultural sector, women do not fully benefit from their contributions. They are deprived of training, qualification programs, agricultural guidance, agricultural inputs, and access to land, whether provided by governmental entities or civil society organizations operating in this field.

According to a November 2023 report titled “Rural Women: A Driving Force for Food Security and Prosperity” by the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA), women constitute over 40% of the agricultural workforce in developing countries on average. This percentage ranges from 20% in Latin America to 50% or more in parts of Africa and Asia.

The report also reveals that many of these women do not receive wages for their work and often engage in unpaid, seasonal, or part-time employment. Furthermore, they typically earn lower wages compared to men.

The report indicates that granting women equal access to resources, similar to men, could potentially increase agricultural production by 20-30%. This increase has the potential to reduce food insecurity for approximately 100-150 million people worldwide. Moreover, the number of individuals unable to access sufficient food rose by approximately 20% in 2020, reaching over 2.3 billion people, with rural women being

*Food security cannot be achieved in the absence of gender equality*

the majority affected.

In light of these findings, Shaher emphasized that food security cannot be achieved without gender equality, particularly considering the significant impact rural women in Yemen face. The absence

of equality hampers their ability to develop themselves and their communities, weakens economic, social, and agricultural development, and ultimately hinders the achievement of desired food security through the promotion of sustainable agriculture programs.

### Recommendations & Interventions

Shaher Saad emphasized that the success of efforts to achieve sustainable agricultural development relies heavily on empowering and developing the skills of rural women, while also providing them with decent employment opportunities. This will enable them and their families to enhance their standard of living and actively contribute to various sectors.

Nada Abdulhaleem, the Director of Rural Women Development at the Agriculture and Irrigation Office in Aden, added, “To ensure the active participation of Yemeni women in agricultural development and the enhancement of sustainable agricultural programs, it is crucial to create employment opportunities for women in the agricultural and animal sectors. Additionally, there is a need for seamless coordination between the dedicated management of Rural Women Development and the community, as well as the promotion of agricultural and animal guidance in the women’s sector. This entails raising awareness and providing comprehensive knowledge of new and modern techniques, alongside the establishment of developmental community associations, cooperatives, and committees. It is imperative

to develop plans for optimal utilization in agriculture and animal production, with the active involvement of women. This can be achieved through the organization of training and qualification courses for female farmers and individuals interested in animal husbandry.”

Nada Abdulhaleem emphasized the importance of full coordination with ministries, departments, organizations, associations, and community committees in each province to activate the role of women in agricultural development programs. She stressed the significance of providing support and assistance to women for the success of their projects in both agricultural and animal fields. This can be accomplished by implementing the projects proposed by women and equipping them with modern techniques and training.

### Financial Opportunities

Nada Abdulhaleem emphasized, “Women farmers have the potential to amplify their impact on sustainable development in the agricultural sector by accessing financial opportunities. This can be achieved through avenues such as securing loans from banks, seeking project funding from organizations specializing in this field, or leveraging savings funds available through associations.” She urged all relevant entities and civil society organizations to prioritize women, provide support for their projects, and empower them to play a crucial role in bolstering this sector.





# Private Sector Financing: Empowering Women and Enhancing Food Security

*Private sector financing in the realm of women and food security is a vital cornerstone in efforts to enhance economic and social stability. Achieving food security is crucial in ensuring the health and well-being of communities. Empowering women in this context promotes sustainable development opportunities and gender equality.*

**By: Hebah Mohammed**  
Women in Development and Peace

Addressing challenges related to food security requires comprehensive collaboration between the public and private sectors, along with sustainable and innovative investments to fund projects and initiatives that enhance community resilience and improve the status of women.

## The Role of Private Sector Financing in Achieving Food Security

Yemen is grappling with a severe humanitarian crisis, marked by substantial challenges in the realm of food security. These challenges specifically endanger women within society, emphasizing the critical role played by the private sector in bolstering food security for women in Yemen. Leveraging its resources and capabilities, the private sector actively backs innovative and sustainable initiatives that foster both nourishing and sustainable nutrition.

Educator Anisa Al-Buraïd emphasized the significance of achieving food security for women, as it is crucial for their well-being and empowerment to actively engage in society. Within this framework, the private sector assumes a key role in bolstering food security for women, with the private educational sector being among the sectors that have made a positive impact in this regard.

She continued, "The private educational sector provides employment opportunities for women in teaching, administration, and school staff. It has focused on qualifying and training women to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to work in this field. Thanks to these opportunities, women have gained a broader presence in the job market, enhancing their economic independence and giving them the chance to contribute to achieving food security for themselves and their families."

She further explained that although salaries in the private educational sector may be low, women find an opportunity for work and financial independence in this sector. Moreover, working in the field of education allows women to have a positive influence on future generations, as they play a crucial role in developing and nurturing children's skills and abilities.

According to Hussein Al-Suhaili, the founder of the Tamdeen Youth Foundation (TYF) and coordinator of the National Economic Recovery Program initiative, the years of conflict in Yemen have resulted in a significant economic decline and severe disruptions in business activities, severely impacting the Yemeni people's ability to afford food. With two-thirds of the population in need of humanitarian assistance and Yemen heavily reliant on food imports (approximately 90%), rising prices caused by inflation rates and ongoing disruptions in the supply chain have left many vulnerable.

Al-Suhaili emphasizes that the Yemeni private sector actively supports the country's economy through continuous commercial activities, implementing charitable initiatives to provide food during emergencies, direct cash transfers, and offering microfinance in partnership with humanitarian organizations in Yemen.

However, he notes that these contributions do not focus on achieving sustainable and long-term impact. Therefore, it is imperative for the private sector to collaborate with the government, civil society organizations, and the donor community to develop a strategy that involves women at all stages of the value chain in crucial economic sectors in Yemen. This strategy should aim to enhance the participation and leadership

of rural women in agricultural food systems, accompanied by sustained efforts to address the social and economic structures that have hindered women's participation.

Anisa Al-Buraïd emphasizes the vital role of the private sector in attaining food security for women. Through a variety of projects and initiatives, the private sector focuses on meeting women's nutritional requirements and enhancing their economic position. Organizations notably distribute food aid, providing essential items such as flour, oil, and other necessities, to women. This assistance significantly enhances their nutrition and ensures the fulfillment of their fundamental food requirements.

Al-Buraïd highlights the significance of school feeding programs, provided by the private sector, in enhancing food security for women. These programs involve supplying students with meals such as biscuits, which not only improves their daily nutrition but also has a positive impact on their families, including women. Furthermore, certain organizations and institutions offer financial incentives to women in the private education sector and the private sector in general. These incentives contribute to empowering women, encouraging their active participation in achieving food security. For instance, some organizations provide specific seasonal incentives to female workers in the education sector, thereby improving their income and ensuring their basic needs are fulfilled.

Moreover, Al-Buraïd notes that some organizations provide monthly financial incentives and community contributions to female teachers, further enhancing their role and providing them with additional motivation to achieve food security for themselves and their families. As previously mentioned, the Teacher Support Fund offers seasonal incentives, bolstering the financial stability of teachers and playing a role in enhancing the food security of both teachers and their families.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Hadhrami, President of the Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF) in Ibb Governorate, emphasizes the pivotal role of the private sector in Yemen's food security and women's empowerment. An essential aspect of the private sector's involvement lies in investing in agricultural infrastructure, including the construction of wells, irrigation systems, and the advancement of agricultural techniques. These initiatives significantly enhance agricultural productivity, thereby bolstering the food security of Yemeni women.

Discussing the projects and initiatives facilitated by certain private sectors to address the nutritional needs and food security of Yemeni women, Al-Hadhrami highlights various endeavors. Notably, maternal and breastfeeding nutrition programs play a significant role in improving the nutritional status of women. These programs offer awareness campaigns and training sessions for pregnant women and mothers, focusing on promoting healthy child nutrition and breastfeeding practices. Additionally, they provide vital nutritional support to mothers and children suffering from malnutrition.

Furthermore, Al-Hadhrami emphasizes the importance of projects that promote local purchases, aiming to empower Yemeni women economically while supporting local families. Such initiatives encourage the consumption and marketing of local products by offering training and development opportunities in marketing and distribution.

## Private Sector's Role in Economic Empowerment

Shaimaa Mojalli, the head of Al-Shaimaa Development Foundation in Ibb Governorate,



Hussein Al-Suhaili

rate, says, "The private sector plays an important role in food security and women's empowerment by providing food baskets from businessmen and private companies during seasons of goodness, such as Ramadan, and in emergency and affected situations. The assistance also includes divorced women, widows, and affected women, and implements a number of charitable community initiatives and employment opportunities for women and girls."

Mojalli explains that the foundation has implemented several activities and projects to empower women and initiatives that have facilitated their access to basic needs. One of these economic empowerment programs is empowering women in bakeries, sweets, sewing, and incense manufacturing, and providing participants with the necessary tools to open their own projects.

She continues, "We have also trained widows and divorced women in computer programs, provided them with computers, and professionally trained women in first aid. Most of the trainees have entered the job market in hospitals and private clinics. The foundation has implemented a number of initiatives to facilitate access to basic needs for women and children, such as facilitating access to water in remote areas."

Regarding the nature of these initiatives and their implementation locations, Mojalli says, "Among these initiatives, we implemented two projects to deliver water to the village of Manwar, Al-Me'shar Isolation, Jiblah District, Ibb Governorate, and Al-Rabadi sub-district. The villagers had a water center in an area far from the village, and reaching it involved a challenging road. We worked on delivering water to the center of the village and providing a tank to collect water. The water flowed directly from the mountain into the tank, which facilitated the delivery of water, and tanks were distributed to the villagers, which encouraged many girls to return to education."

Meanwhile, social specialist Bushra Al-Shaddadi says, "We can also observe that the private sector does not play an active role in providing food security for women because most projects related to women and food security are based on profit. In the current circumstances, it may be difficult for the private sector to contribute effectively by establishing projects that accommodate female labor and enhance food security."

She continues, "On the positive side, there are supportive initiatives for women in Yemen through economic empowerment, like the Yemeni Women's Union, which plays a crucial role in advancing women's economic empowerment. This support is particularly significant for women experiencing domestic violence and those impacted by economic conflicts. These efforts seek to provide suitable employment opportunities, enhance awareness and economic skills for women, and thus enable them to achieve food security."

## Challenges

The private sector may have a role in enhancing women's food security through social projects and initiatives that focus on meeting community needs and empowering women economically. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are challenges

and obstacles facing this role, which must be addressed through cooperation and partnership between the private sector, public sector, and civil society organizations to achieve sustainable progress in promoting women's food security in Yemen.

Hussein Al-Suhaili says, "The business environment in Yemen has deteriorated significantly with the deepening political crisis since 2011, which later turned into a protracted conflict. The private sector has entered a new era marked by escalating political, economic, and security challenges, causing significant damage to it. Additionally, it faces restrictions imposed on banks, liquidity shortages, and a lack of necessary government support to implement specialized projects targeting women and agricultural development. Moreover, the financial illiteracy rate among women, especially in rural areas, remains high."

Shaimaa Mojalli, President of Al-Shaimaa Development Foundation, states, "The private sector faces difficulties in obtaining the necessary funding to finance projects that promote women's food security. This might result from banking financing restrictions or a lack of awareness regarding the significance of investing in this particular field. Obtaining permits from the relevant authorities is also a challenge, especially in women's work. Before the conflict, we consistently engaged in economic empowerment programs, regardless of whether they were funded or not. Nowadays, it is very difficult to obtain permits for implementing economic empowerment programs and other development projects for women."

Al-Hadhrami points out that the most significant challenges facing the private sector in Yemen are the scarcity of funding and the lack of security stability due to ongoing armed conflicts. These factors have a negative impact on infrastructure and investments in the food security sector, which necessitates the establishment of security stability to create a conducive environment for the private sector to operate and implement projects.

He further explains that Yemen faces significant economic challenges, including currency depreciation and high unemployment rates, which affect the purchasing power of women and hinder the implementation of specialized projects in the nutrition field.

Al-Hadhrami believes that the lack of awareness about the importance of food security and healthy nutrition in Yemeni society poses difficulties for the private sector in implementing projects unless women and families are educated about the significance of consuming healthy food and improving nutrition.

## Recommendations

Al-Suhaili believes that financial institutions, financial service providers, regulatory bodies, microfinance banks, and other stakeholders in the financial system should work together to increase funding for agricultural and food projects led by women.

He emphasizes the need to invest in women entrepreneurs and support their empowerment to drive sustainable development in Yemen. Additionally, he suggests providing technical assistance, guidance, and training to support the growth of women-owned businesses in Yemen, as well as assisting in the development of business plans and marketing strategies.

On the other hand, Al-Hadhrami proposes "allocating larger direct grants to programs that address women and food security." He highlights the need to raise awareness in the private sector in Yemen about enhancing women's participation in community empowerment and economic development. Furthermore, he suggests establishing women's forums that promote entrepreneurship.

Mojalli emphasizes the importance of collaboration between relevant entities, the private sector, and civil society organizations to facilitate their work in the field of women and food security. She also calls for lifting the restrictions imposed on these women-led projects and initiatives.

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## Our Vision

*A society that believes in the importance of women in establishing peace and raises their public awareness. Therefore, they become able to participate in all areas of building and developing the society.*

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# Prevalence of Malnutrition Diseases Increases Among Yemeni Women

*Many times, I have only one meal a day with my children and husband, and unfortunately, that meal does not contain any significant nutritional value. It may compensate for the rest of the meals that we cannot afford due to the difficult financial situation we are going through. Many families in Yemen are living in poverty, and women are the most affected among the different societal groups. That is how Khulood Ibrahim describes her suffering due to the financial circumstances her family is going through.*

By: Yasmine Abdulhafez  
Women in Development and Peace

She continues, "Many of my friends have helped me to visit doctors at their own expense. The doctors' advice to me focused on consuming important foods, including increasing fruit and natural drinks intake, and having meals rich in vitamins, which treat the body from diseases and strengthen the immune system."

With a tone of sadness and dismay about the painful reality, she adds, "But the poverty we are living in has made me unable to follow the doctors' advice. I have no choice but to be patient and wait for relief. All the diseases I suffer from are due to poor nutrition. I am not alone in just buying something to satisfy hunger, even if it's just dry bread, without considering the nutritional value of what I consume. There are many other women like me."

Many cases suffer from poor nutrition in its various forms, and with the spread of conflict in Yemen, Iman Ali also suffers from malnutrition-related diseases. She has been affected by severe obesity, leading to skin rashes in parts of her body due to the extreme heat in the city of Al-Hodeidah where she lives.

Iman says, "I suffered a lot because of my weight gain, which made me consider taking weight loss treatment. I did not realize that obesity is also a result of poor nutrition until I met a doctor and explained to her the nature of the meals I consume. I am worried about the effects that may result from taking the weight loss treatment recommended by one of my friends."

She continues, "Whenever I looked at myself in the mirror, I feared being exposed to some chronic diseases that affect people who are overweight, such as diabetes, heart diseases, high blood pressure, respiratory diseases, and others. This also led me to take weight loss treatment, in addition to my suffering from skin rashes."

She goes on saying, "I used to consume excessive amounts of food, especially high-calorie meals, in addition to indulging in sweets and oily dishes." She explained, "I used to add a large amount of oil more than necessary to the meals I prepared at home. I preferred it, not realizing that choosing a healthy diet is important for human health."

Many health reports confirm that poor nutrition results from excessive or insufficient consumption of certain meals and foods, meaning that overconsumption or underconsumption of certain nutrients leads to the same disease.

The causes of malnutrition vary from one country to another in the world. In poor countries, individuals suffer from insufficient consumption of many foods due to the material conditions they experience as a result of poverty, such as Yemen, where many areas suffer from malnutrition, especially among children and women, mostly due to food insecurity.

## UN Reports

A UN report titled "Addressing Food Insecurity in Yemen: From Meeting Individual Needs to Building Country Capacities," published on January 23, 2023, stated that food insecurity is one of the most significant problems facing Yemenis.

The report confirmed that approximately 17.3 million Yemenis suffer from food insecurity, with 24% of women in need of malnutrition medication.

According to observers, the problem of food insecurity in Yemen calls for the urgent need to find solutions that contribute to enhancing food security, especially among women who suffer from malnutrition. This can be achieved through various reforms, including



empowering women in the labor market, improving their living standards, supporting farmers, reclaiming agricultural land, and encouraging them to focus on agriculture and animal husbandry.

The International Committee of the Red Cross website published a report in 2021 titled "Yemen: Alarming Increase in Hunger and Child Malnutrition." The report highlighted an unprecedented rise in food prices during the years of conflict. Essential items such as rice, milk, flour, cooking oil, sugar, salt, and legumes surged by 60%.

These circumstances arise in the midst of a lack of job opportunities and low income, which has led many individuals, including women, to consume insufficient and low-quality meals. On the other hand, poverty has forced many women to prioritize feeding their children over their own daily meals, resulting in many of them suffering from malnutrition in various regions of the country. This has become a significant problem facing women in Yemen.

## Experts' Opinions

To understand the symptoms, causes, and effects of malnutrition on women in Yemen, we sought the opinions of many experts, as well as the most important advice and guidance aimed at reducing the risks or avoiding its occurrence.

Shada Shawqi Al-Yousefi (a specialist in therapeutic nutrition and diets) defines malnutrition as a deficiency, imbalance, or lack of balance in the body's intake of necessary nutrients.

The causes of malnutrition among Yemeni women are attributed to their families' financial inability, exposure to certain diseases, as well as ignorance and lack of awareness of the importance of nutrition and the risks posed by malnutrition, in addition to social and psychological problems.

Al-Yousefi adds, "There are many symptoms, including mental and psychological disorders such as fear, depression, occasional loss of concentration and awareness, mood swings, loss of appetite, and weight loss." She continues, "Other symptoms include increased risk of infection due to immune deficiency, work-related stress, sleep disorders, and abnormal body shape."

Regarding the types of malnutrition, Al-Yousefi states, "Malnutrition encompasses more than just body thinness and weight loss; excessive weight gain is also considered malnutrition, as well as stunting are also considered forms of malnutrition."

Al-Yousefi also suggests some measures to prevent malnutrition, including improving financial conditions and avoiding meals that do more harm than good, such as fast food that increases the risk of obesity, cancer, and heart disease. These meals have very low nutritional value. Additionally, Al-Yousefi advises against consuming canned foods that often contain numerous preservatives.



Salih Al-Dilami

Bandar Adil Al-Sam'i, a specialist in clinical therapeutic and health nutrition, emphasizes that women are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition, especially amidst severe economic conditions, famine, and extreme poverty exacerbated by the ongoing conflict in the country. These circumstances have led to the onset of numerous and varied diseases among women men and children.

He adds, "Most mothers do not have access to adequate and balanced nutrition due to social and cultural behaviors, habits, and traditions. As a result, women are more prone to chronic diseases, especially malnutrition-related illnesses."

Al-Sam'i, the head of the Food and Nutrition Initiative in the Republic of Yemen, sees women's malnutrition as a significant social scourge affecting individuals, communities, and the nation at large. This is because mothers suffering from malnutrition give birth to children predisposed to this condition.

Al-Sam'i urges international organizations to prioritize the nutrition of mothers and fathers, emphasizing that a child's malnutrition is a direct result of the nutrition of the parents.

He further emphasizes that much of the international support aimed at combating malnutrition in Yemen is not effectively utilized, as it focuses on alleviating the side effects of the disease rather than addressing malnutrition itself.

He advises all Yemeni women suffering from malnutrition to seek medical and nutritional specialists to develop dietary plans and nutritional protocols for their own health and that of their children, in order to prevent all diseases and nutrition-related problems, including malnutrition-related illnesses.

## Experts' Tips

In this regard, Salih Al-Dilami, a specialist in comprehensive functional medicine, diagnosis, and therapeutic nutrition, says, "Mal-



Shada Shawqi

nutrition can be prevented by consuming nutritious meals at specific times, and not eating afterwards to provide ample opportunity for the stomach, liver, kidneys, and intestines to rest. This enables them to function efficiently in the next meal, contributing to a longer and healthier life."

He adds, "You can consume healthy herbal tea without sugar, or eat some unsalted seeds, fruits, and unsalted nuts in small quantities - equivalent to the palm of your hand only - daily, and only between meals."

He explains, "One of the most important causes of malnutrition is the open buffet system, where individuals eat at any time, from anything, without hunger or necessity, purely for pleasure. This practice has led to digestive system diseases, thinness in girls and young people, and obesity in others."

He continues, "Malnutrition involves a lack of beneficial, strengthening, and nourishing foods such as proteins, fibers, healthy fats, whole grains, vegetables, fruits, seeds, nuts, and spices. All these components must be included in daily meals in an organized manner."

Al-Dilami believes that the incorrect preparation of plant-based proteins, such as legumes like beans, peas, and lentils, can render them harmful to health, causing issues like gas, bloating, and overall body inflammation.

He also mentions that consuming meals randomly whenever possible constitutes a form of malnutrition that harms the body. The digestive enzymes work efficiently when the stomach is accustomed to specific meal-times. Al-Dilami suggests a solution: scheduling mealtimes, consuming them calmly, peacefully, and thoroughly chewing food. He further points out that the lack of food combining, such as eating starches with proteins like bread and potatoes with meat, can lead to constipation and various diseases. Similarly, consuming legumes with bread and other



Bandar Adil Al-Sam'i

types of bread can also result in constipation and related health issues.

He also mentions that the mismatch in meals, such as consuming carbohydrates like bread, potatoes, and rice with meat, causes constipation and consequently many diseases. Similarly, consuming legumes like beans, peas, lentils with various kinds of bread also leads to constipation and diseases.

Furthermore, he recommends incorporating a green salad dressed with extra virgin olive oil and lemon into these meals, in a medium to large portion with each meal. It is advised to consume the salad first, either entirely or half, and it can be combined with rice and meat or chicken, as some people prefer. However, the quantity of the salad should be equivalent to the quantity of the main dish.

Al-Dilami also emphasizes that white flour is poisonous and should be completely replaced with whole wheat flour with bran, which is a luxurious and noble healthy diet.

Additionally, hydrogenated oils and fats are considered food toxins that should be avoided. Instead, one can consume butter, animal ghee from cow and goat milk, fresh red meat, fish, and pigeon meat.

Carbonated drinks in all forms damage the digestive, renal, and hepatic systems, causing colon diseases, gases, and chronic bloating. These can be avoided by relying on drinking water, fresh juices, and herbal tea like chamomile after meals, which are among the best health and therapeutic solutions for diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.

Malnutrition poses a significant challenge in Yemeni communities, particularly among women, necessitating considerable efforts to enhance their living standards and raise awareness about the causes and effects of this condition. This is because malnutrition is not solely linked to material aspects but also to cultural influences, incorrect dietary behaviors, habits, and traditions.



# Women & Their Vital Role in the Face of Climate Change

*After years of conflict in Yemen, women have emerged as the primary breadwinners for their families, shouldering the responsibility in the face of numerous challenges. Particularly in rural areas, Yemeni women face significant obstacles in achieving food security, exacerbating their suffering and isolation. Climate change further compounds their struggles, forcing them to exert double the effort they would normally need.*



**By: Haneen Al-Wahsh**  
 Women in Development and Peace

The food gap in Yemen has widened, with crop production and essential food supplies stagnating due to conflict and the detrimental effects of climate change on the economy and society. Yemeni women have borne the brunt of this crisis, experiencing food insecurity or even its complete absence.

To address these challenges, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Food Program (WFP), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank have come together to implement the Yemen Food Security Response and Resilience Project (FSRRP). This project aims to support and fund women facing difficult circumstances exacerbated by climate change.

Under the UNDP's purview, the

program focuses on improving agricultural infrastructure and enhancing adaptive capacities to climate change. In collaboration with the Social Fund for Development (SFD) and the Public Works Project, the program aims to enhance food security for approximately 7,556 families, with 30% of the support targeted towards women. So far, the program has provided job opportunities to 8,959 individuals, including 1,388 women. Moreover, 1,900 farmers,

including 762 women, have been empowered to optimize agricultural land usage. This highlights the crucial role of women in achieving self-sufficiency and food security for Yemeni families.

### Labored Breaths

This hard work has a negative impact on rural women and puts their health at risk. Arwa Saeed, one of the women living in a mountainous area within Taiz Governorate and a

mother of six, tells her story with shortness of breath and exhaustion due to the long road and the load she carries. She says, "I travel long distances every day, back and forth, to bring water, graze livestock, and bring feed for them. It's a tough task that makes daily life difficult and has a significant impact on my health."

She adds, "Climate change has had a significant impact on our situation as women, and the burden on us has increased. Rainfall and dust storms have affected the road, making it more difficult to navigate, especially since the relevant authorities have not paid attention to it. This has caused us a lot of trouble and illness. In addition to the heavy load I carry, I suffer from slipping in the vertebrae of the spine and pain in the joints due to the tasks I found myself raised on. Despite this fatigue and suffering every day, my face smiles as soon as I see my children full and happy."

### International Reports

A report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) for 2022, entitled "Yemeni Women: Confronting Climate Change and Leading Towards Yemen's Future," states that "climate change has severely affected Yemeni women's access to water, food, and energy in a country exhausted by conflict. This negative impact of climate change leaves women vulnerable to the consequences of the absence of vital resources, especially for rural women who rely almost entirely on natural and agricultural resources to

earn their livelihoods and feed themselves."

The report adds that "this impact has exacerbated the already high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition suffered by women and girls," confirming that water insecurity remains a constant concern for those responsible for collecting water.

The report states that many women and young girls have to travel six hours or more every day to collect water, while others resort to drinking from unclean sources. If they can afford the financial cost, they pay high fees for water delivery. The variation in seasonal rainfall, caused by climate change throughout the country, leads to soil erosion and environmental degradation, resulting in the loss of fertile topsoil. This directly affects the main source of income for Yemen's rural population, which represents 70% of the country's 30 million inhabitants.

### Women from Lahj

In the Bir Amer Area, located in the Tuban district of Lahj Governorate, Kafa Salem and her family reside. Like other women in the village, she works in agriculture, harvesting, grazing, livestock breeding, and fetching water to help her husband provide food for their children. In a simple tone, Kafa tells of her

*Women in rural Yemen play a significant role in both influencing and being impacted by the achievement of food security*

daily struggles since sunrise until sunset, saying, "I wake up early to prepare food, and I start going to the farm to harvest. I face many difficulties while doing these tasks, including strong winds, dust, lack of rain, and high heat from the sun, all of which have made me a fragile and exhausted body with each passing day."

She continues, "I cannot do anything about climate change; climate change is beyond our control. However, the solutions and measures we adopt to protect ourselves are straightforward. We take basic precautions, such as storing larger quantities of water that can last us for two or three days, thus reducing the time spent in an unsuitable environment. This often involves fetching water. As for agriculture, harvesting, and food provision, we consistently work to withstand poverty and hunger. The official authorities, represented by the Agriculture Office in Lahj, help us sell handicrafts and henna in the market."

In these rural communities, women play a pivotal role that extends beyond providing food to include managing agricultural land and mitigating the negative effects of climate change on already scarce water resources. Despite the social pressures imposed on women, in addition to bearing the burden of all household chores, Yemeni women continue to pursue their path by working on the land with resilience, challenging the circumstances imposed on them.





# The Crucial Role of Women in Alleviating Yemen's Food Crisis

*Hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition pose significant challenges to Yemeni society amidst ongoing conflicts, and these challenges remain largely unaddressed by responsible authorities and international humanitarian organizations.*

**By: Hanan Hussein**  
**Women in Development and Peace**

However, Yemeni women are taking active roles within their communities, striving to secure a dignified life for themselves, their families, and their society by meeting their daily needs.

## Statistics & Estimates

A report by the Yemen Food Security Response and Resilience Project (FSRRP) states that "estimates indicate that Yemen imported 8% less wheat per month between January and May 2020 compared to the same period in 2019; due to low income, this is an insufficient amount of wheat to meet consumption requirements for 2020. This has made food access weak, making large families rely heavily on food imports, causing food prices to rise and family income to decline significantly."

According to the United Nations, "More than 7.2 million people in Yemen—of whom 4.6 million are women—are in urgent need of various forms of assistance such as food, water, health, and shelter. This includes four million internally displaced women across Yemen who confront daily risks while seeking safety and shelter, experiencing increased difficulties and deprivation of life's basic necessities."

It is certain that Yemeni girls and women are the most affected by the conflicts, which have led to the displacement of many of them with their families. Therefore, there is a need to meet many of their needs and alleviate daily suffering.

There are many situations that Yemeni women live in that have made their conditions worse day by day, including unemployment and the loss of sources of livelihood. Here we see that women are looking for many sources of income to obtain security and money in a way that preserves their dignity and pushes them away from hunger, poverty, and need.

## Real-Life Experiences

Anissa Hussein, a graduate of the College of Media, Public Relations Department, searched for work in her field of specialization but did not get it easily. She repeated her attempts many times until she was overcome with despair and helplessness. She sought various ideas to secure employment and earn money to support her children, particularly after her husband lost his salary due to the suspension of salaries.

She turned to teaching at a school and arranged for her eight-year-old child to attend primary school by agreeing to deduct a portion of her salary to cover his tuition. The other half of her earnings at the end of the month was allocated to purchasing essential food items for her family, including wheat, flour, oil, and other necessities. Meanwhile, her husband took on the responsibility of covering expenses such as water and electricity bills by engaging in freelance work.

Her sister, Aliya Hussein, worked from her home as a professional henna artist, decorating girls' hands with intricate henna designs, particularly during holidays and festive occasions. This work provided Aliya with a substantial source of income to support herself and her daughter. Consequently, she managed to purchase necessities such as food, beverages, and clothing, especially after her separation from her husband.

Thus, some Yemeni women live amid successive conflicts and crises to achieve sustainable food security, making use of their talents and free time to gain additional income to achieve various gains that ensure them a dignified life. They are showing a great deal of responsibility and seriousness.

In the midst of crises and closed roads, Yemeni women search for sources of livelihood in various fields and orientations. Anis-

sa and Aliya are simple examples of many others who have faced many obstacles and difficulties, but they did not stop at the first attempt, nor the second, nor the tenth. They continued and still strive with all the strength they have to search for sustainable solutions that ensure food security for themselves and their families.

## Social Perspectives

Shahd Tahir, the head of the Act organization, confirms that Yemeni women generally bear the responsibility of caring for their families and take it upon themselves to provide expenses for each of them. She says, "The man's role is not like that of the woman, as she has many means of livelihood that have achieved sources of income for everyone around her."

Shahd adds, "Women also possess a more intelligent approach towards managing consumption. They opt for a less fragmented lifestyle, moving away from daily types of food to incorporate staples like flour and rice into their daily consumption, thereby reducing expenses."

She confirms by saying, "Women have played a major role in achieving food security. The conditions that occur in Yemen have made them search for different sources of income to work on filling deep gaps, at different levels from within their homes, from e-commerce to handicrafts to various household work, in addition to service work and others."

Shahd observes that women engage in various rural activities, including agriculture and livestock breeding, to generate income and profit, even at a young age. She adds, "We see young girls, aged twenty or younger, taking the lead in household businesses for various reasons. Some lack a male sibling or family support, while others have lost their fathers, among other different circumstances."

## The Role of Official Entities

We find that the public sector supports women in many fields, but on the rural side, we may find some shortcomings, perhaps due to the expansion of the conflict circle in Yemen in recent years. In previous years, there was a lot of support and funding, whether from organizations or responsible entities.

This is what Iman Bazra'a, the Director of the Women's Department at the Ministry of Agriculture, said, "Presently, there is no support available. However, in the past, women, especially in rural areas, received white loans that granted them livestock under specific conditions. The objective was to provide support and funding to enable them to initiate their independent projects."

She further added, "There was a contract agreement and commitment to the terms of the support. The sale of the provided support was strictly prohibited. Loans are given to ensure the ongoing participation of women in repayment."

## Activities & Events

Abdulmalik Al-Haddad, a researcher at the General Authority for Agricultural Research, believes that there are many activities that have been provided to women with the aim of supporting them to find alternative economic solutions amid successive conflicts and crises. He says, "We have accomplished many research projects in the field of developing home food industries in many governorates, such as Aden, Lahj, Hodeidah, and Sana'a. An example of this

*Investing in the education and training of women is essential to equip them with the necessary skills to contribute effectively to food security*



Shahd Tahir



Abdul Malik Al-Haddad

is the pickling industry in Aden, the local cheese industry in the Al-Barh area in Taiz, and the sweets industry in Hodeidah, as well as in Sana'a Governorate."

Regarding the most prominent outcomes of the activities conducted in the realm of food and women's training in food security, he stated, "The outputs of the research activities included bulletins and comprehensive reports. Our focus encompassed the entire community, and we specifically engaged women in home industries across various governorates (Aden, Hodeidah, and Taiz) as they are primary contributors to these sectors. Through field visits, it was evident that women are the ones responsible for producing local cheese."

## Future Plans

Abdul Malik Al-Haddad explains that there are a number of plans that he has proposed and adds, "There are a number of future plans and projects that have been submitted to the management of the Food Research and Post-Harvest Technologies Center. One of these activities involves setting up a sequence of training courses aimed

at women engaged in home industries, recognizing their significance in achieving food security. This initiative is particularly crucial given the multitude of research outputs in this field. Additionally, the essence of any industrial activity lies in meeting the necessities for a dignified life."

## Obstacles & Challenges

Women play a fundamental role in ensuring food security around the world, representing nearly half of farmers and bearing responsibility for producing over half of the world's food supply.

According to the opinions of specialists and researchers in the field, women also face a number of challenges that can affect their ability to contribute to food security. These challenges include:

- Lack of education and training, as it is common for women not to receive sufficient qualifications, education, and training, which may limit their ability to acquire the necessary skills to contribute to food security.

- Marginalization: Women are often deprived of access to agricultural resources, such as land, water, and other natural re-

sources.

- Discrimination: Women may often be discriminated against in society, which may limit their ability to participate in economic activities.

The main difficulties that can be encountered in sectors that support women include not obtaining adequate funding to establish such important courses and weak financial resources to start these projects, according to researcher Al-Haddad.

## Proposals for Solutions

As all the social roles that women play in building sustainable food security are praised, social awareness must be raised about the importance of women's presence and effectiveness in achieving food security for themselves, their families, and their entire community.

Several specialists and interested parties have proposed many solutions to support women in achieving food security. These solutions include:

- Investing in women's education and training helps them acquire the necessary skills to contribute to food security, such as sustainable agriculture and agricultural business management.

- Promoting women's rights: promoting women's rights can help eliminate the discrimination that women face, allowing them to participate freely in the economic sector.

- Facilitating access to natural resources, such as agricultural land and water, as this can help empower women to produce food.

- Establishing sustainable agriculture training programs, such as teaching how to grow crops more efficiently and productively, which helps increase food security.

- Providing small loan programs for women, which may help rural women start or expand their agricultural businesses, helping them increase their income and improve food security for many families.

- Implementing school nutrition programs: these programs can help ensure that children receive the necessary nutrition crucial for healthy growth and development.



# Conflict Deepens Women's Food Security Crisis in Yemen

*Yemen's enduring conflict has had far-reaching consequences, impacting every aspect of life. The destruction of infrastructure and the decline in economic and social conditions have further compounded the food security crisis. A recent analysis by the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) in 2023 revealed that approximately 3.2 million people in Yemen experienced severe food insecurity.*

By: Alia Mohammed  
Women in Development and Peace

The report also predicts that this number will rise to 3.9 million people, with high levels of acute food insecurity (Phase 3 or worse). The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Food Program (WFP) have all issued warnings about the alarming levels of food insecurity in certain areas of Yemen.

Among the most vulnerable groups affected by this protracted conflict are women. The FAO highlights that women in Yemen endure severe food shortages and are particularly susceptible to hunger and famine.

## Women & Conflict

Alia Al-Hamadi, the Director of Women's Development Administration in Hadhramout Governorate, believes that the ongoing conflict in the country has had a particular impact on women and girls, who are the weakest link in society.

She added, "The conflict has compelled numerous women to flee their agricultural areas and safe havens, rendering them more in need of food due to the hardships they endure. This is a consequence of disrupted production, particularly in agricultural and industrial areas, which has resulted in food insecurity, hindering many women from accessing the minimal amount of food requirements."

## Decline in Agricultural Production

Women in Yemen rely heavily on agriculture as a primary source of food and income, and the ongoing conflict in the country has made it difficult to access and use agricultural land.

A large number of Yemeni women have been unable to grow crops and care for livestock, which has led to a decline in food production and a decrease in access to food rich in essential nutrients.

"We relied on agriculture as a source of income and to secure the basic needs of the family," said Hana Ali, a 40-year-old farmer who works in agriculture and livestock in her village in Lahj Governorate."

She says, "I have borne the burden of providing for my family's needs over the past years, and my suffering has increased with the rise in prices of consumer goods and basic services. The conflict has negatively affected our lives and exacerbated our suffering."

## Limited Economic Opportunities

Nabil Mohammed Nour Al-Din, a researcher at the General Autho-

riety for Agricultural Research and Guidance, said, "The deterioration of agricultural production and food security poses a serious threat to all groups in general, and women in particular, given that they are the weakest link in the face of this deterioration, especially since about two-thirds of the workforce in developing countries are women".

He added, "In Yemen, a large number of women work in agricultural activities, which reflects the great harm that is inflicted on women". He emphasized that hunger targets women to a great extent.

He also pointed out that pregnant and breastfeeding women are the most vulnerable due to the lack of food security resulting from the deterioration of agricultural production, which in turn has a significant impact on women who depend on agricultural land to support their families.

According to a report by the Swiss Alliance for Sustainable Food and Possible Society (Sufosec) on the food situation in 16 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, based on a survey of about 14,000 families over two years from 2020 to 2022, "women suffer from malnutrition more than men by an increase of 10%, in addition, one out of every three women in the 15-49 age group suffer from anemia due to malnutrition".

In the same context, the social activist Nabila Salem explained that the decline in agricultural production leads to a lack of economic opportunities for women, making it difficult for them to work in this sector, which weakens their income level and increases the severity of poverty.

Adding to this, the decline in agricultural production leads to an increase in food prices. Women are particularly affected, as it becomes difficult for them to secure sufficient food for themselves and their families. They may find themselves

in a difficult situation, as they are forced to reduce food rations for their families, which in turn leads to an imbalance in meals and an increase in hunger among family members.

## Financial & Livelihood Pressures

Since the beginning of the conflict in late 2014, Yemen has been plunged into a state of food emergency, and the income level of many families has been affected due to salary cuts and a lack of job opportunities, which has greatly affected the food security of women.

Most Yemeni families live on a single meal that is devoid of basic nutrients due to the low economic situation and low-income level.

Nadia Hassan, a housewife, says, "Our living situation has changed a lot, and many women have faced financial and psychological pressures due to the conflict and difficult economic conditions in the country."

Additionally, numerous Yemeni women face challenges in securing their fundamental needs for adequate, nutritious food due to soaring food prices and low income levels. This predicament has resulted in malnutrition and persistent hunger, impacting their health and rendering them vulnerable to various diseases such as anemia, stunted growth, and heart disease, all stemming from the challenging economic conditions.

Mona Ahmed, a woman who was forced by the conflict to search for work to support her family after losing her husband, and became solely responsible for four of her children, says, "It is difficult in this situation to provide everything your family needs in terms of food. In light of the current situation in the country, providing only one meal has beco-

Women suffer from malnutrition more than men, with an increase of 10%

me difficult. We women face great challenges in providing food, and sometimes we have to give up our share of food to our children".

In the same context, a report titled "Surviving in Times of War" issued by the World Bank in 2023 stated that the repercussions of the conflict in Yemen have had catastrophic effects on the Yemeni economy. The report indicated that the currency crisis and high food prices have increased the percentage of Yemeni families with weak or limited food consumption and low or medium performance.

## Impact of Poverty on Food Security

Security stands as one of the fundamental priorities for women, yet the issue of poverty in Yemen has impeded the attainment of this security. Faiza Abdullah, responsible for the women's sector in the community committees in Aden, believes that "Yemen suffers from high levels of poverty, and women are one of the most affected groups by the conflict".

She emphasized that the increase in the poverty rate and its negative impact on women in society warns of a major food catastrophe that everyone should pay attention to.

In addition, Yemeni women have faced multiple difficulties due to the conflict, and many women have found it difficult to obtain sufficient and healthy nutrition for themselves and their children. These difficulties included reducing opportunities to access healthy food and a lack of resources to purchase basic food items.

She also pointed out that poverty has had a negative impact on women's ability to obtain necessary health care services, increasing the risk of health problems they may

face. In addition, poverty also affects women's educational opportunities in Yemen, as many of them are forced to leave school due to the poor economic situation they encounter. Their inability to obtain the necessary education limits their opportunities for economic independence and improving their living conditions.

She emphasized that women in Yemen face poor health conditions due to poverty, such as malnutrition and the spread of diseases resulting from malnutrition. She stressed the need to find a solution to the problem of poverty in Yemen, build damaged infrastructure, provide job opportunities, and promote the nutritional system for women and children.

## Solutions & Treatments

Within the framework of the treatments, Nabil Nour al-Din emphasized the need to intensify efforts to improve the agricultural situation, develop sustainable agriculture, and provide support for women working in this field.

He added, "Governments and organizations must undertake projects that preserve agricultural production to maintain food security for the entire community and women, by providing food aid and healthy nutrition, and improving the economic and social situation in the country".

Nabila Salem confirmed that addressing the current economic situation in Yemen is one of the solutions to improve food security for women.

She stated, "Enhancing the living conditions of Yemeni women necessitates the availability of job opportunities, education, training, and qualification programs that empower them economically. Additionally, there is need for comprehensive research and innovative solutions aimed at improving the nutritional status of women and address the lack of food security among the most vulnerable groups".





# Women Farmers: The Cornerstone of the Local Economy and Family Livelihood

*Agriculture serves as a fundamental source of income for countless families and local communities. In numerous nations, women farmers assume a pivotal role within the agricultural sector, actively contributing to the production of food and essential raw materials. Moreover, they play a significant part in bolstering both the economic stability of their families and the overall prosperity of their countries.*

By: **Afrah Borji**  
Women in Development and Peace

## Self-Sufficiency and Effort

Salma Abdul Khaleq, a farmer hailing from Abyan Governorate, has dedicated years of hard work to her husband's and family's farm. However, after exerting tremendous effort without reaping substantial financial rewards, she made the decision to establish an agricultural reserve on one of her family's abandoned lands.

Reflecting on her journey in agriculture, Salma shares, "I initially found myself indebted to my mother and sisters, both in gold and money. In order to repay my debts within a year, I reclaimed and cultivated my land. Today, my farm has become more productive than ever, thanks to my unwavering dedication."

Salma goes on to recount the challenges she has faced, stating, "I strive tirelessly to ensure food security for my large family and my town by supplying an ample quantity of cucumbers and tomatoes. My annual production significantly fulfills the local market's needs, particularly in light of the conflicts that have hampered both imports and local production."

With hopes for support from the relevant authorities, Salma expresses her desire for farmers to receive essential fertilizers and for the burden of imposed taxes to be alleviated. Additionally, she wishes for water project owners to reduce the prices of irrigation water.

On her part, Najiba Aqlan Saeed, the president of the Kauthar Development Council in Taiz, says, "I have worked on



food security after the conflict events in Yemen. I felt saddened by the situation the country has reached, with a lack of life's essentials and people's need for the most basic things."

She confirmed that she went out to seek and search for effective organizations in Taiz after preparing a database about the needy families in her area, and she went to all organizations, bodies, and local authorities as well.

She added, "Some people responded, and others rejected me, but I did not despair. I tried to provide drinking water for my area through public tanks twice a week, and we provided them with food baskets that filled a great humanitarian gap for those who lived in our situation."

She added in her speech that the weakness of food security is due to the role of the fragile state, the lack of awareness of people about the importance of cultivating the land with natural grain crops, and their reliance on themselves to provide good crops from their land. As for what the organizations offer - according to Najiba - it is a drop in the ocean and does not meet the needs of the poor families that have not received any support, but their efforts are valuable

and appreciated.

She says, "I faced many difficulties and overcame most of them, including the promises of organizations that have not been fulfilled until today, and my embarrassment in front of the community that hoped for the best from me."

## Official Role

Regarding the programs offered by the ministry, which specialize in supporting rural women farmers, Najiba adds, "The ministry works to implement the state's policy in the agricultural sector in accordance with the constitution and the prevailing legislation, and the General Administration for Rural Women's Development is the legitimate representative in providing plans and projects aimed at their development. It should stand as a primary collaborator alongside organizations and donors, contributing by providing training, financial aid, and service initiatives specifically designed for rural women. Additionally, the establishment of a national strategy within the agricultural sector is crucial. This strategy should prioritize enhancements in food systems and the nutritional well-being of susceptible families,

aiming for sustainable improvements. This includes elevating the efficiency and competitiveness of crop, livestock, and fisheries value chains while considering nutritional aspects. Moreover, the strategy should focus on sustainable management practices, bolstering climate resilience for natural resources, and ensuring the social and economic integration of the most vulnerable stakeholders across the agricultural food system."

She emphasizes the importance of improving governance and the enabling environment for planning and mobilizing resources for two of the Sustainable Development Goals. Each pillar includes medium-term results and proposed activities that have been extensively discussed and modified to meet the needs of our country and the available resources. There are many programs and projects offered to women in rural areas and funded by some organizations interested in the agricultural sector, and in coordination and supervision with rural women's administrations in some of those programs and projects.

In the same context, Fathiya Arshad, the head of the Rural Women's Association, says, "The Women's Association, in cooperation with the Red Cross and its funding, played an active role in employing many women farmers. They received training and were employed in dedicated facilities for grinding, packaging, and selling henna. They were supervised by agricultural engineers affiliated with the association, ensuring oversight from the initial stages to marketing and sales."

## Rural Women & the Economy

According to the Yemeni economist Wafiq Saleh, "In fact, Yemeni women are the backbone of the agricultural sector, which is one of the vital economic sectors in the country. Prior to the conflict, the agricultural sector employed about 70% of the workforce outside the public sector, and thus rural women were the mainstay of agricultural production in the country. This means that Yemeni female farmers played a significant role in agricultural production, especially in the Yemeni countryside where the majority of the population depends on agriculture as a primary source of livelihood. According to official estimates, the percentage of women working in agriculture is more than 75%, and in animal hus-

bandry, it is more than 90%."

Farmer Sima Ahmed expressed, "The farm produces what is needed for the house (self-sufficiency), and other basic needs are purchased from the farm's income. As for agricultural technology, it does not exist, and therefore, we need training courses in this field. Yemeni farmers need comprehensive support to enhance their livelihoods, including both financial and non-financial aid such as the provision of water tanks, irrigation networks, and protective fencing. This support is crucial for both seasonal vegetable cultivation - potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini, eggplant, okra, and chili - and the growth of perennial trees like coffee, mango, guava, and lemon. As for the local market, there are many markets such as Al-Turbah market, the center market, the brokerage market, and the Mansoura market."

## Difficulties & Challenges

Professor Wafiq Saleh highlights a major challenge faced by rural women in agriculture - a decline in cultivated areas over recent years. This decline is attributed to various factors including conflict, presence of landmines in agricultural zones, and the soaring prices of essential agricultural production resources like fuel, tools such as pesticides and fertilizers, among others. Rural women also do not receive the necessary attention to improve their situation, to keep up with the productive development in terms of training and guidance, and to obtain the means and equipment that alleviate the practical burdens placed on them.

Wafiq continues, "Rural women require significant attention from the government to revitalize the agricultural sector. This necessitates the formulation of comprehensive plans that encompass the provision of essential tools and requirements for agriculture. Collaborating with international organizations in this domain is essential, as it can bolster agricultural production, enhance employment prospects, and bridge the gap in food security within the country."

The rural woman working in the agricultural sector brings substantial benefits. Her involvement raises the economic standing of households and communities, making the rural woman farmer the cornerstone of the national economy.





# Gender Challenges and their Implications on Food Security in Yemen

*In the realm of food security, women and girls encounter distinct obstacles stemming from gender discrimination and inequitable access to resources and opportunities.*

By: Hebah Mohammed  
 Women in Development and Peace

Alarming statistics reveal that women make up a substantial proportion of the global impoverished and hungry population, underscoring the difficulties they encounter in obtaining adequate and nourishing sustenance. Moreover, women are directly impacted by conflicts and humanitarian crises, exacerbating their struggles in ensuring food security for both themselves and their families.

## Gender Challenges & Food Security

Gender plays a significant role in achieving food security in Yemen and any other society. Social disparities and gender biases impact women's ability to access adequate and nutritious food, as well as their opportunities to participate in decision-making regarding food security.

According to social researcher Huda Al-Zubairi, Yemeni women face significant challenges in obtaining appropriate food due to economic, social, and cultural factors that affect their rights. These factors may limit women's access to education, training, and employment opportunities, negatively impacting their income and ability to secure sufficient food for themselves and their families. Key challenges for women in Yemen include limited economic opportunities and difficulty accessing necessary resources for agricultural production, as around 80% of the population lives below the poverty line.

Comparing the roles of women and men in accessing basic needs, Al-Zubairi notes that women face many challenges due to the current situation, particularly since the conflict began in 2015. Women have taken on significant responsibilities in providing for their families, especially after government salaries were suspended and the head of the household stopped working.

In Yemen, many factors confront Yemeni women, most notably the social situation. There is a clear discrimination that women suffer in obtaining their rights compared to men, both within the family and in society in general. Women also face violence, whether it is verbal, physical, or psychological, which



greatly affects their mental and physical health, and significantly impacts their ability to achieve food security.

It is also noted that Yemeni women face social challenges in the form of harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, and domestic violence. The pressure from family or society to marry women while they are still children deprives them of their right to education, and these practices deprive women of access to their basic rights.

Dr. Fawzia, an assistant professor at the Faculty of Science and Technology, University of Sana'a, and a member of the Yemeni Women's Union pointed out that the increasing number of female breadwinners has multiplied the burdens on women, making it difficult for them to access basic services. There has been a rise in food prices with psychological distress experienced by women due to the absence of the family breadwinner, a lack of income sources, and the presence of a disabled family member. This situation is exacerbated by insufficient support and programs for individuals with disabilities. This has forced women to accept income-generating activities that were not socially acceptable, such as widespread begging, or being exploited and blackmailed in various ways.

## Gender Discrimination & its Impact on Women's Access to Food

Al-Zubairi states, "Social discrimination affects women's ability to access basic necessities. We observe that women live in more impoverished areas than men, lacking many essential services such as bedding and blankets, making them more susceptible to diseases."

She continues, "Healthcare is limited for women, they face difficulties reaching health centers due to impassable roads, checkpoints, and disruptions in certain areas. These factors increase their vulnerability to illness and mortality."

She points out that the majority of women experience malnutrition more severely than men, particularly during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. They require comprehensive care, but due to poverty and conflict, women often struggle to access this care, worsening their condition.

She explains, "Most women from poor families affected by conflict struggle to access clean water. Women need personal hygiene more than men as they are responsible for raising their children, exposing them to infectious diseases." She emphasizes that women in Yemen receive less education than men, facing discrimination in education, while being primarily responsible for household or

agricultural work, significantly affecting their opportunities for employment and economic improvement.

## Policies for Achieving Social Justice in Food Security

There are numerous legal policies and programs aimed at promoting gender equality in the field of food security. Huda Al-Zubairi mentioned some of them, stating, "Policies and programs are focusing on improving women's access to agricultural resources, which helps increase food production and self-sufficiency in the agricultural sector. Some policies and programs contribute to providing employment opportunities for women, significantly contributing to their daily or monthly income and ensuring a decent life for them."

She also emphasized the importance of legal measures to protect women from gender-based discrimination and to ensure equal access to food compared to men. The Yemeni government has taken measures to enact a law granting women the right to land and property ownership, thus enhancing gender equality in owning agricultural resources.

Al-Zubairi believes that there are essential steps to implement these legal policies and programs, including directing them toward women and girls with the most urgent needs. It involves studying the situation of the most vulnerable women, engaging women in the development of these legal policies and programs, as they are more knowledgeable about the problems they encounter. Additionally, it involves implementing a monitoring and evaluation process to ensure their effective implementation.

## Current Situation

According to Najwa Al-A'adi, a member of the Yemeni Women's Union, "Since 2011, women in Yemen have been experiencing a severe setback in their social status and rights, manifested in the increase of gender-based violence and exploitation of women. Despite our efforts in campaigning against gender-based violence, there is still a significant decline in the community's trust in women and an increase in condescending attitudes towards them. We are currently organizing a campaign to mitigate gender-based violence, which will take place from November 25th to December 10th, 2023."

Dr. Fawzia Al-Sabri confirms, "Women are subjected to a high degree of gender-based violence at present, as well as an exacerbation of poverty among women, an increase in the

percentage of female breadwinners, and their exposure to psychological pressures leading to mental and physical disorders among women."

She continues, "There is a deterioration in basic needs and difficulty in accessing essential health and food services. With the continuation of restrictions and the length of the crisis, the private sector, which is essential for sustaining life and providing basic services, is affected. Gender inequality hinders women and girls from accessing essential services, leading to a huge gender gap in literacy, education, and maternal mortality rates during childbirth."

## Promoting Gender Equality through Education and Opportunities

Al-Sabri states, "Education, in its essence, holds intrinsic value; it empowers women to cultivate and refine the work skills demanded by the market or skills they can utilize to initiate their independent business projects. Women have started to create new projects within their homes or engage in trade in markets."

Al-Sabri further adds, "Many civil society organizations have contributed to the return of girls to education, and women's economic empowerment has contributed to forming economically stable families dedicated to educating their sons and daughters. This reflects the importance of women's economic empowerment, awareness of the necessity of education and care. The Yemeni Women's Union has been keen on training and economically empowering women, enabling them to return to schools, and some to continue their university education."

Al-Zubairi agrees, emphasizing that education plays a crucial role in achieving food security for women. Education provides opportunities for women to develop the necessary skills and capabilities to facilitate their livelihoods and contributes to gender equality in opportunities. This allows women to have equal opportunities with men to obtain suitable jobs, ensuring their families' access to food. Women can also contribute to raising the country's economy through small projects.

## Solutions & Recommendations

Dr. Fawzia Al-Sabri emphasizes the necessity of conducting awareness sessions and messages to encourage a shift in societal attitudes towards women's work, the importance of women's participation, gender equality, and achieving stability, early revitalization, and sustainable development. She highlights the social gender perspective as a focal point reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Development Program's 2022-2025 strategic plan, which revolves around gender equality, addressing obstacles to gender equality, and enhancing women's economic empowerment and leadership roles.

Additionally, she points to the increased participation of women in the social and cultural context, tailored skills training based on their needs, and market demand for achieving economic independence. She also mentions the importance of organizations implementing women's training and economic empowerment programs, such as the safe spaces provided by the Women's Union in Yemen, which help mitigate gender-based violence.

Furthermore, she advocates for increasing opportunities for obtaining microfinance or promoting home-based businesses based on the existence of a market for their products, providing an encouraging environment for small income-generating women's projects and entrepreneurship, and supporting women in developing their projects and accessing entrepreneurship.

Huda Al-Zubairi also emphasizes the need for legal reforms to address gender-based discrimination, activate women's roles, and protect them in all aspects of their lives, including ensuring food security and access to resources such as land ownership, reduced taxes, and financing that aids women in economic empowerment and food security.

In conclusion, to comprehensively and sustainably achieve food security in Yemen, gender equality and women's economic and social empowerment must be strengthened. Efforts aimed at improving food security should include promoting women's rights, enabling their effective participation in decision-making, and providing access to economic resources and opportunities. However, women are not merely victims in this context; they are also powerful agents of change. Empowering women and enhancing their participation have a significant impact on food security and sustainable development.





## Media & Food Security

# The Media's Role in Promoting Women's Involvement in Ensuring Food Security: A Modest Contribution

*The current situation in Yemen presents a significant challenge to the local community, particularly in ensuring food security. This challenge stems from various factors, including armed conflict, economic collapse, currency depreciation, high unemployment rates, and climate-related damage to agricultural lands. International organizations, such as the World Food Program, consistently warn about the severe impact of food insecurity on women and children in Yemen.*

By: **Ahmed Bajoaim**  
Women in Development and Peace

Yemeni women are particularly affected by the lack of access to healthy and balanced nutrition, making food security a pressing issue for them. It is crucial for the diverse Yemeni media to give serious attention to this matter, as they have the power to raise awareness and empower women in their pursuit of food security. Given the suffocating humanitarian and economic crisis that Yemen has faced in recent years, access to food and clean water has become a vital necessity for the population.

Yemeni women are actively involved in reclaiming agricultural lands and contributing to food production, playing a crucial role in ensuring food provision. In this report, we will delve into the role of the media in addressing this matter, consulting with experts in the field.

### The Role of Media

Television correspondent Zakaria Mohammed stated, "The role of various media is extremely important in directing attention towards the suffering of Yemeni women in the midst of these harsh living conditions." He emphasized the shortcomings of the media in highlighting this suffering, stressing the need to shed more light on it, intensify efforts, and address all the requirements needed by women. This includes raising awareness about the importance of women's empowerment in various fields, educating the community about the significance of women's presence and involvement in achieving gender equality, including food security. Furthermore, the media should encourage institutions and civil society organizations to fund workshops for developing appropriate solutions to ensure food security for women.

He added, "The ongoing conflict in the country has significantly impacted the economic situation, leading to alarming levels of poverty. This has resulted in food shortages and complete lack of it for many families, mostly comprising women and child-

ren. The current situation has shifted the focus of the media and reduced its role in raising awareness about vital issues concerning Yemeni women, who are the most affected by the conflict and its unjust consequences. Therefore, the inability of women to obtain their nutritional needs for an active and healthy life stands at the forefront of these consequences. Additionally, the prolonged conflict has resulted in the deaths of thousands of men, making it extremely challenging for women to attain food security after losing their breadwinners."

Journalist Abeer Wakid believes that Yemeni media primarily focuses on political events and humanitarian situations arising from the ongoing conflict. When it comes to providing food security for women, there is a lack of attention. The conflict negatively impacts advocating for women's issues in Yemeni media, with a focus on conflict news and political analysis at the expense of covering various issues, including women's issues and ensuring food security. The conflict may also lead to reduced funding for women's education programs and empowerment in agriculture and food security.

Journalist Liza Al-Ganadi points out that the Yemeni media generally does not prioritize food security, especially when it comes to women. The nutritional needs of women during pregnancy and lactation, as well as their overall health, are affected by food insecurity, leading to various diseases and complications. While specialized press may show interest in such issues concerning women, the majority of media outlets, being mostly news-oriented, tend to focus on politically influenced topics.

Journalist Madh-haba Al-Yazidi believes that in recent times, the media has been more focused on economic conflicts and their aftermath rather than on food security and its various demographics. This has had a negative impact on the local community and has solidified the political situation in all aspects of life. The concept of food security is not well understood within the society, but international organizations may dedicate programs to address food security for Yemeni women, recognizing their vital



Zakaria Mohammed

role in this field. By raising awareness of their contributions and highlighting their successes in ensuring food security, a significant shift in this matter could occur.

She emphasizes that women's food security is closely linked to the livelihood of the family, and in conflict-ridden environments, the lack of resources poses a significant challenge. For instance, a mother may sacrifice her own food for the well-being of her family. Therefore, the lack of media attention, the undervaluing of certain societal groups, and the difficult living conditions have negatively impacted women's role in ensuring food security, despite the existence of success stories, especially among rural women.

Journalist Ashraf Radhwan believes that the media only pays attention to and sympathizes with women in sensitive issues. As for food security, there may be some media coverage, but it is limited to about 5%. Discussion of this topic is usually left to experts through scientific seminars and conferences related to the food and agricultural sector, which the media is connected to. The conflict has significantly affected the food security of women in Yemen through the destruction of agricultural land, water shortages, and the conversion of agricultural areas into military barracks, leading to a high level of food insecurity and undermining women's efforts in this regard.

Furthermore, the conflict has shifted media focus towards the conflict issues and their tragic consequences, neglecting other developmental aspects, including women's food security. This necessitates different media entities to conduct field visits to the targeted areas, produce comprehensive reports after studying the subject thoroughly through scientific seminars, workshops with specialists and media, and then implement the findings to provide real outputs for the improvement of women's food security. This should be realistically conveyed to the



Ashraf Radhwan

public to enable a genuine understanding of the significant role women play in food security.

Contrary to the previous opinions, journalist Rana Al-Hubaishi states that Yemeni media is always interested in raising awareness about food security through TV and radio programs. This is achieved by hosting food security experts, documenting interviews, and presenting programs that illustrate the role women play in ensuring food security and achieving positive progress. However, conflicts have a significant impact on the deterioration of women's food security through salary cuts, price hikes, currency devaluation, and climate effects, leading to famines, especially affecting pregnant women who require adequate nutrition for themselves and their fetuses, resulting in fetal malnutrition.

### Plans & Programs

Television correspondent Zakaria Mohammed said, "Undoubtedly, the continuation of the conflict has directed most media towards political disputes or towards defending the conflicting parties, greatly affecting humanitarian issues such as women's needs in maintaining and providing food security. The media must work to highlight these issues in a compelling way to encourage other media outlets to support women who suffer from marginalization in their rights, including access to food security. This requires the adoption of well-thought-out awareness programs backed by statistics provided by funding entities working to improve women's status on all levels."

Abeer Wakid added, "Yemeni local media should enhance public awareness of the importance of food security for women through purposeful media campaigns, intensifying programs focused on women's affairs, and strategically timing their broadcasts to reach a wider audience. This should also involve promoting sustainable deve-

lopment, focusing on sustainable agriculture and rural development to achieve sustainable food security, as well as providing practical information on improving nutrition, including best dietary practices, food preparation, and storage."

Lisa Al-Ganadi clarified, "If there is media interest in the topic of providing food security for women from some local media outlets, it is limited to republishing statistics and reports released by international organizations and institutions on the impact of food insecurity on women in Yemen. There are no clear plans and programs presented by various media outlets addressing the effects of food insecurity on women in Yemen. The conflict has a significant impact on food security and the economic situation, leading to loss of income, a decrease in the local currency, skyrocketing prices of basic goods, and a surge in unemployment, all directly affecting women who have lost their breadwinners."

Al-Yazidi indicates that the media plays a significant role in clarifying the strategies and plans adopted by countries, turning crises into solutions, especially for sensitive groups such as women. This is achieved through intensifying various media sections with reports and television stories, as well as social media towards any field that requires attention. Unfortunately, this is absent in Yemeni local media, as most of them contribute to conflict due to their prevailing orientation. Therefore, it is rare to find media plans and programs primarily aimed at discussing women's issues, including food security.

Al-Hubaishi states, "The conflict had a significant impact on Yemeni media, as it tended to cover armed conflicts and their harmful effects on the nation and society. However, we hope that the media will give sufficient space to the role of women, especially rural women, in providing food security through their plans and programs related to this issue. In addition, channels should allocate time during crises for health programs, such as a morning program discussing suitable meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, as well as raising awareness about good nutrition for pregnant and breastfeeding women and organizing educational courses for media professionals in various fields. Some teams should be dedicated to health and nutrition to raise awareness in Yemeni society."

In conclusion, the public opinion shaped by the various media outlets tends to focus on conflict issues and causes. If this focus were slightly shifted towards vital and developmental issues, shedding light on them and giving them sufficient space, the economic situation, including the role of women in providing food security, would be better than it is today. The media's neglect of successful women at present is merely an extension of the damages caused by the conflict, especially to Yemeni women.



# Resilience and Determination: New Driving Forces for Yemeni Women in Achieving Food Security

*Yemen faces significant challenges in ensuring food security, a pressing issue that deeply impacts the country's economy and the lives of its people, especially amidst the ongoing political crisis. While the food crisis is not unique to a third-world country like Yemen, which is classified as one of the world's poorest nations, it is crucial to highlight the pivotal role of women in addressing this issue. Women can actively participate in various sectors, including agriculture, industry, commerce, animal husbandry, and fishing, and achieve remarkable successes that contribute significantly to this vital field.*

By: Ahmed Bajoaim  
Women in Development and Peace

Yemeni women are instrumental in guaranteeing food security, given their significant involvement in agricultural production, land management, and reclamation. Agriculture serves as the primary source of food resources in Yemen, playing a crucial role in the national economy and the potential for achieving self-sufficiency. By effectively harnessing the agricultural sector, Yemen can transition from being an importer to a producer and exporter. This requires the concerted efforts of both official and private entities to exploit and develop the suitable agricultural area, which stands at 1,539,006 hectares according to the National Information Center. Currently, approximately 81% of this land, equivalent to 1,241,387 hectares, is under cultivation.

## Experts' Perspectives

According to Dr. Ali Baabad, the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Sciences and Marine Biology at Hadhramout University, Yemeni women play a very important role in providing food from agriculture, industry, animal and fish wealth, and others, especially rural women who have clear contributions to food security. They participate significantly in the agricultural sector, which is their main work in those areas, in addition to animal husbandry. The eastern regions of Hadhramout Governorate are also among the most diverse areas in the Republic in terms of animal wealth, and most of those who work in this field are women. It can be said that women have been able to contribute effectively to providing some types of food and can achieve self-sufficiency and food security.

Dr. Baabad, a professor of food science and technology, further emphasized that women in these areas lack training and qualifications in animal husbandry and veterinary services, hindering their ability to develop and compete effectively. Whenever these services are found, it will make a qualitative leap in livestock production and export. Women there are interested in grazing sheep and goats and raising them primarily. Women in Tihama areas in Al-Hodeidah, as well as Shabwah, Abyan, and Lahj, are also interested in raising cows and camels. If support for women is found in these governorates, self-sufficiency in natural milk can be achieved, and imports can be dispensed with.

According to Baabad, government agencies should take care of the agricultural and animal sectors and support women alongside men, as some jobs are not possible for women to do without the help of men. This can be done by coordinating their ownership and providing irrigation, seeds, and fertilizers. All these measures will encourage women to produce. With these factors in place, our country can reduce its dependence on importing significant portions of grains, such as wheat, barley, oats, corn, and legumes, in addition to meat and livestock. Also, attention should be paid to palm cultivation,

as many Yemeni regions are famous for palms as well as Yemeni coffee. If the basic conditions for women are available, they will naturally contribute to improving local production.

Awad Ba-Lukaiman, the Director-General of the Agriculture Office in Sahel Hadhramout, explained that women play a vital role in the agricultural sector. They actively participate in agricultural programs aimed at improving the living standards of their families. Women can contribute to achieving even a small part of food security by following several points, as women are a fundamental element in this sector, which is one of the most important pillars of the national economy. These efforts involve raising awareness among women's groups about the significance of expanding crop cultivation and selecting resilient crop varieties suitable for prevailing environmental conditions. Ultimately, these measures aim to attain self-sufficiency in crucial food requirements.

He mentioned that female farmers face great difficulties in achieving food security, the most prominent of which is the lack of necessary support from the state or donor agencies to open factories for processing vegetables and fruits. For instance, during peak harvest periods like the tomato crop season, there are large quantities that end up being wasted without benefit due to the lack of factories to take this crop and turn it into tomato paste. Establishing such facilities would save the farmers from losses and at the same time achieve self-sufficiency in the local markets for this commodity. Also among the difficulties are the lack of training courses for women working in agriculture and the lack or scarcity of women's associations that adopt the marketing stages of products, whether agricultural or otherwise.

In this context, the Deputy Director of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Hadhramout Governorate, lawyer Majdi Bouabes, pointed out that Yemeni women have significant contributions in providing food security and are trying to enhance it in various vital sectors. The Chamber of Commerce also has a special section for businesswomen, which is active in training and qualifying women and holding workshops in cooperation with international organizations interested in this matter. The number of businesswomen affiliated with the Chamber is about 200 women, who have licenses to practice commercial and industrial work officially, and this will enhance local production in the industrial sector.

Bouabes described women as half of society, and society cannot rise if half of it is disabled or not working. Therefore, women are currently positively engaged in the field of work, which improves local



Majdi Bouabes

production and achieves self-sufficiency in some commodities, including industrial ones. If these products are properly preserved and manufactured with good specifications, they can be exported, like many Yemeni products that have become famous abroad. The Chamber of Commerce actively engaged in marketing various products created by women. In the city of Mukalla, women are considered the first participants in the fish industry and its packaging in various factories spread throughout the city. These products have achieved great fame locally and internationally.

## International Reports

With the deterioration of food security over the past years due to the dire conditions in Yemen, the World Bank provided a financial grant to improve food security in the country amounting to \$150 million, with approval for \$127 million, according to a report from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization on December 14, 2022, titled "The World Bank provides an additional grant of \$150 million to enhance resilience and address food insecurity in Yemen." The report indicated that during the implementation of the projects, there will be a focus on women, especially in rural areas, due to their essential role in improving food security.

The report mentioned that the project will be implemented in Yemen jointly through the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Development Program, the World Food Program, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, in addition to local partners. The agricultural, animal, and fish wealth sectors will receive projects worth up to \$79.4 million from the total grant provided. The World Food Program also contributes to enhancing the role of women and providing financial grants to help them develop skills in the

agricultural and food production sectors, which will create new opportunities for women to contribute to food security in the country.

According to a statistic mentioned in a report by the United Nations, the percentage of Yemeni rural women working in the agricultural sector is 87%. About 80% of them are engaged in animal husbandry. All of this proves the assistance of women in improving food security, which depends on agriculture as a basic pillar. The report issued on October 16, 2022, entitled "Leaving no one behind in Yemen: Steps towards better production, nutrition, environment and life," indicated that the Yemeni Republic has self-sufficiency in vegetables, thanks to the role played by women in this sector. Local agriculture meets 15% to 20% of Yemen's food needs.

According to the United Nations report, the agricultural sector's contribution to the country's total needs reached around 13.4% in 2020, compared to 10.4% in 2012. This indicates a significant development in the agricultural sector, which has not been affected during the years of conflict. This is due to the efforts of international organizations, led by the Food and Agriculture Organization, to address the country's food security crisis. The report also confirmed the vital role played by Yemeni women in this important sector. The United Nations report indicated that the agricultural sector in Yemen deserves investment and development to complete the efforts aimed at achieving more sustainability in food security.

Another United Nations report indicates that Yemeni women have a pivotal and important role in preserving food security, cultivating and managing agricultural land, and obtaining water. The report, entitled "From Climate Change Combat to Resolving Conflicts Among Farmers... Yemeni Women Have an Indispensable Role in Protecting Their Local Communities," was issued on June 10, 2022. The report stated that women in rural communities are addressing the issue of climate change with determination and perseverance. They contribute to finding alternatives and providing solutions within their communities, especially after the involvement of several women in the conflict resolution committee affiliated with the International Organization for Migration.

According to the United Nations Development Program, the program worked on supporting water collection management and rehabilitating deteriorating agricultural lands to ensure safe access to water sources for rural women. This is to reduce the burdens that fall on their shoulders and provide sufficient time for them to parti-



Dr. Ali Baabad

cipate in productive activities to achieve food security. The UNDP commented in its report titled "Yemeni Women: Confronting Climate Change and Leading Towards Yemen's Future" on March 6, 2022, that the participation of Yemeni women has become more important to work towards enhancing the country's resilience in food security. The UNDP rehabilitated more than 24,000 hectares of agricultural land.

According to the report, 50% of women benefited from the rehabilitation of agricultural land, and the program trained 750 female farmers in productive agricultural work and how to use seeds and fertilizers. In support of small industries run by women, the UNDP implemented solar energy networks for these projects to provide uninterrupted services to contribute to increasing industrial production and enhance food security. The report concluded by stating that the UNDP will continue its efforts to enhance the role of women in confronting climate change and addressing the problems caused by the impact of climate change with an integrated approach that contributes to improving food security and resilience.

Women have enormous strength and endurance to face challenges, which has made them a path to success. Providing food security is a difficult task that has been facing Yemeni women for years. However, these challenges have become more complex after the country entered a tunnel of conflict since early 2015. Nevertheless, many women, whether in rural or urban areas, are still making great efforts to achieve food security and increase self-sufficiency rates for some agricultural crops and industrial products. International organizations have not hesitated to support and finance these soft hands that are trying to cultivate what human disasters have destroyed.





# Rural Women: Key Players in Achieving Food Security

*Yemeni women are unsung heroines, tirelessly dedicated to the welfare of their families. Their role in rural areas is even more significant, encompassing a wide range of responsibilities. They diligently meet their needs both within and beyond the household, taking charge of household chores such as cleaning, cooking, and laundry. Moreover, they tend to live-stock, milk cows, nurture animals, fetch water, and uphold the family's unity from its very foundation.*

By: Hanan Hussein  
Women in Development and Peace

## The Role of Rural Women

Iman Bazra'a, the Director of the Women's Department at the Ministry of Agriculture, explains that rural women play a significant role in ensuring food security. She states, "Due to the absence of male family members such as fathers, brothers, or husbands, women have taken on a strong desire and passion to enter the labor market to provide for their families and fulfill their duties at home and outside."

Bazra'a adds, "In Yemen, we see rural women working on farms and then going to the market to sell their products and crops, as well as participating in seasonal markets. During wedding ceremonies and funeral gatherings, we witness them actively seeking marketing channels to sell their products."

### Statistics & Figures

"Women constitute nearly 60% of the workforce in crop cultivation, 90% in livestock farming, and 10% of the total paid labor force. They are also among the most vulnerable groups affected by the risks of food insecurity, climate change, and deteriorating conditions," according to a report published by the Food Security Response and Resilience Project in Yemen.

Despite these challenges, the continuous problem of high food prices and water scarcity persists. Yemeni women, who provide care and support for their families, prioritize the well-being of their children and families. They face limited options to ensure sufficient and safe food for their loved ones.

### A Real-life Example

Ahlam Olaya, from the province of Sana'a, has been working as a farmer since childhood, coming from a rural family. With the rise in fuel prices, she turned to

cultivating various types of vegetables and greens such as mint and parsley using modern technology called protected cultivation. Ahlam explains her project idea, saying, "I had been thinking about this project for a long time, but the lack of funds was the barrier that held me back for a while. Then I found a way to implement it by seeking a loan from a financial institution, making a part of my dream a reality."

Currently, Ahlam cultivates a variety of vegetables and greens in high demand in the market, ensuring food security. She also engages in other rural activities, such as raising chickens and other animals. Ahlam has worked towards achieving sustainable food security to meet the needs of her village residents, considering the distance between the village and markets. Additionally, her farm provides a steady source of income through buying, selling, and earning money.

Moreover, Ahlam has created employment opportunities for several women who work with her on the farm, thereby generating income for many families. She says, "I have 5-6 workers who assist me on the farm, helping with pruning, planting, mo-

onitoring and harvesting crops, and other agricultural tasks."

Ahlam believes that her use of modern technology, such as protected cultivation, instead of traditional farming, has greatly benefited her. She has noticed a significant difference in terms of financial gains, as this technology has reduced expenses and saved on fuel costs during irrigation.

Ahlam emphasizes that she has been able to yield a considerable harvest in the season through these efforts. Additionally, she keeps up with the latest developments in the field of agriculture, working towards achieving food security through the products she provides to the community, ensuring a sustainable income for herself.

### Difficulties

Many rural women engage in side jobs such as sewing, embroidery, and home-based projects like cooking, baking, and cake-making to earn additional income. Despite their efforts, they still face challenges in their work.

Iman Bazra'a talks about promoting and marketing the products of working women in various community activities, stating,

"The General Administration supports rural women by participating in the exhibitions held by the Ministry's General Administration in Sana'a, where dedicated events and bazaars take place." She emphasizes that there are no external marketing channels (outside Yemen), and if they exist, they are extremely rare. Iman believes that many productive families work in different fields, including sewing household clothes (prayer clothes, jalabiyas), making juices, pastries, and Yemeni dishes, as well as engaging in various home industries. These products are primarily sold in public markets, vegetable markets, and restaurants.

Despite their high quality, these products face things like congestion and spoilage in markets and malls, primarily due to ineffective marketing efforts. Additionally, society lacks awareness of the importance of supporting women in various aspects, including promoting their development and striving for food security for themselves and their communities.

### Difficulties & Obstacles

The United Nations estimates that over 7.2 million people in Yemen urgently require assistance, which includes about 4.6 million women. Among them, 4 million internally displaced women across Yemen face daily risks while seeking safety and shelter. This situation exacerbates their challenges and deprives them of basic necessities, as reported by the UN.

According to the same report, one of the main challenges facing rural life in Yemen is the uneven distribution of seasonal rainfall across the country due to climate change, soil erosion, and environmental degradation, leading to the loss of fertile topsoil. This directly affects the main source of income for rural Yemenis, who make up 70% of the country's population of over 30 million.

In rural areas, women and girls are particularly affected in achieving food security as they bear the responsibility of fetching water from distant locations, often without access to clean water, which is one of the major difficulties they face. Moreover, obtaining household gas presents challenges, compelling women to collect firewood from distant areas. They often navigate mountainous terrain and rugged roads to acquire fuel. This poses a challenging situation, but it also makes women inspiring leaders, setting an example of perseverance in striving for a dignified life.

Furthermore, education plays a pivotal role in increasing opportunities for rural girls to acquire new knowledge and advanced methods that assist them in establishing small projects alongside their routine work. This ensures an increase in income and enriches their time for their own benefit.

### Solutions & Recommendations

Yemeni women in rural communities encounter multiple difficulties and challenges. In response, various international organizations, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), are actively seeking sustainable solutions to alleviate the adverse impacts of water scarcity and address these challenges.

The program has implemented plans to collect rainwater, build irrigation channels and networks, utilize floodwater for irrigation, support integrated water management practices, and rehabilitate deteriorating agricultural lands. In 2021 alone, the program supported the rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities in the cities of Aden and Mukalla, benefiting over 130,000 people, with 51% being women.

Additionally, the Emergency Crisis Response Project (ECRP) in Yemen, supported by the World Bank, has rehabilitated irrigation channels and agricultural terraces, constructed flood protection walls benefiting approximately 40,000 women. The program has also assisted around 3,100 families in establishing household gardens, benefiting about 1,500 women. Moreover, it has provided cash-based nutrition services to over 275,000 women and 404,000 children.

On the other hand, raising awareness in the community about the importance of women's roles in rural areas is crucial to assist and support them within their families and collectively drive development forward. Conducting training programs or vocational courses that ensure their learning of ways to benefit from cottage industries, encouraging them to pursue further education, and enabling them to access information from the Internet or awareness campaigns in rural areas through brochures and publications are essential steps.

Yemeni women in rural areas dig through solid rock to provide for their families. By working together alongside their male counterparts, communities can create opportunities for both genders to contribute to food security.





# Impact and Consequences of Malnutrition on Women

*The nutritional situation of women of childbearing age in Yemen is a grave concern, with no improvement in their nutritional status since 1997. Shockingly, a quarter of these women suffer from malnutrition, posing significant risks to their pregnancies. According to a recent statement by UNICEF, malnutrition in mothers increases the likelihood of pregnancy-related complications such as obstructed labor, stillbirth, low birth weight, and postpartum hemorrhage.*

By: Hanan Hussein  
Women in Development and Peace

This issue is not limited to Yemen alone; malnutrition affects women worldwide. In fact, the World Food Program (WFP) estimated that in 2021, approximately 1.2 million pregnant or breastfeeding women in Yemen are afflicted by severe malnutrition, an advanced form of the condition that can even lead to death. There are several factors that can contribute to malnutrition among women in Yemen, the most prominent of which are:

**Poverty:** According to a 2023 statistic from the World Bank, between 71% and 78% of Yemenis suffer from poverty, making it difficult for families to afford food. The International Organization for Migration (IOM), a United Nations agency, has warned of the rising poverty rate in Yemen, which now affects nearly 26 million people. The organization stated in a tweet on the X platform (formerly Twitter), "Seven years of conflict in Yemen have left around 25.5 million people below the poverty line, out of a total population of 30 million." It added, "The conflict has displaced more than 4 million Yemenis."

**Conflicts and successive crises:** The ongoing conflicts in Yemen have disrupted food supply chains, in addition to causing food prices to rise, making it difficult for families to obtain food.

**Climate change:** This has led to changes



in weather patterns, resulting in a decrease in agricultural productivity for many families, causing significant malnutrition among women and children.

## Prominent Health Effects of Malnutrition in Women

There are many health effects that Yemeni women suffering from malnutrition may experience, the most prominent of which is a decrease in fertility. This is what Dr. Noha Al-Ariqi explained, saying, "Malnutrition may lead to a decrease in fertility in women, which may affect the low number of individuals in society."

She added, "In addition to increasing the risk of diseases, including infectious diseases and

cardiovascular diseases, there are growth and developmental problems in newborns, such as growth retardation and decreased intelligence."

## Projects Proposed to Address Malnutrition

Many organizations have launched numerous projects and initiatives to address malnutrition among women and children throughout Yemen. One such project was launched in Aden in February 2020, and it provided employment opportunities for women in preparing sandwiches. All the components of the lunch meals they prepared were sourced locally, supporting local markets."

The sandwiches are very important in improving the overall nutrition of children, as

they provide them with half of their daily calorie needs. WFP plans to expand its project to include other parts of Yemen.

UNICEF has made great efforts to combat malnutrition, including supporting the treatment of severe malnutrition cases in 4,465 primary health care facilities and 34 therapeutic feeding centers. The organization also launched a call in 2022 to obtain \$120 million for its nutrition programs, as the urgent needs in this regard amount to \$60 million, enabling UNICEF to respond continuously to the nutrition crisis in Yemen.

## Solutions to Improve the Nutritional Situation of Women in Yemen

Nora Ataa, a general practitioner, confirms

that the most prominent solutions to improve the nutritional situation of women are:

Improving access to food, such as food relief programs and agricultural development programs, to ensure that women get the food they need.

Establishing educational and awareness programs to promote the importance of nutrition among women. This includes nutritional education programs on radio and print publications, in addition to school nutrition programs.

Implementing primary health care programs, family planning initiatives, and maintaining continuous medical follow-up. These measures aim to mitigate the detrimental effects of neglect from suffering from malnutrition, which can lead to death.

# The Peril of Malnutrition Among Women in Yemen

*Malnutrition is a pressing global issue that significantly impacts millions of women worldwide, making it a major concern for organizations dedicated to women's health and community development.*

By: Alia Mohammed  
Women in Development and Peace

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines malnutrition as a condition characterized by deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in energy and nutrients within an individual's diet. This problem manifests in four main subtypes: wasting, stunting, underweight, and micronutrient deficiencies. The consequences of malnutrition are severe, as it can rapidly increase vulnerability to diseases and even lead to death.

## Malnutrition

Nutrition specialist Reem Abdullah defines malnutrition as a condition that affects women due to a lack of basic and essential food needed to stay alive."

She adds, "The causes of malnutrition in women are multiple, the most important of which are: consuming small amounts of foods that contain the necessary nutrients to support health, particularly proteins, essential minerals, and vitamins. These nutrients play a role in boosting the body's immunity, affecting both physical and mental health as well as growth."

Reem Abdullah explains that malnutrition increases the risk of anemia, heart disease,

kidney disease, diabetes, cancer, and affects other bodily functions such as movement and vision.

In a related context, nutrition specialist Hani Mubarakoot, a consultant in internal medicine, diabetes, and therapeutic nutrition, says, "The concept of malnutrition encompasses two meanings; one related to deficiency and the other to excess, both falling under the overarching title of malnutrition."

He adds, "Malnutrition leads to a deficiency in various types of nutrients, whether major or minor, such as vitamins, salts, minerals, and trace elements. Obesity and overweight are also malnutrition diseases."

He points out that the result of malnutrition appears from the excessive use of sugars, soft drinks, and lack of physical activity, which causes a disturbance in the amount of energy that enters the body, as well as the amount of energy consumed. Its symptoms include weight gain, increased fat mass in the body, and various complications and effects on the human body.

He continues, "The symptoms of malnutrition are many and depend on the type of element that is lacking in the body. For example, if the body lacks iron, it may develop anemia, and if there is a deficiency in vitamins, the symptoms appear according to the type of vitamin that is lacking. However, the

most prominent symptoms are weight loss, weak bones, body aches, hair loss, in addition to skin cracks and sores, mucous membrane ulcers, and recurrent women's infections."

## Special Nutrition

UNICEF stated in its report on maternal nutrition, "Ensuring the provision of nutritious dietary patterns and adequate care services for women is of paramount importance to keep mothers and their children healthy."

UNICEF explained that women need nutritional requirements, especially before and during pregnancy, as well as during breastfeeding, as exposure to malnutrition is at its highest level due to increased energy and nutrient needs during pregnancy.

UNICEF has pointed to the factors affecting women's dietary patterns, the most prominent of which include the ability to obtain food and its affordability, gender inequality, and social and cultural customs that may restrict women's ability to make decisions about their nutrition and care.

According to Tarek Al-Samai, a member of the monitoring and evaluation committee for malnourished patients at the WHO and the director of the Yemeni Oasis Center for Therapeutic and Health Nutrition, malnutrition in pregnant women is defined as a deficiency or excess and imbalance in calorie intake during pregnancy. This period is critical to meet the body's needs for major and minor nutrients.

He also pointed out that the nutrition of pregnant women is affected by psychological factors and hormonal changes that pregnant women experience during pregnancy. Pregnant women feel physiological changes during the nine months, as well as loss of appetite and nausea.

Regarding the essential nutritional elements that a pregnant woman needs to ensure hor-

monal balance, Al-Samai says, "A pregnant woman needs a ratio of carbohydrates ranging from 50-65%, 25 grams to 71 grams of protein per day, and 20% of fats. In addition, she needs vitamins and minerals during pregnancy, mainly magnesium, manganese, folic acid, and vitamin B6."

He added, "During the seventh, eighth, and ninth months of pregnancy, pregnant women need psychological rest to stimulate the production of tryptophan hormone and reduce cortisol hormone levels. Pregnant women should consume foods rich in tryptophan, which are found in dark chocolate, small fish, and green leafy vegetables."

Al-Samai emphasized the importance of a pregnant woman visiting a nutrition specialist to develop a suitable healthy diet during the nine months. Additionally, clinical follow-up and evaluation during this period are crucial. This includes assessments such as evaluating the mid-arm circumference and conducting physical examinations. In these examinations, they pay close attention to trimming nails and hair loss, as both are considered early signs of malnutrition and anemia in pregnant women.

On the other hand, Anoud Mohammed (medical assistant) explained that women are more affected by malnutrition than men, and the reasons for this are attributed to social, biological, and health reasons.

She adds, "Pregnant women are particularly at risk of malnutrition, and this threat affects the growth and health of the fetus in the future. Malnutrition in women may also affect the health of the child in the first years of life."

She pointed out that weight loss in pregnant women increases the incidence of birth risks and complications, which include obstructed labor, subsequently raising the rate of deaths.

She emphasized that improving dietary patterns for women, their access to nutrition

services, and enhancing nutrition and care practices before and during pregnancy, as well as during breastfeeding, are among the most important factors that have an impact on the health and safety of the fetus's growth.

## Prevention and Protection

Regarding the most important methods of prevention to avoid malnutrition, Hani Mubarakoot says, "We can protect ourselves from malnutrition by consuming essential and diverse nutrients in accordance with the recommended dietary allowances based on age groups. Whether it's in the stage of adolescents, puberty, pregnancy, or childbirth, or later during menopause. Adhering to these guidelines helps prevent both excess and deficiency, enabling the body to obtain the necessary nutritional allowances from all nutrients."

In his talk, he points to the required servings that should be provided to pregnant women, including dairy, proteins, starches, fruits, and vegetables. He emphasizes the importance of a pregnant woman getting four servings of dairy daily and consuming five to six servings of proteins.

He continues, "Regarding starches, they should be consumed from seven to ten servings, along with two or three servings of fruits and vegetables. Attention should also be given to the fat intake, which can be obtained from natural oils such as sunflower oil, corn oil, olive oil, or sesame oil."

On the other hand, Anoud Mohammed believes that the treatment of malnutrition depends on its severity due to the infection. She explains that dietary modification is the primary treatment for malnutrition. In cases where there is an inability to eat, medical solutions and nutritional supplements are capable of supporting the therapeutic stage of malnutrition.



# Achieving Food Security for Women in Yemen: Challenges and Solutions

*Proper nutrition is vital for all individuals, and women have a pivotal role in ensuring it for themselves and their families. Nonetheless, women in Yemen encounter formidable obstacles in attaining sufficient nutrition, primarily due to various factors impeding their access to essential food resources.*

By: Hebah Mohammed  
Women in Development and Peace

## Women in Yemen Face Economic Challenges in Securing Adequate Nutrition

The country has experienced a suffocating humanitarian crisis, with conflict being a major cause of worsening poverty and food insecurity. Many women suffer from family disintegration, loss of income, and threats of violence, hindering their ability to provide sufficient nutrition for themselves and their families.

According to Hayat Al-Kaina'i, the head of the Yemeni Women's Union in Ibb, women in Yemen face social, cultural, and economic challenges that negatively impact their ability to secure sufficient nutrition. Many women face cultural biases related to women's roles in society, decision-making, and unfair distribution of resources, limiting their food security.

Social specialist Bushra Al-Shaddadi also points out that Yemeni women face numerous challenges in ensuring food security for themselves and their families due to various negative factors, including the difficult economic situation in the country.

Al-Shaddadi further explains that Yemeni women struggle to find suitable employment opportunities, increasing the challenges of achieving food security. The lack of support and guidance from relevant authorities regarding food security is another factor hindering their ability to achieve sustainable food security for themselves and their families.

Al-Shaddadi explained that the Yemeni woman faces difficulty in obtaining suitable job opportunities, which increases the challenges of achieving food security. The lack of support and guidance from relevant entities regarding food security is another factor that hinders her ability to achieve food sustainability for herself and her family. Yemeni families, especially in rural areas, have shifted from a lifestyle based on agriculture and livestock to a consumption-based lifestyle, which leads women to rely on vendors to meet their nutritional needs, reducing their ability to secure food for their families due to low income and high cost.

Challenges increase when it comes to pregnant and breastfeeding women, as malnutrition and lack of healthcare harm their health and the health of their children. Women in Yemen also suffer from restricted access to adequate healthcare and appropriate health information, exposing them to high health risks and affecting their ability to secure sufficient nutrition for themselves and their children.

The significant increase in food prices has greatly affected women and their ability to provide sufficient nutrition for themselves and their families. The shortage of food supplies and the high cost of transportation and distribution means that women face difficulty in obtaining essential food at reasonable prices.

Social and economic inequality in Yemen has led to the spread of poverty among women, affecting their ability to access and secure sufficient food. As a result of conflict and security tensions, many wo-



men in Yemen face difficulty in accessing humanitarian aid and food programs. Food assistance, school feeding, and training programs are not adequately available or distributed equitably, affecting women's ability to secure sufficient nutrition.

## Women's Challenges in Yemen: Malnutrition and Dedication to Care

Amid the harsh conditions faced by women in Yemen, they encounter significant challenges that affect their health and well-being. One of these challenges is malnutrition. Nutrition specialist Ansam Adil states, "Pregnant and breastfeeding women, as well as children, face heightened risks of malnutrition, vitamin deficiencies, and essential mineral deficiencies attributed to the challenging circumstances they endure."

Furthermore, Yemeni women consistently make sacrifices for their families, facing economic crises while providing full care for their households. This extreme dedication makes them vulnerable to sacrificing their own well-being to ensure food for their children. This, in turn, deteriorates their health and affects their ability to carry out daily tasks and contribute to society.

According to the World Food Program, over three million women and children in Yemen require special support for the prevention and treatment of malnutrition.

Nagwa Abdallah Al-Aadhi, a regional trainer in women's rights and civil society organizations, explains that before the conflict in Yemen, women faced few challenges in securing food as men typically took responsibility for this.

However, with the conflict and worsening economic and social challenges, women's situation has become more complex. Securing food and relying on food aid from international organizations has become one of the biggest challenges they face. Unfortunately, some women are forced into illegal work, or to send their children to work on the streets or beg in order to make ends meet.

Many restrictions are imposed on women's work in Yemen, hindering their ability to achieve full economic independence and participate effectively in economic and political life. These constraints stem from social and cultural traditions that limit wo-

men's freedom in choosing their jobs and participating in the labor market.

The educationalist and former General Manager of Women's Development Department in Ibb Governorate, Anisa Al-Bareed, states, "Throughout history, Yemeni women have faced various challenges, whether they were economic, social, political, or cultural, and have struggled to overcome them. However, the current situation in Yemen has greatly hindered and frustrated them, as well as men. This has increased the burden on women to obtain the minimum necessities of life (primarily food), but their natural and acquired strength and resilience have enabled them to continue and endure hardships."

The current crisis in Yemen has pushed most women into the labor market to provide the minimum living standards for their families. While women in Yemen play a crucial role in securing their family's needs, many face difficulties in finding employment opportunities, leading to unemployment or unstable, low-paying jobs. This situation presents a significant challenge for women, affecting their ability to provide for their families and improve their livelihoods."

## Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in Yemen

Many women in Yemen suffer from malnutrition and low health awareness due to poverty and overall economic hardship. Additionally, they face difficulties in obtaining sustainable income from their jobs or personal projects. Improving this situation requires raising awareness and providing support for empowerment projects that contribute to achieving economic independence. Sayyaf Al-Asadi, President of the Goodwill Ambassadors Foundation, pointed out that women in Yemen face several challenges that hinder their economic empowerment, including low health and nutritional awareness, lack of education, difficulty in finding suitable employment opportunities, and challenges in securing the necessary financial resources to start their own projects.

As a result of many women in Yemen suffering from malnutrition and lack of essential vitamins and minerals, which have affected their health and ability to work

and contribute to society. Efforts have been made to provide appropriate healthcare and nutritional supplements for breastfeeding mothers and needy children. Special workshops have also been established to provide women with fabric and sewing tools to learn sewing skills, as well as establishing confectionery, embroidery, and dish-making workshops, providing essential materials and necessary training for women to develop their skills and turn them into sustainable employment opportunities.

Anisa Al-Bareed believes that increasing employment opportunities and improving the economic conditions for women in Yemen is essential, requiring support for women in developing and educating their skills, providing sustainable and fair employment opportunities, and promoting entrepreneurship and economic empowerment for women.

## Proposed Solutions

In light of these challenges, it is essential to provide adequate support for women in Yemen to improve their ability to ensure food security for their families. This requires enhancing the overall economic situation, providing suitable employment opportunities, and offering necessary support and guidance regarding food security and healthcare, as emphasized by Sayyaf Al-Asadi. He stressed the importance of working together to address the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, providing necessary support to affected women and families. This support should include enhancing access to dignified and sustainable employment opportunities, providing vocational training, and financial assistance for women interested in establishing small businesses.

Hayat Al-Kaina'i highlighted essential factors for women to lead a dignified life with adequate food, such as providing education and training opportunities in establishing small agricultural projects and business management. Additionally, it will improve their access to assets and production inputs, as well as involve them in all stages of the value chain in vital economic sectors in Yemen.

Al-Kaina'i directed all institutions and entities concerned with women's affairs to build women's capacities in entrepre-

neurship, life skills, technical and vocational training, and handicrafts such as sewing, embroidery, network marketing, accessories and beauty tools, mobile phone maintenance, and other fields.

Al-Shaddadi also emphasized the need to enhance efforts to improve healthcare for pregnant and breastfeeding women. This includes providing counseling, nutritional guidance, appropriate maternal and child healthcare, increased investment in the health sector, healthcare facilities, medical personnel, and comprehensive health awareness campaigns.

She added, "We need an awareness renaissance by various media outlets about the importance of food security and the necessity of investing in the capabilities of Yemeni women and empowering them economically to achieve food security. Local and international organizations, government, and the private sector should collaborate to provide the financial, technical, and training support, and necessary resources to enhance food security and improve the economic situation of Yemeni women."

Anisa Al-Bareed emphasized the need to train and qualify women in various fields to generate income according to their abilities, such as agriculture, industry, competitive sewing, livestock farming, poultry farming, competitive handicrafts, beekeeping, and opening commercial stores, among others. She also highlighted the importance of forming conscious women's associations or unions to organize and manage such projects.

She added that awareness of women's rights and their empowerment in society should be strengthened, along with increasing women's participation in making decisions related to food security. There is also a need to enhance international efforts to support Yemen by providing necessary humanitarian and developmental aid to improve women's lives, ensure sufficient nutrition for them and their families, and secure their well-being.

In summary, collective efforts are crucial to enhancing the economic and social conditions of women in Yemen, offering vital support to tackle food security challenges, and securing a dignified and healthy life for them and their families.



# Yemeni Women Plagued by Malnutrition Diseases, Urgent Interventions Needed

*Malnutrition poses a significant challenge in impoverished and conflict-ridden countries, such as Yemen. In recent years, the situation has worsened, disproportionately impacting women and children. The prolonged conflict, lasting nearly nine years, along with dire economic and living conditions, has led to a scarcity of nutritious food and proper nourishment for many women. Malnutrition, characterized by a severe deficiency in vital nutrients necessary for growth and overall health, poses a grave threat to individuals' well-being and quality of life.*

By: Ahmed Bajoaim  
 Women in Development and Peace

## Malnutrition Statistics

International organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), World Food Program (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and UNICEF have issued warnings about the worsening humanitarian situation and the spread of malnutrition diseases among the community, including women and children in Yemen, due to the ongoing conflict. A report released by the WHO on February 12, 2021, titled "Severe Malnutrition Threatens the Lives of Half of Children Under Five in 2021 in Yemen," indicated that around 1.2 million Yemeni women, including pregnant and breastfeeding women, suffer from severe malnutrition according to the organization's report.

The international report also revealed that the rate of malnutrition among mothers and children increases every year compared to previous years of conflict in Yemen, leading to higher rates of food insecurity and diseases such as respiratory infections, diarrhea, and cholera. The report confirmed that the Yemeni governorates most affected by malnutrition among mothers and children in 2021, where severe malnutrition is expected to exceed fifty percent, include Aden, Sana'a, Al-Hodeidah, Lahj, Taiz, Al-Dhali, and Hajja. Yemen suffers from a severe lack of access to healthcare services and immunization for both children and families.

According to Dr. Ahmed Anina, the director of the malnutrition department at the Public Health and Population Office in the governorate, the number of women suffering from malnutrition in the districts of Al-Khawka and Hays, located in the western Yemeni governorate of Al-Hodeidah, has reached 3,378 women between January and October of the current year 2023. He explained that this number represents only the cases recorded in hospitals and health centers, while the actual number may be higher due to the worsening humanitarian situation in these districts, as well as the wave of displacement in these areas.

The number of women affected by malnutrition at the University of Hadhramaut Family Medicine Center in the Fawa area in Mukalla, during the period from January and November 10 of this year 2023, reached 61 registered cases. Out of these, 28 cases were related to malnutrition among breastfeeding women, and 33 women suffered from malnutrition during pregnancy, according to the relevant authorities in the center. However, the Health Office in Hadhramaut excluded the existence of accurate statistics at the level of the governorate for women suffering from malnutrition, but the office is currently working on identifying the affected individuals, as stated by Dr. Raid Bamakhrama, the coordinator of the nutrition program at the Public Health and Population Office in the coastal area of Hadhramaut.



Nutrition specialist Dr. Wafa Al-Ashwali stated that there are many symptoms and effects indicating malnutrition among women, including loss of appetite, fatigue, discomfort, difficulty concentrating, muscle weakness, increased risk of other diseases, difficulty in wound healing, and other effects indicating malnutrition. These effects are due to the deteriorating economic situation resulting from the conflict that exacerbated the living conditions. The most affected category of malnutrition is women due to several factors, including weak body, exposure to pregnancy, which requires a balanced and varied diet, and then the stage of breastfeeding.

The combination of these factors, compounded by the fatigue and exhaustion experienced by the mothers while managing childcare and household responsibilities, alongside restricted access to insufficient food due to challenging economic conditions, frequently leads to malnutrition. This includes severe malnutrition resulting from hunger, undernourishment, or poor absorption of nutrients found in some foods, despite the availability of the required quantity and elements. In addition to lack of nutrients in some foods that the body needs, and lack of awareness among pregnant or breastfeeding women.

Dr. Wafa Al-Ashwali points out that there are psychological diseases that affect humans, especially women and children, leading to malnutrition, including depression, dementia, personality disorder, anorexia nervosa, digestive system diseases, as well as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, malaria, continuous diarrhea or vomiting. If these diseases are not quickly treated, the patient may suffer from malnutrition, especially in remote areas and displacement camps. The patient's immunity is weak and



Dr. Raid Bamakhrama

not resistant to other diseases, making them vulnerable to fatal diseases, and may lead to death in some cases.

On the other hand, the coordinator of the nutrition program at the Office of Public Health and Population in the Hadhramaut Coast, Dr. Raid Bamakhrama, addressed the reasons for the spread of malnutrition, most notably the limited availability of food crops for many families in our Yemeni society in general, as a result of the economic downturn, high levels of poverty, and the depreciation of the local currency. This has led to a negative impact on daily food intake and its quality in terms of essential and beneficial elements for the body, exacerbating malnutrition in Yemen in recent times, especially among women who endure significant efforts in pregnancy, breastfeeding, and child-rearing.

Bamakhrama emphasized that pregnant or breastfeeding women require a diverse range of nutrients to properly feed their fetus or child, and the lack of

these nutrients exposes both the woman and her child to malnutrition, some of which can be severe and fatal. Therefore, in the difficult living conditions in Yemen, there is a need for food items containing essential elements that can help combat the spread of this disease. Additionally, the continued consumption of a single type of food for an extended period leads to an imbalance in the body's essential nutrients, which is another cause of malnutrition.

Furthermore, he continued to discuss the factors contributing to the high rate of malnutrition among Yemeni women, stating, "After the outbreak of the conflict, the rates of this phenomenon have increased due to the catastrophic humanitarian situation, as well as climate pollution and its impact on drinking water, which has become contaminated due to the aftermath of the conflict in most Yemeni regions that have witnessed armed conflict. The deterioration of the health situation and its declining quality has made the spread of malnutrition rampant and difficult to control at present, especially among women, casting a frightening shadow on children according to international reports."

## Stories

A nutrition doctor, who preferred not to be named, mentioned that a displaced woman from the governorate of Abyan is suffering from malnutrition after her husband, the breadwinner for her and her two daughters, was killed in clashes between warring parties. The doctor quoted her as saying, "We suffered financially after my husband's departure, and we were left with no means. I was forced to work on a farm, despite the young age of my breastfeeding daughter, for a meager amount of money that was not enough to buy our

basic necessities. This forced me to reduce our meals to just one for myself and two for my daughters. After three months of reducing our meals, I fell ill, including anemia and physical weakness."

The doctor continued, "Her two daughters were also not in good condition, suffering from infectious diseases due to the poor quality of food and the lack of access to breast milk, which was deemed unsuitable due to the mother's illness. After seeking refuge in a camp in Hadhramaut, she and her daughters received medical care that partially restored their health. She had been suffering from malnutrition for over two years and is currently undergoing treatment. Meanwhile, her two daughters have improved after receiving healthcare and nutrition, which we can say is moderate in the displacement camp."

In another story, the supervising doctor stated, "Salma suffered from severe diarrhea for nearly two months, leading to a deterioration in her health. After necessary tests and examinations, it was found that she had lost weight below the normal range for the patient's condition, as well as a height difference. These are medical indicators to determine an individual's normal weight, so Salma's condition falls under the category of malnutrition. She is under continuous monitoring by a specialized team. Continuous diarrhea and vomiting are among the causes of malnutrition, and diarrhea occurs due to consuming expired or low-quality food, as most of the available food in the country is of poor quality and expired."

## Solutions

Dr. Wafa Al-Ashwali considers addressing the underlying diseases causing malnutrition as one of the most important solutions to alleviate the problem in Yemen. This involves diagnosing the patient by the treating doctor and generally managing the condition by consuming calorie-rich and protein-rich foods, along with nutritional supplements and calorie-rich beverages as prescribed by the specialist. It also involves ensuring that the malnourished individual consumes light meals between main meals.

In a similar context, Dr. Raid Bamakhrama, the coordinator of the nutrition program at the Public Health and Population Office in Hadhramaut Coast, has identified several factors that can help reduce the incidence of malnutrition. These include improving the economic situation, raising nutritional awareness in the community, providing treatment to affected individuals in rural and remote areas, and ensuring access to medical teams.

Bamakhrama emphasized the significant efforts of various international organizations in Yemen to address the causes of malnutrition, such as providing nutritional supplements like wheat and soybeans to pregnant or breastfeeding mothers for a certain period. This care is often administered through regular check-ups for pregnant and breastfeeding women, especially in displacement areas, camps, or medical centers, with organizations like UNICEF, the WFP, and the WHO playing a prominent role.

At the end of the report, combating malnutrition and its effects on Yemeni women requires rapid and effective interventions to address the significant challenges they face. This includes preserving their health and safety, increasing societal awareness and education about the negative impact of malnutrition on women's lives, as well as on pregnant and breastfeeding women. It also involves improving healthcare, early detection of cases, and unifying international and local efforts to enhance the economic and living conditions of Yemenis while alleviating widespread unemployment, with continued humanitarian support from international organizations.



# Global Aid and Assistance Empower Yemeni Female Farmers

*International organizations play a vital role in bolstering food security for women by supporting and empowering farmers to ensure an ample food supply for themselves and their families. This support leads to increased contributions to agricultural production, encompassing both grains and vegetables.*



By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez  
Women in Development and Peace

Numerous international organizations have partnered with relevant authorities in rural communities across various Yemeni governorates. Their collaboration aims to equip farmers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and resources to effectively raise livestock, thereby enhancing their animal wealth and product output.

The assistance provided to Yemeni female farmers by international organizations is multifaceted. It includes financial aid as well as moral support through workshops, activities, and training programs. These initiatives are designed to equip women with diverse experiences, enabling them to become active contributors and participants in building a safer future for their families and communities.

## Organizations' Reports

According to a report published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on April 9, 2023, titled "The FAO Trains Communities in Animal Health to Improve Livelihoods and Economic Situation of Rural Families", 50 trainees were selected, including women, from different directorates in Al-Hodeidah, Amran, and Dhamar. Among them were farmers and those interested in animal health, as part of a training program aimed at equipping them with skills to become effective animal health workers in their communities.

This training program lasted for 36 days, including 20 days for the theoretical aspect, and the remaining days for the practical aspect, which involved field visits to villages in Sana'a Governorate. The training program was held at the Agricultural Veterinary Technical Institute. The trainees were equipped with various skills, including documenting cases in the veterinary record, diagnosis, determining appropriate medications according to veterinary medicine standards to enable them to preserve animal wealth, as well as training in occupational and personal safety.

The report confirmed that this course will contribute to increasing livestock production by enabling the targeted communities to preserve their animals, emphasizing the importance of animal wealth in contributing to the country's economy, constituting 20% of the total agricultural GDP.

The report mentioned that the focus on animal wealth benefits rural and agricultural communities by providing families with milk, meat, eggs, and other products. Additionally, preserving this wealth enables communities to have a food reserve and avoid food crises they may face.

The report also indicated that the implementation of this course was part of the project "Supporting Livelihoods in Response to the Urgent Needs of Displaced and Host Communities", supported by the Government of Japan and the European Union, as part of the project "Joint Efforts

to Support Food Security and Nutrition in Yemen through the FAO".

## Beneficiaries' Perspectives

In a rural area in Yemen, Zahra Hasan (a pseudonym) lives as a mother of four children and is one of the beneficiaries of support from international organizations. She has received numerous training courses in the proper animal husbandry methods, particularly in the areas of nutrition, health, and safety, ensuring their reproduction.

Zahra says she has learned a lot from these courses and now understands the importance of using the correct methods in animal rearing, fattening, and breeding, along with other skills acquired through her participation in the training program.

She adds, "After gaining sufficient knowledge about caring for livestock in a proper manner, my desire to raise animals has increased. With great enthusiasm, I decided to buy many goats and prepared a place for them next to the house. I exerted great effort in their upbringing, and now my children and I drink the milk and eat the meat."

She continues, "In addition to being a source of food for my family, they also provide us with income through their sale. Many families have come to realize the importance of animal wealth and how it contributes to securing food for individuals. As a result, many citizens have returned to livestock farming after having abandoned this profession."

On the other hand, Jameela Sa'eed, another beneficiary of the support provided by organizations to farms in Yemen, recounts that she and other women from her village have been trained in animal husbandry. She mentions the various aspects of the training, including poultry breeding methods that ensure their reproduction.

Sa'eed says, "The training was not limited to that; it also covered methods on raising goats with minimal cost and maximum benefit, and techniques for cultivating specific seeds and methods for their reproduction."

## Experts' Perspectives

Farag Al-Shira, the Field Guidance and Plant Protection Manager in Abyan, states, "Many international organizations have played a significant role in supporting farming, such as the FAO, which has supported numerous agricultural associations and empowered women by educating them about animal husbandry principles, dairy production methods, and industry techniques."

Regarding the support that international



Ali Mahfooth Abu Musharra

organizations can provide to female farmers, Al-Shira explains, "Equipping women with skills and experience opens up income sources to help them meet their livelihood needs. It also enables them to undertake impactful projects, such as labor-for-work initiatives, which have significantly affected the completion of various tasks. This has resulted in a positive impact on farmers' lives, such as clearing irrigation channels from trees and shrubs."

Gawa Abdulilah Al-Wazeer, who owns a dairy and its derivatives project, emphasizes, "Agriculture and animal husbandry are the most crucial fields for Yemeni women, and greater efforts in advancing these activities have contributed to the renaissance of food processing."

She adds, "International organizations should support them by providing livestock or poultry, and appointing animal husbandry specialists to oversee their activities to prevent livestock mortality or disease outbreaks."

She continues, "My sister has greatly assisted me in my project as she is knowledgeable in animal husbandry. Some people seek her expertise to select animals and supervise them from the beginning, providing suitable feeding methods, helping to procure appropriate treatment if they fall ill, as well as offering guidance and advice to improve animal husbandry practices."

She further adds, "It is the responsibility of organizations to educate farmers on proper crop cultivation methods, emphasize the importance of agriculture for communities and its role in achieving self-sufficiency. Encouraging female farmers to focus on agriculture and animal husbandry contributes to increasing their activity in these fields."



Gawa Abdulilah Al-Wazeer

Ali Mahfooth Abu Musharra', a farming guide, says, "Supporting female farmers in Yemen can increase their contribution to food security by introducing high-quality livestock breeds to produce meat, milk, eggs, and other animal products."

Musharra' continues by emphasizing the importance of training female farmers in modern methods to increase production and reduce costs, including the use of natural pesticides and organic fertilizers in both agricultural and animal aspects. He adds that international support for Yemeni farmers from organizations can encourage them to focus on home gardens, which contribute to self-sufficiency and provide necessary support to ensure the continuity of these green spaces at home.

Musharra' also highlights the necessity for international organizations to provide livelihood essentials like food, financial support, and improved access to education for their children. This becomes particularly crucial in light of escalating living costs and mounting unemployment rates.

He emphasizes the importance of empowering female farmers in various skills, including food processing and animal health, particularly in areas focused on livestock breeding.

Musharra' affirms that female farmers play multiple roles in enhancing food security in Yemen through their diligent work in both plant and animal farming, contributing to the reliance on local agricultural products and thus strengthening food security.

Regarding animal production, rural women working in agriculture are responsible for raising animals and poultry, and feeding them to obtain meat, milk, and eggs, thus

enabling reliance on local food industries. These efforts undertaken by women in Yemen serve as additional measures to combat food insecurity.

Musharra' emphasizes that rural women without agricultural land continue to contribute to food provision by working for landowners on a daily wage. This enables them to purchase feed and necessary treatments for their animals.

The majority of women in rural areas rely on animal husbandry to provide food for their children, particularly dairy products, meat, and eggs, as well as to secure a source of income.

## Communities in Need for Organizations' Support

Rashid Muhammed, a farmer from the governorate of Raima, highlights the significant struggles faced by rural women in numerous parts of Yemen where support from organizations has yet to reach. In areas such as Bakal area in Mazhar district, women undertake various agricultural tasks, caring for crops and livestock without any economic return. He adds, "Women start their day early, traveling to remote areas to fetch animal food, enduring hardships throughout the year with little benefit in the form of limited fat and milk that does not suffice for their families."

Rashid continues, "The same goes for crop cultivation; it starts with plowing the land, then sowing the seeds, which takes seven months to become crops. Once they grow, women take care of the crops every day. They lose comfort and endure a lot of fatigue. At the end of the season, they only get a small amount of grains, which is not enough to cover the cost of hiring a traditional ox for plowing the land, or the laborers who helped in some stages of the cultivation."

Rashid addresses the most pressing agricultural needs in their region, saying, "Our land is fertile and suitable for all kinds of agriculture, but it has not been properly utilized. We need agricultural guides, seeds and seedlings, financial support to encourage farming, and the implementation of irrigation projects through solar energy systems, as well as the establishment of supportive organizations."

Support from international organizations remains crucial for Yemeni female farmers, especially after losing attention from official authorities that have become incapable of providing services to their citizens due to the destruction caused by years of conflict in the country.



# Food Insecurity in Yemen: Displaced Women Hit Hardest

*In 2018, Sakina Naji fled from Al Hodeidah Governorate when conflict reached the airport near her home. Along with numerous families leaving the city for different governorates in the country, she traveled to a district in Taiz Governorate where her father's residence is located.*

**By: Yasmine Abdulhafeez**  
 Women in Development and Peace

“We fled with nothing but the clothes on our backs, abandoning our homes, possessions, and means of livelihood. Death loomed in the form of gunfire and explosions that plagued the city at that time. Our only concern was how to survive and shield our children, so we sought refuge in displacement camps in search of safety,” Sakina recalls.

Sakina Naji, a mother of four daughters and a son, recounted her struggle to receive assistance from international and local organizations dedicated to displaced families. She stated that throughout her displacement period, she only received one basket of aid.

«When we fled, I had only a small amount of money with me, which we had saved for years. My husband was forced to leave his job after a shell landed in front of his workplace before we fled. Since then, we have been living in dire financial conditions, as it was our only source of income,” Sakina explained.

She went on to describe the worsening living conditions her family has experienced since being displaced. “We can no longer afford the same nutritious meals we used to eat. Our breakfast now consists of bread and tea, and rice is a luxury we rarely have. We often have to make do with porridge,” she said.

Sakina also mentioned that even after her husband and some family members returned to work in Al Hodeidah, their situation did not improve. “The conflict has severely impacted the sources of income for many residents, leading to a decline in businesses and causing widespread suffering among families. The most my husband and children can afford is flour, sugar, and oil. Our lives have changed for the worse,” she concluded.

Sakina revealed that in the area where her family sought refuge, she had no choice but to work in the fields alongside her daughters for larger landowners. This was done in exchange for a meager daily wage or a small amount of grains or firewood, all in an effort to improve their living conditions and ensure enough food for their family. She emphasized that this is a common reality for many displaced women in various cities and regions. “We have shouldered additional burdens



to meet our basic needs, which has taken a toll on us psychologically and socially,” she added.

## Official Role

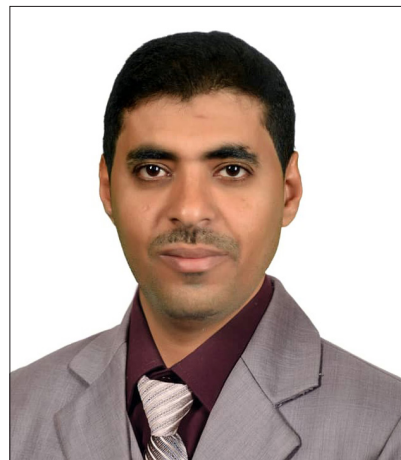
Mohamed Radman, General Coordinator of the Displaced – Taiz, expressed his concern about the lack of response from humanitarian agencies. He stated that despite their efforts and appeals, only 15% of the needed support has reached displaced families, particularly women.

He emphasized that these families lack basic necessities such as food, medicine, and shelter materials. Furthermore, he highlighted that humanitarian aid is only reaching them to a limited extent in certain areas.

Radman believes that effective communication with humanitarian organizations is crucial in addressing these challenges and that implementing development projects, such as vocational courses and workshops for women, will empower them to support themselves and their children during displacement.

In contrast, Mohammed Al-Saeedi, Director of Camps Management, Executive Unit, Ma'rib, highlights the numerous challenges facing women in displaced persons camps across Yemen. He emphasizes the impact of funding shortages, which disproportionately affect women, as many families in displacement sites rely on them.

In an interview with Women in Development and Peace Newspaper, he states, “Official agencies, in collaboration with humanitarian partners, are exerting significant



**Mohammed Al-Saeedi**

efforts to address all the issues confronting displaced women, including implementing interventions and empowering them through economic empowerment programs. This includes providing skills training to enable them to find employment and generate income.»

Al-Saeedi also underscores the distribution of sewing machines to many displaced women in Ma'rib Governorate, enabling them to support themselves, as well as other livelihood projects such as animal husbandry, baking, and hairdressing, along with the establishment of stores for them.

## International Estimates

The ongoing conflict in Yemen has resulted in the displacement of millions of people, with over 4 million Yemenis forced to flee their homes, including more than 900,000 in Ma'rib alone.

Displaced individuals in Yemen

are facing significant challenges, including shortages of food, shelter, and healthcare services. Humanitarian organizations and partners are working to provide life-saving assistance to those in need.

A report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) titled “Yemeni Displaced Persons Due to Conflict Face the Specter of Famine,” published on December 11, 2020, revealed that approximately 40% of displaced families struggle to access enough food, with 37% not consuming an adequate amount due to a lack of income sources.

This has left many vulnerable and at risk of food insecurity, particularly displaced women who are exposed to various psychological and social factors due to their living conditions.

## Psychological Effects

Psychological effects have also impacted women due to the lack of food security for them and their families. Afrah Al-Ariqi, Head of the Psychology Department at the Faculty of Arts, University of Al Hodeidah, explains, “Displacement generally affects the lives of displaced women, especially in terms of food security. Displacement leads to the loss of livelihood sources, as individuals are forcibly removed from their original homes. This situation often results in an inability to secure basic life necessities such as food, drink, safe housing, and job opportunities. This is especially challenging for families that relied on traditional crafts and professions

such as agriculture and fishing in their original homeland.»

She further notes, “There are numerous psychological effects associated with displacement, especially for displaced women, who are among the most affected by the consequences of displacement. These effects include fear of the future, anxiety, sadness, despair, diseases, suicide attempts, depression, and poor psychological compatibility and adaptation.»

To mitigate these effects, Al-Ariqi suggests various proposals such as providing social and psychological support to displaced women to improve their mental health, economically empowering them to enhance their livelihoods, and raising awareness to improve their social adaptation skills with the host community.

Psychologist Ali Al-Kibsi highlights the multitude of psychological effects experienced by displaced women, including instability in both their mental health and family dynamics, heightened feelings of anxiety and tension, and increased susceptibility to developing psychological illnesses, particularly among women who are more sensitive to such challenges.

Al-Kibsi emphasizes the importance of implementing solutions such as establishing institutions that offer psychological support within displaced communities, creating job opportunities that enable women to secure a source of income for purchasing essential goods, and organizing displacement trips to areas with greater food security.

In contrast, *continue ....page2*



psychologist Milyun Mohammed Al-Thamri asserts that displacement has a particularly detrimental impact on women, children, and the elderly. She points out that displaced women often experience heightened feelings of panic and fear about their uncertain future.

Al-Thamri explains that exposure to distressing news can trigger panic, leading to physical ailments such as chronic stomach pain, irritable bowel syndrome, headaches, and nausea, as well as emotional symptoms like social isolation, profound sadness, and sleep disturbances.

She suggests several solutions to help displaced women cope with these effects, including accepting their new reality in order to adapt more effectively, seeking opportunities for employment or other forms

of productive activity, accessing support services within the displaced community, and engaging in social integration to enhance personal growth, family well-being, and awareness.

According to psychologist Salah Ahmed Bashamakha, the absence of food security for women and their families can have a significant impact on their mental health and overall well-being, leading to various psychological issues such as anxiety and stress. He emphasizes that the lack of sufficient food can result in ongoing anxiety and stress for women, as they constantly worry about providing daily meals for their families.

Bashamakha asserts that prolonged food insecurity can also lead to feelings of sadness and depression, negatively affecting women's

mood and emotions. Additionally, he points out that continuous hunger and the inability to meet basic food needs can impair concentration and mental abilities, making it difficult for women to focus on daily tasks and think clearly.

Bashamakha emphasizes the importance of addressing food insecurity for women and their families by providing sustainable job opportunities and adequate income to meet their nutritional needs.

He also highlights the need for training and vocational education to empower women, enabling them to work and earn independent income. This approach can improve food security and enhance their confidence and psychological independence.

Additionally, he stresses the importance of providing psychological sessions and social support to help

women cope with the psychological challenges associated with food insecurity, as well as the need to strengthen social support through local networks and strong communities to provide emotional and practical resources for women facing difficulties related to food insecurity.

### Social Effects

Sociologist Abdulkarim Ghanem highlights the challenges faced by displaced women in finding sustainable employment opportunities that preserve their dignity, leading to food insecurity for many families.

He emphasizes the loss of traditional protection mechanisms for women due to displacement and the increased burden of performing work with minimal returns, in addition to household tasks, within the context of a conflict economy prioritizing

males over females.

Ghanem notes that despite efforts to find employment, displaced women rarely achieve the welfare necessary to positively impact their personal lives, resulting in decreased food intake for themselves despite being the primary supporters of their families.

He also noted that many displaced women resort to searching for food among garbage or engaging in marginal work, such as collecting plastic waste, instead of pursuing education or more stable employment.

There is a pressing need for greater efforts to improve the situation and livelihoods of displaced women. It is crucial to protect them from psychological harm resulting from the suffering they face, considering that they are the most affected within the displaced community.

# Youth Initiatives: Essential Steps in Upholding Women's Food Security

*Numerous youth initiatives are playing a crucial role in enhancing food security for women in Yemen. These initiatives implement innovative projects, provide training, awareness, and financial support, thereby improving women's access to food.*

By: Alia Mohammed  
Women in Development and Peace

Collaborating with humanitarian organizations and government institutions, youth initiatives are an integral part of the collective effort to achieve food security for women in Yemen. They offer innovative solutions that enhance agricultural production and improve food accessibility.

Among these initiatives, Al-Asala Wal-Tawasul initiative for Social Development stands out as a significant contributor to supporting food security for women in Yemen. The initiative has distributed food baskets to the most impoverished families, specifically targeting marginalized areas and regions lacking basic services on the outskirts of Aden.

### Awareness & Education

Al-Asala Wal-Tawasul initiative for Social Development has launched a major awareness campaign addressing malnutrition, its symptoms, and causes. Hanan Ahmad, the initiative's president, emphasizes the lack of nutritional aid reaching the outskirts of the city of Aden, where women are in need of nutritional awareness and promotion of dietary consciousness. She advocates for comprehensive community awareness campaigns and educational programs on diverse dietary systems and the inclusion of nutritious and healthy foods in daily meals.

Furthermore, she highlights the importance of organizing workshops and short lectures to educate women on consuming nutritious foods and raising awareness about the significance of balanced and healthy nutrition, which are crucial measures to prevent women from suffering from malnutrition-related diseases.

Given the challenging economic conditions, she highlights the struggle encountered by youth initiatives



in executing sustainable projects focused on enhancing food production and ensuring sustainable food sources for women and families within the community. This becomes feasible only through intervention from organizations to provide financial support, as well as establishing food chains and supplements for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

She also emphasizes plans to ensure women receive sufficient food rations, including the verification of accurate records by relevant individuals in the most impoverished areas, identification of cases in need of food aid, and its distribution

through organizations to ensure fair access to food.

### Qualifying & Training

Sahar Al-Hashmi, a member of the Ihsan Initiative, emphasized that qualifying and training are among the most important roles played by youth initiatives to improve food production and provide sustainable food sources for women and families in the community. She stated, "Youth initiatives provide qualification and educational opportunities for women to increase productivity, enhance income, and improve living conditions. The training received by

women can contribute to their economic empowerment and increased employment opportunities by acquiring new skills that strengthen their leadership abilities."

She added, "Recent youth initiatives have offered training opportunities for women in agriculture, animal husbandry, and food processing through workshops, training courses, and financial support for small food projects."

She confirmed, "Many women have been able to start their own projects, leading to increased employment opportunities and improved food security for themselves

and their families."

### Securing Food

Ali Mohammed, a community activist, participated in several initiatives supporting food security for the most vulnerable groups. He stressed the significance of food distribution projects and extending assistance to needy families as critical measures to enhance the food situation for women. He underscores the vital roles undertaken by youth initiatives in guaranteeing women's access to food. These include offering emergency food aid to women and families enduring challenging economic conditions, ensuring access to fundamental food resources, supporting agricultural projects, and establishing food sources for women.

He stressed the necessity of providing support and funding to maximize the effectiveness and positive impact of such projects, which achieve food security for women in Yemen.

### Challenges & Difficulties

Regarding the most important challenges and difficulties faced by youth initiatives in their endeavors to promote food security for women, these initiatives encounter numerous obstacles that significantly impede the execution of their humanitarian and developmental projects.

Hanan Ahmad believes that many youth initiatives have ideas and projects that serve all segments of society, but they are unable to implement them due to security conditions, economic challenges, and financial constraints.

She says, "Many initiatives face difficulty in obtaining special licenses to operate, in addition to the lack of support and funding to implement small projects; as support and funding are directed to civil society organizations and large institutions and associations."

She adds, "Youth initiatives need support and encouragement from the government, international organizations, and the international community. It is crucial to offer educational and training opportunities for young people interested in community and humanitarian work and providing the necessary funding and resources to implement their projects. This is essential for enhancing food security and ameliorating the economic and social conditions in Yemen."



# The Role of Rural Women in Food Security

*Rural Yemeni women are considered one of the vulnerable groups in society due to unfavorable circumstances, depriving them of access to most available social opportunities. In such conditions, it is not expected that they can provide enough food for their families, and it is essential for them to contribute to national food security.*

**Eng. Fathia Arshad Muhammad**  
 Head of Rural Women Development  
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 Advisor of "Women in Food  
 Security in Yemen" Issue

When analyzing the situation of rural women, the variation between geographical areas and its diverse effects on women should be taken into consideration. However, common features of the life and social conditions of rural Yemeni women can be presented.

Rural women actively and earnestly participate in all social and economic activities, both within and outside the home, bearing the greater burden of public responsibility. Their activities include:

Providing drinking water and purifying it for her family and these require effort and hardship, either by carrying containers of water over long distances or by purifying and filtering it for use. She also prepares and cooks food for the family, and raises and cares for the children.

She raises field animals, sheep, and poultry, feeds them, grazes them, and treats the animals in some simple medical cases, as well as beekeeping and honey production.

Milking and processing milk, and transforming it into various dairy products such as cheese, yogurt, butter, and ghee, with exceptional skills.

Participating in agricultural activities outside the home, such as land preparation, seeding, weeding, fertilizing, irrigation, pesticide use, harvesting, and processing.

Participating in fishing activities, especially in preparation, preservation, and storage through drying and salting processes.

Practicing several crafts using raw environmental materials and transforming them into useful products for herself and her community, such as making bags, baskets, incense cages (pyramid-shaped cages are used to hang clothes and perfume them with incense), and fans. Also, producing ground henna, which is a source of income for many families in henna cultivation areas.

Engaging in weaving, wool spinning, handicrafts, and various types of crafts.

Rural women serve as the household's doctors, preparing simple herbal and medicinal remedies to treat the family for colds, skin diseases, stomach, and kidney ailments. Bedouin women have extensive experience in this field.

Producing cosmetics from oils and perfumes, making incense and its derivatives, which is a source of income for many rural women, as well as pottery making such as pots, dishes, and stoves.

Some rural women benefit from animal waste to produce biogas for energy production and organic fertilizer for agricultural land fertilization.

One of the most important duties for a woman throughout her life, alongside all her other work, is being a mother, and the responsibility of the entire household is her sacred task.

In terms of agricultural production, we find that rural Yemeni women are responsible for food production in rainfed lands to support their families. They are also responsible for livestock rearing, while male farmers take on the responsibility of producing cash crops in irrigated lands.

In addition to agricultural and livestock responsibilities, rural Yemeni women are fully responsible for the household needs of the family. The reproductive role of women remains a major focus for the community and the women themselves.

Apart from field work, household chores, and childcare, rural women also bear the responsibility of fetching water and firewood, tasks that consume a lot of time and energy, especially since water and firewood are usually located far from the village. Yemeni rural women spend about 16 hours daily on agricultural and household tasks.

They also take on tasks that are labor-intensive and time-consuming, especially since most of these tasks are done manually or with simple tools.

One of the priorities for food security in Yemen is achieving self-reliance in at least the main food crops. It is very important,

especially for a country like Yemen, to maintain a balance between economic goals, which consider quantitative economic indicators, and qualitative political, humanitarian, and social goals. In these circumstances, the solutions are inherently political in nature.

## Challenges Facing Rural Yemeni Women

Despite being responsible for specific agricultural activities, women's roles shift to men when dealing with supportive entities. Low income in Yemen is a major reason for the difficulty in accessing food, whether locally produced or imported. This situation will worsen with the implementation of the second phase of the structural adjustment program and economic reform. The cancellation of food support affects the purchasing power of the poor, negatively impacting their already low nutritional levels (child malnutrition is at 30%).

While economic capacity should be prioritized, efforts should be made to achieve a certain level of self-reliance in food security before resorting to importing entirely insecure major food needs.

Women's contribution to agricultural and animal production is not accurately assessed, as their rural work usually falls outside the cash economy and therefore is not included in national surveys and censuses. This has a negative impact on women's status and opportunities in society, leading to all agricultural production facilities being directed to male cash crop producers, neglecting areas within women's responsibilities.

Women use primitive technology, resulting in significantly low agricultural productivity. Additionally, they lack access to good information on animal husbandry or labor-saving technology (rural women spend three hours daily hand-feeding cows).

Rural women lack access to veterinary services, especially considering the rarity of women specializing in veterinary medicine in Yemen. Furthermore, they spend a lot of time and effort providing fodder for animals, in addition to the massive responsibilities of fattening sheep and milking cattle. Some activities seen as unproductive and time-consuming for Yemeni women include manual grain grinding, water fetching, firewood collection, making cattle manure discs, gathering fresh fodder, hand-feeding cows with corn cobs, churning butter from milk, winnowing grains, and manually planting seeds.

The rural Yemeni woman engaged in agricultural production

does not control the means and sources of production; she has no control over land, water, agricultural equipment, credit, and capital. In addition, there are restrictions on her ability to acquire such control. It is rare for a woman to own agricultural land except in areas with large numbers of women.

The lack of women's rights to land ownership deprives them of access to loans, which usually require land ownership as collateral, perpetuating the cycle of women's poverty.

Women have no authority or control over tangible or financial capital, such as water wells, draft animals, agricultural equipment, or development facilities. On the other hand, the husband, through his monopoly of marketing activities, controls the financial and tangible capital, and usually obtains development facilities.

There is no serious attention given to rain-fed agriculture, even though it is responsible for women's livelihoods, even if it is a source of food production.

Men control decisions related to financial matters, including credit, loans, marketing, income distribution, savings, and land deals.

## Proposals & Recommendations

There is a need for cooperation between men and women in facing the challenges imposed by development, in order to enhance the educational and political level of women.

It is essential to officially recognize women's participation in agriculture as a fundamental condition to improve extension services and enhance their capabilities. It is also important to recognize the roles of working women, providing them with extension services while offering practical training and achieving a proper balance between traditional and new skills that generate income for women and help them make good use of this income.

Balancing traditional and non-traditional crafts to improve the quality of products and open marketing channels for women's products.

Ensuring women's right to ownership, as it helps to increase the role of rural women in development, while the lack of guaranteeing this right leads to project failure.

Proposing support for projects implemented in rural areas to reduce the flow of their population to urban centers.

Conducting a study on women in the informal sector and the private sector, and considering the needs of these sectors in the working conditions of women in the

private sector.

Providing female agricultural workers and landowners with appropriate technology to increase their production and reduce physical effort.

Providing women with training in the necessary skills to meet the community's needs, with the necessity of increasing current training operations and professional training in various sectors such as small-scale production projects.

Providing development facilities for women in small-scale production projects in the informal sector.

Providing legal advice to clarify women's rights and organize their personal affairs in the workplace and family.

It is important to focus on agricultural production, livestock, beekeeping, medicinal and aromatic herbs, income generation, and small industries in the villages. There should also be attention to non-agricultural extension by other ministries and relevant institutions, with the importance of coordination with agricultural extension, for example, coordination on literacy with the Ministry of Education and health issues with the Ministry of Health, and so on.

It is essential to provide services for rural women, guide and develop them, with special attention to livestock. Encouraging female students to pursue veterinary medicine is necessary, as well as providing more veterinary services through mobile units. Agricultural advisors should be trained in basic veterinary services to assist rural women in sheep fattening, milk production, and processing to increase their income.

Women must have access to technology to increase productivity and reduce labor, and irrigation projects should also benefit women. Economic, social, and cultural factors related to gender result in rural women being deprived of much-needed agricultural services.

Encouraging handicrafts as a clear productive activity is important.

Integrating women into development projects, rather than supporting projects that marginalize women, is crucial.

Utilizing animal waste through simple rural technology for biogas production for cooking and household lighting is beneficial.

Introducing technology to reduce animal feed loss, protecting animal shelters from predators.

Providing women access to resources and skills for income-generating activities will improve their decision-making within the family.





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# 90.5% Believe that it is Necessary to Enhance Women's Role in Decision-Making and Food Security Planning in Yemen

By: Yomna Ahmed

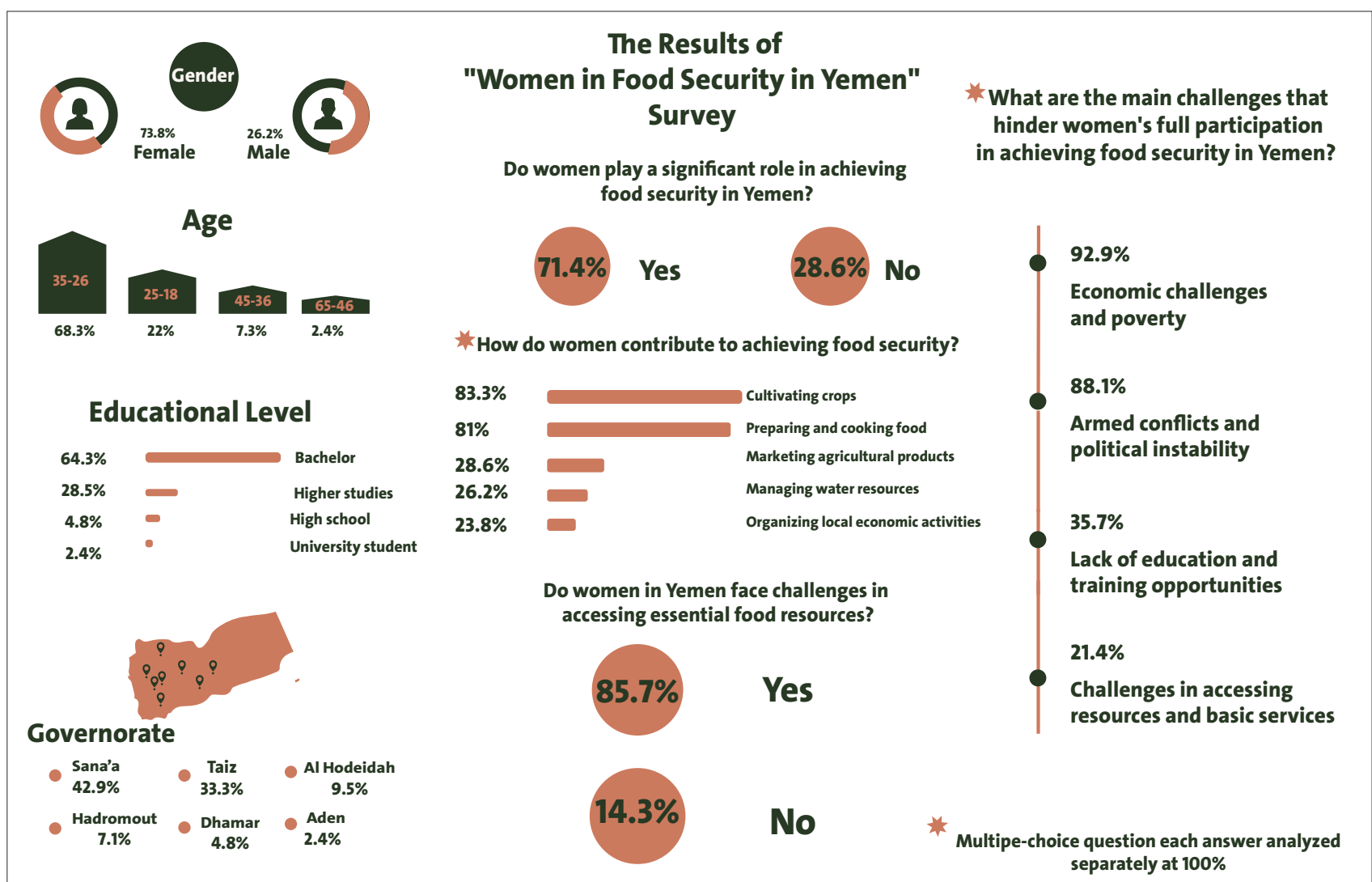
Women in Development and Peace

Yemen, due to the humanitarian crisis it has been experiencing for years, faces significant challenges in securing sufficient food for individuals. It suffers from a severe shortage of food resources and water, leading to approximately 17 million people, equivalent to 60% of the population, experiencing varying levels of acute food insecurity until March 2023. The agricultural sector in Yemen currently only provides 15-20% of the country's basic food needs, exacerbating the situation and increasing the likelihood of famine.

The importance of the role played by Yemeni women in achieving food security in Yemen is further emphasized by the fact that Yemeni women are a fundamental pillar in securing food for their families. They represent the majority of the workforce in the agricultural sector, surpassing the number of male workers. Approximately 60% of those working in this sector are women, compared to only 40% men.

Women in the agricultural sector are engaged in livestock farming by 90% and in agriculture by 75%. This makes the role of Yemeni women in resolving the food crisis and achieving food security extremely important and cannot be overlooked. Therefore, the Information and Opinion Survey Unit at "Yemen Information Center" conducted a survey titled "Women in Food Security in Yemen" to assess public opinion on this role.

The survey was conducted on a sample size of 152 participants, with 73.8% of them being females and 26.2% males. The age groups varied, with 68.3% being young adults between the ages of 26-35, 22% between 18-25, 7.3% between 36-45, and only 2.4% between 45-65.



Regarding educational qualifications, the majority of participants held a bachelor's degree (64.3%), followed by those with higher degrees (28.5%), 4.8% with a high school diploma, and 2.4% were university students.

In terms of the geographical scope of the survey, the sample was drawn from six Yemeni governorates: Sana'a (42.9%), Taiz (33.3%), Al Hodeidah (9.5%), Hadromout (7.1%), Dhamar (4.8%), and Aden (2.4%).

### Main Results

Firstly, 71.4% of the participants in the survey stated that they see Yemeni women as important contributors to achieving food security in Yemen. They believe this is due to several reasons, including\*:

Crop cultivation and livestock care (83.3%).

Food preparation and cooking (81%).

Marketing agricultural products (28.6%).

Management of water resources and irrigation (26.2%).

Organizing local economic activities (23.8%).

Meanwhile, 28.6% of the participants believe the opposite.

Additionally, 90.5% believe that it is necessary to enhance the role of women in decision-making and planning for food security in Yemen, while the remaining 9.5% stated that it is unnecessary to enhance the role of women in decision-making and planning for food security in Yemen.

When discussing the challenges facing Yemeni women in

accessing essential food resources, 85.7% responded with "yes," indicating that they do face challenges. The identified challenges were as follows:

Economic challenges and poverty (92.9%).

Armed conflicts and security instability (88.1%).

Lack of training and educational opportunities (35.7%).

Challenges in accessing basic resources and services (21.4%).

Meanwhile, 14.3% stated that they do not face any challenges in accessing essential food resources.

The participants in the survey believe that supporting women's participation in enhancing food security in Yemen is possible through the following\*:

Providing funding and finan-

cial support for women working in the agricultural sector in Yemen (78.6%).

Focusing on the qualification and training of women in this field (76.2%).

Raising awareness about the importance of women's role in enhancing food security in Yemen (28.6%).

In conclusion, the participants in the survey believe it is necessary to provide sustainable and continuous support for Yemeni women to enhance their role in securing food for their families and contributing to achieving food security and sustainable development in the country.

\* Multiple-choice question, with each answer being analyzed as a separate sample, with a percentage of 100%.