

Impacts of Food Security: A Study on the Refugee Population in Malawi, Africa

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Figure 1. Malawi women running a produce market.

Purpose Statement

Socially and politically empowered gender roles influence food production and therefore food security. The purpose of this literature review was to explore the hypothesis that empowering and educating women and children will improve food security in refugee camps, as well as, throughout the country.

Conclusion

The information obtained from this literature review, supports that education woman and children in refugee campus about sustainable agricultural practices and best business practices:

1. Will enable refugee women and their families to attain improved health determinants.
2. Results in these women often feeding not only themselves, but also their families, communities, and the rest of the country.

Background & Rationale

2.8 million people in Malawi, many in refugee camps, are estimated to be currently in need of food assistance. (World Food Programme, 2016).

Food insecurity remains a major health determinant among refugee populations in Malawi.

Socially and politically empowered gender roles additionally complicate the food insecurity in the country.

Young women and girls are at risk for physical and sexual violence, gender discrimination, and may be forced to discontinue their education or to marry early. (Selby, 2019).

Hypothesis: Empowering and educating women and children in refugee camps may address the need for improved food security and the status and safety of women in these camps.



Figure 2. Taking fish to market.

Methodology & Significance

Resources utilized were:

1. UWM libraries data base
2. Various organizations addressing agricultural issues in African countries including World Food program, United Nations, National Geographic, and UNHCR.

Key words searched were: Refugees, food insecurity, income, food aid, malnutrition, agriculture, and women and children refugees.

Article inclusion: Abstracts and conclusions were used to select articles for inclusion.

Data extraction included information to understand gender roles and the impact of food insecurity in refugee populations in Malawi.

Significance

Malawi hosts 40,000 refugees most of whom depend on food assistance from humanitarian partners. A Joint Vulnerability Profiling Exercise (JVPE) conducted by WFP and UNHCR in November 2018 showed that eight out of ten refugees in Dzaleka Camp are highly vulnerable and depend entirely on food assistance to meet all their food and other essential needs," (World Food Programme, 2019).

Results/Findings

Hypothesis supported:

Empowering and educating women and children, improves food insecurity in refugee camps, as well as, throughout the country.

“When you educate a man you educate an individual, but when you educate a woman you educate a family.” (Lewis, 1995).

The more we educate women and children, the more the information spreads. The more the information spreads, the better off the individuals, communities, and countries are in the long run.

The research shows that if we continue to educate the women and children in the refugee camps about sustainable agricultural practices, as well as, the best business practices, they will begin thriving for themselves, for their communities, as well as for the country. International initiatives remain imperative.

Such steps empower women and children with skills that will be useful once they are resettled outside of the camp.

Impact

It is imperative that we continue to support vulnerable populations and countries in all ways.

We can do this by providing relief, as well as continued research to find new gaps that need to be addressed, such as work force, education, and sustainable farming solutions for refugees.

Discussion

Policy changes to support empowerment of women would:

1. Improve the quality of life and food security in the camps.
2. Support women to turn these skills into a business to provide for their families.
3. Set women up to teach future generations of women, children, and refugees.

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