

Rachel Barr

Children's Dignity Forum

Tarime, Tanzania

Topic Four. SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

1. Choose one or more of the targets for SDG 2. Discuss the current state of these targets in your host country as you see them, related obstacles, and your recommendations for achieving them.

Target that I have chosen: By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

I have met so many wonderful people in Tarime, Tanzania. What strikes me as different from my interactions in Canada is how often my conversations focus on food with my coworkers, neighbours, and community members. I think food is talked about so much partly because it's a big part of connecting and building community, but I think the other major reason is that many people in the community have a complicated relationship to food security and it is something that they are constantly thinking about. What I have learned is there is a number of elements that contribute to food security, the quality of food supply, the ease of use, and the right to use food through purchasing power and claims.

I believe that the narrative that some charity based organizations have created about "the starving child in Africa" is detrimental to the work that has to be done around food insecurity. These organizations have created a narrative that if you just sponsor a child or give money, we can eradicate hunger when in reality hunger and food insecurity is extremely political. There are a number of reasons why food insecurity is extremely politicized but I will focus on a gender perspective. Risks of food insecurity affect women in higher proportions around the globe, including Tanzania. Just recently a woman who lives beside us was sharing a story about what happened in her home. She had bought three chickens to produce eggs to eat and sell, and eventually her family would eat its meat. She believed that this was an income generating asset that she could rely on, but her husband wanted to go on a trip and insisted that they sell the chickens. She asked him not to but ultimately, as the man of the household, it was his decision. Now a major food and income source is gone from their home. She now needs to find other ways to supplement this income that she was relying on. This isn't an

uncommon story, this is a more accurate narrative in Tarime, Tanzania than the starving African child that we see in World Vision advertisements. Inadequate control over means of production and decision making make women more vulnerable to food insecurity and leaves them at higher risk in agricultural production. There are cultural and political structures that limit women's decision making power about access to food and production. Institutionally there are lot of factors that affect women's rights in Tanzania like production based entitlements, inheritance and transfer entitlements, and the right to own land. Culturally like in most places around the globe, men have the final say in the household about decisions and those decisions can be detrimental to the family's food security, particularly because in most cases the woman has a better understanding of the resources needed to keep the family taken care of.

For women in Tarime, Tanzania not having a lot of autonomy in decision making in their household has major impacts on them because agricultural production is often not only their food source but their income for other family costs like health, education, clothing, and other necessary activities. In the markets here, it is always women that are selling the fruits and vegetables and generating income from the produce grown here. I believe it's imperative that we move away from the idea that it is solely poverty that is causing food insecurity and look at the cultural, political, and economic structures that are put in place that block women's right to make decisions about food security and production that effects the well-being of them and their household.