

Committee: Commission on the Status of Women

Topic: Women and Sustainability

Organization: Amnesty International

Protecting Women in Sustainability

Often times people fail to recognize the large effect and importance women have on the topic of sustainability. Women play a crucial role and are powerful agents of change, however, their powers are limited due to strict social stigmas and gender biases that can be found in nearly all aspects of life. Whether it is from food, to the economy, society, education, and even basic healthcare.(1) Additionally, these cultural norms pose an extremely dangerous threat to the well being of women. For instance, women are often seen as impure after they begin menstruating, because of this, there is are very few options for access to sanitary pads or tampons, forcing women to resort to unsanitary objects like overused rags or even leaves. In addition, women do not have access to proper dispensary of these, while they do have incinerators in some countries, these are extremely harmful to the environment and affect the population around it due to the harmful chemicals used to burn the waste. The result being women having to live with disease filled blood.(2)

For these reasons Amnesty International is an active partner for encouraging the development of women's rights in all aspects. We recognize that girls face unique challenges that causes them to be victims of poverty, violence, poor health care, and a minimal education.(3) This is why we have taken action in a multitude of countries with a common goal of improving the quality of life for all women. Observing recent cases, Amnesty International fought against Iran's freedom of speech policy towards women. More notably women journalists such as Homa Hoodfar who was advocating for Muslim women's right to speak, their equality, and their right to work despite being observed under strict Islamic law. Hoodfar was arrested for doing this, however, Amnesty International was outraged by the injustice the Iranians and we took action, abling us to free her from her solitary confinement where she was poorly mistreated by officials.(4)

In regards to the lack of food security for women, Amnesty International remains having an active presence in this conversation. We work towards creating more recognition of the rights of women as well as prisoners who lack basic needs such as access to proper food. Amnesty International also documents the prevalent correlation of the lack of opportunity women receive in the economy to food security, drawing attention to the serious matter.(5)

Looking at the lack of aid women receive on the grounds of basic health, food, and societal views, Amnesty International has devised solutions that can fully address the problems and unique challenges women face. Because of this Amnesty International deems it imperative to institute our Compost strategy. Regarding the Compost strategy, we utilize a technique known as vermicomposting, a much faster and efficient way of composting using worms. Rather than burning or throwing sanitary napkins, more commonly leaves, into the sea, which are incredibly harmful methods to the environment and people, women can dispose their waste in vermiculture

where nutrient rich soil will be produced that can be used to improve small scale farms of which 80% of women work in sub saharan Africa.(6) Amnesty International recognizes that this is not a permanent solution nor can it be enforced on a large scale, although the solution addresses key factors that concern women and sustainability issues such as insufficient ways of throwing away waste as well as food security. Our policy is safe and efficient seeing as earthworms are able to reduce pathogen levels to zero during the composition process, thus ridding of harmful diseases like Hepatitis B and C(7) and it does not involve using incinerators which involve harmful chemicals that cause pollution to the air and has shown to have serious side effects on the population.(8) Using the Compost strategy we can create clean nutrient rich soil to improve food security for women as well as better the dire sanitary situation.

In addition, Amnesty International recognizes women have an extreme lack in economic opportunities in aspects from the wage gap to land ownership. For this reason, we encourage countries to allot a certain amount of land towards women seeking better economic prosperity. This has been accomplished before in certain provinces within India, in which this allotted land acted as a safe haven for women who were widowed or who were victims of gender based violence.(9) Within this land women can choose to run their own farms and live as they please without the fear of being discriminated against. In addition to this, Amnesty International sees the importance in allowing them to be economically prosperous while in this land. For that we strongly encourage giving labor animals as well as crops to increase their income rather than microloans. This solution also works well with our Vermicomposting Policy seeing as the nutrient rich soil can be sold to the women or the women can sell the soil to other farms. Even using the soil for themselves is a viable solution.

Committee: Commission on the Status of Women

Topic: Gender Based Violence

Organization: Amnesty International

Combatting Gender Based Violence

Everyday, women and girls are victims to countless forms of gender based violence. Nearly 200 million women and girls across the globe today have endured female genital mutilation or cutting in some 30 different nations. The majority of these countries often mutilate or cut the girls before the age of five.(10) Along with that, over 700 million women currently alive were once married as a child, 250 million were married before the age of 15. Because of this, girls are often unable to defend themselves against violence from their partner and are susceptible to sexual assault as well as premature pregnancy, another leading cause of death amongst girls ages 15-19.(11) In addition, girls also receive lack of health care, this becomes an extremely prominent issue when looking at the countries that have high sexually transmitted disease rates which are also associated with child marriage and sexual violence towards women and girls. The violence unfortunately does not end there as it estimated that one in three women have been physically abused, forced into have sex, or sexually assaulted in her lifetime. This statistic shows how prevalent gender based violence is in all countries around the world. (12)

Looking at these issues, Amnesty International holds a strong stance in defense of all women and girls who have been victims to gender based violence. In regards to the topic of femicide, Amnesty International has been an active partner in the Ni Una Menos (not even one less) campaign in Argentina. Where the levels of femicide are gradually increasing in the nation women are outraged and taken their protest against the government to the streets. Amnesty International is a constant advocate for this campaign and continuously documents their successes while simultaneously drawing attention to the pressing issue.(13)

In addition, Amnesty International in the past has ran a 16 days of activism against gender based violence campaign in order to increase the awareness of these acts around the world. Our purpose was to show and develop international solidarity with women and victims of violence. One of the campaign's main focus was education as well and a woman's right to actively seek it without being discriminated or abused because of it. In addition it drew attention to issues surrounding education and how gender based violence often impedes on a woman being able to seek a proper education.(14)

In order to help reduce child marriage, Amnesty International proposes the launch of several large-scale cash transfer initiatives, or CTIs, to incentivize families to delay their daughters' marriages. At birth, newly born girls will be given a bond that will only be able to be cashed out after the girls turn 18. And to further ensure the marriage is delayed, these bonds will only be able to be cashed out if the girls is not married. It is important to also note that these cash transfers will be focused towards lower caste individuals or more impoverished one seeing that girls are twice as likely to be married as a child if they live in a poor household or do not have a good education.(15) These cash transfer initiatives are essentially to act as an incentive

by the governments in which they will offer money to individuals or primarily to the lower caste or impoverished. Essentially these transfers will be incentivizing people to delay the marriage of their daughter. Being that these cash transfers are targeted towards lower income individuals as that is where child marriage is most prevalent, this will be cost effective. Although this is not a permanent solution to the issue, Amnesty International believes that the cash transfer initiative is a necessary step that must be taken in order to limit the amount of child marriages.

Amnesty International also recognizes that the allotment of land to women is also a viable solution for gender based violence. Seeing that in India women who were widowed are often more susceptible of violence. By offering land to these individuals where women can live together and create somewhat of a microeconomy. Living in their own land protects women from a multitude of things like discrimination from being on their menstrual cycle, economic opportunity, as well as gender based violence. These micro economies are mainly targeted towards women who suffer gender based violence, lack economic opportunities, or women that have been widowed.

Committee: Commission on the Status of Women

Topic: Women in Education and Employment

Organization: Amnesty International

Improving Women in Education and Employment

Nearly 70 million children around the world today cannot receive a basic education. More than half of these children are girls. There are several reasons for this high dropout rate for girls, some of the main reasons being the distance from the school to their homes, as well as the dangerous social stigma of being impure once a girl begins menstruating. Often times girls stay home from school whenever they get their period, although staying home from school so frequently causes them to become behind in school, their grades to drop, and even drop out of school entirely. (16) In addition, worldwide it is much more common for girls to be responsible with helping their mothers do housework. Some of these household duties involve gathering water, a task that requires long distances to be traveled and can take up to 6 hours each day. Because of this, girls frequently have to drop out of school since they are not able to get these household chores done if they are occupied by school. Thus, the result is having to drop out of school, or they even after finishing their chores, they risk going to school so exhausted that even receiving an education becomes a greater task. (17)

With this, Amnesty International is still an active body advocating for the right to a proper education for all women and girls. One example occurring right now is that of a law in Sierra Leone that prohibits pregnant girls or women from going to school. These girls often went to extreme lengths to conceal the facts that they were pregnant by strapping down their stomachs tightly, a huge risk to their health. After seeing this Amnesty International was outraged and called upon the Sierra Leone government to ensure that they will lift the ban right away so that the girls do not endure discrimination and do not receive a proper education. Amnesty International also demanded that the government needs to protect a woman or girl's right to privacy and to be free from acts of discrimination or gender biased treatment by stating that all schools are not allowed to check or test girls if they are pregnant as it is morally wrong and a huge invasion of their privacy. (18)

In fear of being attacked, as well as bound to societal norm type jobs like traveling for hours and long distances to bring water back to the village, girls are unable to receive basic education and face unique challenges. With this, Amnesty International proposes offering bicycles, labor animals, canvas water tanks, as well as the No Witness Washer mechanism for young girls who begin menstruating. By giving bicycles and labor animals this has proven to cut down the time it takes to gather water. More specifically, a group of 60 girls that faced similar struggles in Eritrea were given bicycles, of those girls, 55 were able to complete secondary school rather than dropping out at the common age of 12. (19) Regarding the No Witness Washer mechanism, it is a washer and a dryer that can be used for pads. The most significant

aspect of the No Witness Washer is the fact that the inside is concealed from the public so no one is able to see what exactly the girl is washing and thus is not discriminated for it.

Regarding the No Witness Washer which is a mechanism that acts as a washer as well as a dryer for pads. This device consists of a medium sized basket, two bowls in order to conceal the insides from the public, a long string, and a unnoticable pouch that will be used for carrying clean or dirty pads to and from school or work. This is an affordable device that can be easily used by all being that included on it are visual instructions that anyone can follow so that there is no language barrier. Another significant aspect of this to note is that girls will not have to resort to dangerous methods such as using leaves or old, overused, and dirty cloths seeing as often times they do not wash them as they are afraid of being seen as impure or unclean.

It is also notable that another prevalent reason girls may stay home or drop out of school is the fact that girls are frequently seen as people who must stay home and do the housework or get water. Because of this girls are unable to receive a basic education. However, Amnesty International believes that we must offer families the same necessities they would receive when their girls would stay home. Though the difference is that the girls would be able to go to school while families received the same aspects. Whether it is water or food, the same actions could be done in the household even while the girl is at school.

1. <http://www.iied.org/why-womens-empowerment-essential-for-sustainable-development>
2. <http://www.mum.org/menhydev.htm>
3. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/women-s-rights>
4. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/latest-victories/good-news-homa-hoodfar-freed-after-global-campaign-iran-ua-13716>
5. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/poverty-and-human-rights>
6. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/am307e/am307e00.pdf>
7. http://www.wastetohealth.com/medical_waste_disposal_technique.html
8. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S019459989670181X>
9. <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-india-landrights-women-idUSKCN11417B>
10. http://www.unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR..pdf
11. <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/facts-and-figures#notes>
12. <https://www.usaid.gov/gbv>
13. <http://blog.amnestyusa.org/americas/5-things-i-learned-at-argentinas-niunamenos-march-against-femicide/>
14. <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/women-s-rights/violence-against-women/16-days>
15. <http://www.icrw.org/child-marriage-facts-and-figures>
16. <https://www.one.org/international/blog/why-are-so-many-girls-dropping-out-of-school/>
17. <https://www.one.org/us/take-action/stand-with-eva/>
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19. <http://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/3-ways-increase-girls-education-eritrea>