

COVID-19 pandemic highlights need to support women and girls internationally

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On International Women's Day, Caritas Australia joins development and aid organisations all over the world in demonstrating support for gender equality and celebrating the achievements of women worldwide.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown more clearly than ever the disparities between men and women internationally, and the vital importance of stepping up to support vulnerable and marginalised women and girls around the world.

Women aged 25 to 34 are 25% more likely than men to live in poverty, and the poverty rate for women will likely increase by 9.1 per cent in the coming year as a result of the pandemic, according to research from UN Women.

Women frequently experience poorer health, nutrition and education outcomes, and are more likely to experience sexual and gender-based violence or early marriage. Although more girls participate in a basic education than ever before, in some regions there remains a significant gap.

"Globally, women and girls continue to face inequality," says Kirsty Robertson, CEO of Caritas Australia. "But human rights can only be achieved when women and girls have equal rights, responsibilities, opportunities and are able to reach their full potential as citizens."

"We work alongside communities to support women and girls in the way that they need to thrive – whether this means providing clean water to a community so that women no longer need to trek kilometres every day, or supporting women to develop ways to earn an income for themselves and their families."

Empowered women are more likely to send their children to school and their children have better health outcomes. When more women work, economies grow. Peacebuilding efforts that include women are also more likely to be durable and effective.

To support women and girls around the world for International Women's Day this year, please make a donation at caritas.org.au.

Caritas Australia is a member of Caritas Internationalis, one of the world's largest humanitarian networks in the world with 162 agencies operating in 200 countries and territories.

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