

## International Women's Week: Supporting Disadvantaged Women Worldwide

March 7th to 13th marks International Women's Week (IWW), a week IDRF is proud to support in order to recognize the achievements and struggles of women in Canada and around the world. International Women's Day (IWD), traditionally celebrated on March 8th, commemorates the economic, political and social achievements of women in the past, present and future. Women have marked this day since the 20th century to highlight their solidarity in the fight for equal rights. Today, many nations across the world celebrate IWD and even mark this day as an official holiday.

In the past century, women have made great strides particularly in developing countries. More women have entered the professional work force, have a right to vote, and have political and economical autonomy. Nonetheless, despite what some may think, women around the world have not yet won the battle for equality. Many women, especially in third world countries, still fight for the right to vote, for the right to be recognized as persons, for a right to equal pay, and for the right to attain political and economic freedom.

Moreover, women –who have been displaced as a result of armed conflict or who have been degraded as a result of poverty –often find themselves frequently exposed to violence, discrimination and intimidation. Coupling this issue is the fact that many women are also often left to care for children on their own where they further face the challenge of providing for their family while experiencing at times systematic discrimination in their community.

IDRF strives to empower women and children through emergency relief and sustainability development projects. In Haiti, IDRF partners are ensuring all earthquake survivors –regardless of race, religion or gender –are receiving medical attention. In Swat, Pakistan, IDRF has supported the establishment of a Maternal, Neonatal & Child Health Center for displaced persons. The project has provided maternity services to expecting mothers when there were none available inside or outside the camp.

In rural Kenya, where women live below the poverty line and are forced to bear the responsibilities of household chores, IDRF strives to empower women and promote livelihood development by training women in business management, savings, leadership and record keeping.

Similarly, in Tanzania, where half the population makes less than one dollar a day, IDRF is providing women with soft loans and business and leadership training to improve their socio-economic standing. Women learn about income generation principles, book keeping, saving, credit management, group management, leadership, gender relations, and HIV/AIDS protection, all of which has allowed them to improve their business and income as well as has allowed them to repay their loans.

Overall, IDRF continues to support young girls and women of all ages around the world by ensuring they have access to education, health care and livelihood development. Whether it means supporting child education in Pakistan or livelihood development projects for women in Guyana, IDRF ensures that the needs of disadvantaged women and children are met through their projects.

You too can ensure that the needs of women, not only in your life, but in an IDRF project dear to you, are not ignored. By simply donating to an IDRF project of your choice, you are empowering women and children and providing them with the support and services they need to overcome difficult circumstances.

Thus, this International Women's Week we encourage you to make a donation in honor of a mother, sister, wife, friend, etc to an IDRF Project.

On behalf of IDRF, we would like to wish you a happy International Women's Day!

Below is a list of projects that focus specifically on empowering women and children. Please note, additional projects can be found in the projects section of our website.

- Tanzania - Women Empowerment Project
- Malawi - Providing Basic Literacy and Livelihood Development Opportunities for Women in Chitipi
- Bangladesh - Post Cyclone Rehabilitation -Livelihood, Food and Markets for Rural Women Entrepreneurs
- Guyana - Scholarship and Tuition Fees for Orphans and Vulnerable Children
- Ethiopia - Strengthening Non-Formal Education in Mekdela

- Canada - Eel Ground School Breakfast Program
- Uganda - HIV/AIDS HBC: Empowering Caregivers
- Palestine - Providing Assistive Devices & Rehabilitation for Children