Pink FoodBank

www.pinkfoodbank.org

Women Empowerment, Food Security, and *Hunger Eradication*

PINK FOOD BANK RESEARCH LAB PUBLICATION. #025
SEPTEMBER 2026



Pink FoodBank

© 2026 Pink Food Bank Foundation.

This publication is available as a PDF on the Pink Food Bank Foundation website under a Creative Commons license that allows copying and distributing the publication, only in its entirety, as long as it is attributed to the Pink Food Bank Foundation and used for noncommercial educational or public policy purposes

pinkfoodbank.org

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary

2. Introduction

3. The Women's Role in Food Security

4. Issues Affecting Women in Nigeria's Food System

5. Successful Women Empowerment Models

6. Women and Food Security Past Policies

7. Recommendations

8. Conclusion

9. References

Executive Summary

Women play a central, often under-recognized role in Nigeria's food systems as farmers, household food managers, and community caregivers. Empowering women economically, socially, and educationally is one of the most effective levers for eradicating hunger and strengthening food security at both the household and national level.

This research journal examines the relationship between women's empowerment and food security in Nigeria, highlighting how hunger relief organizations such as Pink Food Bank, a Nigeria NGO, can integrate gender-focused strategies into their food donation and community programs. It reviews key barriers facing women in the food system, successful empowerment models, and strategic recommendations for advancing both gender equity and hunger eradication together.

Introduction

Across Nigeria, women are disproportionately responsible for household food production, preparation, and distribution, yet they frequently face limited access to land, credit, education, and decision-making power. This gap between women's central role in food security and their limited access to resources represents both a challenge and an opportunity for hunger eradication efforts.

Evidence from across Africa consistently shows that when women have greater access to income, land, and agricultural resources, household food security and child nutrition outcomes improve significantly. This makes women's empowerment not just a matter of gender equity, but a practical, evidence-based strategy for reducing hunger.

This journal explores how Nigeria NGO organizations, including Pink Food Bank, can design hunger relief and food donation programs that intentionally empower women, reviewing lessons from previous interventions and proposing a strategic pathway for integrating gender empowerment into Nigeria's broader food security agenda.

The Women's Role in Food Security

Understanding women's role in Nigeria's food systems is essential to designing effective hunger relief and food security interventions.

1. Women as Primary Food Producers

In many Nigerian communities, women are responsible for a significant share of household and smallholder food production, particularly in vegetable farming and small livestock rearing, making them central actors in local food security.

2. Women as Household Food Managers

Beyond production, women typically manage household food budgets and preparation, making decisions that directly affect family nutrition. Empowering women with resources and knowledge therefore has a direct, measurable effect on household food security and child nutrition outcomes.

3. Women in Community Hunger Relief Networks

Women also play leading roles in informal community support networks, including food-sharing groups and cooperative societies, informal structures that mirror the mission of formal hunger relief organizations such as Pink Food Bank.

Issues Affecting Women in Nigeria's Food System

Despite their central role, women face significant barriers within Nigeria's food and agricultural systems.

- **Limited Land Rights:** Cultural and legal barriers often restrict women's ability to own or inherit farmland, limiting their capacity for independent food production.
- **Restricted Access to Credit:** Women farmers frequently face greater difficulty accessing loans and financial services needed to invest in agricultural inputs.
- **Educational Gaps:** Lower literacy and education rates among women in some regions limit access to modern agricultural techniques and nutrition knowledge.
- **Time Poverty:** Women's disproportionate burden of unpaid domestic labor limits the time available for income-generating agricultural or economic activities.
- **Exclusion from Decision-Making:** Women are often underrepresented in community and household decisions about food and resource allocation.

Successful Women Empowerment Models

Several models demonstrate the impact of empowering women within food security programming.

Women-Led Cooperatives

Women's agricultural cooperatives have proven effective at pooling resources, sharing knowledge, and increasing collective bargaining power, resulting in improved productivity and household food security across participating communities.

Pink Food Bank's Gender-Inclusive Approach

Pink Food Bank's community-centered hunger relief model naturally engages women as key partners in distribution and outreach, reflecting an emerging best food bank practice of centering women in food donation and community resilience efforts. Expanding this approach through targeted training, leadership opportunities, and economic support for women beneficiaries can strengthen both gender equity and hunger eradication outcomes.

Women and Food Security Past Policies

Nigeria has implemented several policies aimed at strengthening women's role in agriculture and food security, with varying degrees of success.

1. Women in Agriculture Programs

Government-led agricultural extension programs have included women-focused components aimed at improving access to training and inputs, though implementation has often been inconsistent and underfunded relative to need.

2. NGO-Led Gender and Nutrition Interventions

Nigeria NGO organizations have increasingly incorporated gender-focused strategies into hunger relief programming, recognizing that engaging women as active partners — rather than passive recipients — improves both the reach and sustainability of food donation and nutrition interventions.

Recommendations

To strengthen the link between women's empowerment and hunger eradication, the following recommendations are proposed for Nigeria's food security and hunger relief sector.

- **Prioritize Women in Program Design:** Ensure hunger relief and food donation programs, including those run by Pink Food Bank, intentionally include women in planning, leadership, and distribution roles.
- **Expand Access to Credit and Land:** Advocate for policy reforms that improve women's access to agricultural land and microfinance services.
- **Invest in Women's Agricultural Training:** Support training programs that build women's skills in modern, low-cost agricultural and nutrition practices.
- **Support Women-Led Cooperatives:** Provide funding and logistical support to women-led farming and food distribution cooperatives.
- **Track Gender-Disaggregated Data:** Encourage Nigeria NGO organizations to collect and report gender-disaggregated data to better understand and address women's specific food security needs.

Conclusion

Women's empowerment and food security in Nigeria are deeply interconnected. Strengthening women's access to land, credit, education, and decision-making power is not only a matter of equity but a proven, practical pathway to reducing hunger and improving nutrition outcomes for entire communities.

Hunger relief organizations such as Pink Food Bank are well positioned to advance this agenda by intentionally centering women in their food donation, community outreach, and program design — reinforcing the link between gender empowerment and lasting hunger eradication in Nigeria.

References

Food and Agriculture Organization. (2023). "The Gender Gap in Agriculture and Food Security."

United Nations Women. (2022). "Women's Economic Empowerment and Food Security in Africa."

International Fund for Agricultural Development. (2023). "Gender and Rural Development in Nigeria."

National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria. (2023). "Gender in Nigeria Report."

Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, Nigeria. (2022). "National Gender Policy."

World Food Programme. (2023). "Gender and Food Security Analysis."

Pink FoodBank

www.pinkfoodbank.org