

JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

Briefing material to use for activities marking International Women's Day and Mothering Sunday on the theme of Justice for Women.

One of the Anglican marks of mission is to seek to transform the unjust structures of society.



JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

There are three main strands to Justice for Women:

LEGAL JUSTICE so women are safe at home and in the community

ECONOMIC JUSTICE so women can enjoy the fruits of their work

SOCIAL JUSTICE so women can get equal access to education, health care and other services

LEGAL JUSTICE

RUTH 2.23 "Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else's field you might be harmed."

Every woman should be able to feel safe at home and in the community. Yet women can be victims of crime on their way to or from work, collecting firewood, getting water, or working in the fields. Just like Ruth was in the verse above from the Bible.

Worldwide millions of women who are the victims of crime often have difficulty in getting access to justice because:

- The courts may be a long way away, travel costs may be high, and they may not be able to afford legal help.
- They may not know their rights.
- Traditional authorities may not recognise women's rights.
- They may fear the stigma or becoming an outsider.

As a result of these barriers, women do not report crime, or do not press charges against their attackers.

UN Women sets out some practical steps to make the legal system more accessible to women and provide access to justice by:

- Improving national legal frameworks, and monitoring progress.
- Trying new ways of delivering legal services, with one-stop shops, outreach services and special courts.
- Making sure that women are involved in the courts and legal services.

You can find lots more information about women and access to justice at progress.unwomen.org



Supported by:

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

WHAT THE CHURCH IS DOING TO PROVIDE WOMEN WITH ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The Church has acted to support women getting access to justice.

You can read Tearfund's report "Silent No More" on sexual violence. It draws from experiences of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Liberia in working for justice for women, and has been an inspiration for action worldwide. It is an outstanding example of the way that women and men in the church, working together can effect change.

The Church in Zambia is bringing together faith communities and justice services to reach out into the rural communities to make sure women know their rights and can get access to justice.

In Solomon Islands the Anglican Church of Melanesia runs an inspirational refuge for women fleeing domestic violence. It adopts a multi-agency approach and works with courts, police and social services to make sure women and their children get access to justice and support to rebuild their lives.

And in Dhaka, the Anglican Church of Bangladesh provides a legal advice service for women, including those suffering domestic violence, by women lawyers who run outreach services at the Church to make it easier for women to attend.



ECONOMIC JUSTICE

RUTH 1.6 "When Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah."

The story of Naomi and her two daughters-in-law Ruth and Orpah has echoes today in the plight of refugee women fleeing poverty and hunger – what Archbishop Rowan Williams has called "the mobility of the vulnerable."

Women are most likely to be poor, hungry and refugees.

A UN report on women and poverty found:

- Households of lone mothers with young children are especially vulnerable to poverty.
- Older women are more likely to be poor than older men in both developed and developing countries.
- In most African countries and a half of Asian countries women's poverty is made worse by restrictions on their ability to own land and other types of property. These restrictions may result from formal or traditional laws.
- In developing countries fewer women than men have cash income, and many married women have no say in how their cash earnings are spent.
- Married women in developing countries, especially in African countries and poorer households, have little say in deciding how the household income is spent.

Economic justice means making sure that:

- Women's work is properly valued.
- Women have property rights – especially in rural areas in developing countries where women produce 80 per cent of the food – and can take decisions about family finances.
- Women have access to finance for income generation and investment for micro-enterprises.

WHAT THE CHURCH IS DOING TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

Anglicans around the world are working to provide economic justice for women.

Five Talents has received acclaim throughout the Communion for its pioneering work to provide economic justice for women by providing them access to finance through micro finance. In many countries they have worked with the Mothers Union. You can read more about the work of Five Talents at www.fivetalents.org

Many micro-finance schemes cater for women in rural areas, for example in Burundi. The Church of Bangladesh provides micro-finance schemes for women living in urban slums in Dhakka.

In Zimbabwe, Anglicans help some of the most vulnerable women, including those living with HIV and AIDS.

women, who may travel to get to a clinic or hospital to give birth, only to find there are no trained staff to assist them.

- Women are more likely to be living with HIV and AIDS: around 59 per cent of HIV-positive adults in sub-Saharan Africa – a total of 13.2 million people – are women.
- Although access to education has improved markedly in the past decade, globally women still lag behind men: more than one in five girls of primary-school age are not in school, compared to about one in six boys.

WHAT THE CHURCH IS DOING TO PROVIDE SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

Anglicans are working to ensure that women can get access to the services they need. In many developing countries Anglicans provide medical services for women, and the Church has a strong track record in educating women.

In Pakistan, Anglicans provide schools for girls, literacy training and healthcare services, including obstetric services, challenging injustices in the wider society.

Southern Malawi diocese is running literacy courses to empower women.

In Uruguay the Church is bidding for funds to start a project to provide early years health and care services for children, with support built in for pregnant women and young mothers who are the victims of domestic violence or who have problems of substance abuse.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

MATTHEW 9 .20 "Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.' Jesus turned and saw her. 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith has healed you.' And the woman was healed at that moment."

Social justice means ensuring that all people share in the benefits of society through access to public services. Yet many women are denied social justice. Like the woman in the story in Matthew's Gospel above, many women still suffer or die needlessly due to poor reproductive and sexual health services.

- More than 500,000 women die each year in childbirth, most of them in developing countries. Only 46 per cent of deliveries in sub-Saharan Africa, where almost half the world's maternal deaths occur, are assisted by skilled attendants. It's a particular problem for rural

