

## The International Day making the voice of rural women heard



***“International days are occasions to educate the general public on issues of concern, to mobilize political will and resources to address global problems, and to celebrate and reinforce achievements of humanity<sup>1</sup>.”***

This year on the International Day of Rural Women (15 October 2021), the United Nations is celebrating the role that rural women play in climate action with a focus on [“Rural women and girls building resilience”](#).

While the world faces climate change and environmental issues, rural women play a crucial part in creating resilience. If it takes the whole population for the world to become carbon-neutral, then measures are needed to reduce the care burden and to better redistribute it between women and men, as well between families and public services, especially in remote villages and rural areas.

Women and girls have suffered the most during the Covid pandemic, especially those in rural areas. In such zones, women play a pivotal role in farming, food security and nourishment. But long before Covid broke out, they had been struggling against gender discrimination. With today's crisis, they require better access to quality health services, medication and vaccines more than ever. And restrictive social norms and gender stereotypes don't help.

Despite this, women in rural areas have been at the forefront of keeping things afloat in the face of the pandemic. This includes undertaking unpaid domestic work and social care, which have surged

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.edmundorice.net/en/why-do-we-mark-international-days/>

with the recent lockdowns. As a result, many of these women suffer from isolation, misinformation and a lack of access to key technology that would improve their situation.

This is why dRural aims to co-develop a digital service marketplace for rural areas, where local businesses can reach new customer segments and people can quickly find a wide range of services, including health-care assistance, energy and electricity. The idea is to foster a flourishing ecosystem to drive economic growth and wellbeing in rural communities. To support women's productive and unpaid care and domestic work, it is essential to advocate for sufficient infrastructure and services.

dRural is organizing a social media campaign on the International Day of Rural Women centred on gender balance data from the four project regions and showing the gender gap in economic and cultural development in rural areas. The campaign's call to action is to make gender balance a real engine for development and growth.

Women are leaders in the rural economy as farmers, wage earners and entrepreneurs. In fact, globally, [one in three employed women works in agriculture](#). Women also collect biomass fuels, manually process food materials, and pump water; 4 out of 5 households [without piped water rely on women and girls](#) for water collection.

Gender-responsive investments in rural areas have never been more critical – they help empower women, drive sustainable growth, improve food security and mitigate climate-change.

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