



5 GENDER EQUALITY



To aim for a society in which women and men enjoy the same opportunities, rights and obligations in all spheres of life.

ABUNDANTVENTURES.ORG

Importance of gender equality

There are 17 UNSDG goals. Gender equality is one of them, gender equality is when everybody has access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender. For example, by having gender equality, everyone is able to participate in voting, including women. Women's suffrage (the right of women to vote in elections) began at the start of the 18th century, but women were only selectively given, then stripped of, the right to vote.

Gender equality has many important points to it. Until now, not all women have equal rights like men. Since February 24, year 2022, more than 600,000, a vast majority of whom were women and girls, have fled their homes and sought refuge in the neighbouring countries, during the Russia-Ukraine war. These numbers are expected to increase significantly, which will reverse the significant progress made on gender equality made on gender equality and women's rights in Ukraine as well as in neighbouring countries. (Although women got the rights to vote again, they lost their right to education very recently under the Taliban rule in Afghanistan.) Gender equality prevents violence against women and girls. It is an essential movement for economic prosperity. Societies that value women and men are generally safer and healthier. Gender equality is a human right, making everyone benefit from it.



Being a volunteer at AV

As a volunteer at AV, we strive to harvest 3000 kilograms of fresh produce and donate it to the Lost Food project as well as other vulnerable communities. AV is co-founded by two women, so by donating to the Lost Food, we are also contributing to their project, "Period Poverty". Period poverty is a suffering for most girls all around the world, contributing to menstrual inequality. "Period poverty affects 1.2 billion girls around the world who are forced to skip school when they menstruate. Girls fall behind and will often drop out of school as a result.", says Suzanne Mooney, TLFP founder. This links back to the goal of gender equality as when the Covid-19 pandemic hit, women lack the access, information, and inputs they need to fight food insecurity and malnutrition. These hunger problems and food shortages are putting additional burden to women as they are already vulnerable to mental health risks to gender-based violence. Furthermore, the UN mentioned, "At the current rate of progress, it may take another 286 years for women to have the same legal rights and protections as men."

(On the positive side of gender equality, the Japanese law already stated that men and women must be paid equally for the same work. Under the new rules, companies must also disclose the ratio of women in management, and the percentage of male employees taking childcare leave. In addition, from June onwards, businesses in Japan must report the pay gap between men and women as a percentage and displaying it on the company website. This creates a huge change to the country as it aims to address Japan's growing labour shortages and boost growth of the company.)

From my experience, volunteering at the farm not only included growing and donating produce but also, all whilst educating ourselves on how to contribute towards food waste. While doing work at the farm, it was realised that most of the food waste happens from the society only wanting to buy produce that look good. I realise that supermarkets do not buy the ugly fruits but rather the good-looking ones. Therefore, the rest of the fruits go to waste. As a statement coming from the founder of The Lost Food Project, "Did you know there are over 820 million people in the world existing somewhere between hunger and starvation, yet there is enough Lost Food to feed all those people four times over?" Through the mindset of "ugly but beautiful", AV has already succeeded in donating fresh produce to the Lost Food project, as well as other vulnerable communities.