

Hunger and poverty go hand in hand



Simon Peter Esaku / World Vision

Uganda: Emmanuel (3), Oscar (1), Harriet (24) and Martin (29) eat orange sweet potatoes. World Vision promotes sweet potatoes as a drought-resistant crop which is highly nutritious and can be sold to increase family incomes.

Hunger

Our bodies need the right amounts of a variety of foods to be healthy and active. The world produces enough food to feed everyone, however every day 795 million people go to bed hungry – that's equal to one out of every nine people.

“What if we were simply to refuse to count the hungry? What if we instead tried to understand hunger in terms of four universal emotions: anguish, grief, humiliation and fear? We would discover, I believe, that how we understand hunger determines what we think its solutions are.”

Frances Moore Lappé

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What are the effects of hunger?

When someone does not get enough of the right foods, they become malnourished. Malnutrition causes the body to slow down its activity, causing tiredness, lack of concentration, lack of initiative and poor immunity.

Tiredness and sickness caused by hunger make it difficult for parents to work to earn money or grow food for their families. This means the family won't have enough food, and the children and parents will keep being hungry. This is called a poverty cycle.

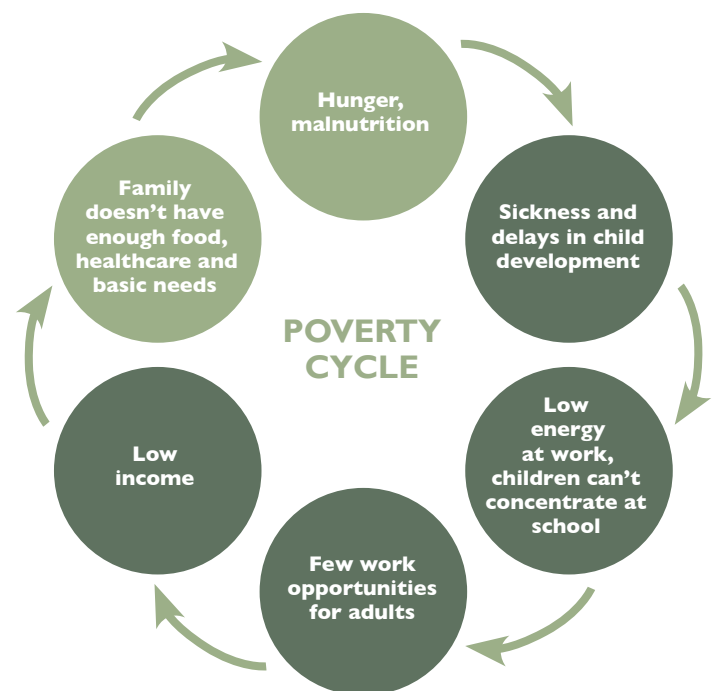
Children suffer the greatest effects of hunger, even if they don't look hungry. When children don't get enough food they feel tired and lack energy to play and learn. They stop growing properly and become stunted (shorter than they should be for their age). Hunger also slows their brain development and learning, meaning they don't reach their potential, which affects their futures. Hungry children become trapped in a vicious cycle of hunger and poverty.

Hunger weakens children's defences against disease. Sick children lose their appetites, and the few nutrients they do absorb are drained away by diarrhoea and vomiting. This means they take longer to recover and are liable to get sick again soon. Common illnesses like measles and diarrhoea become killers when they affect hungry children.

The 1000 days from pregnancy and until a child is 2 years old are the most significant for ensuring correct nutrition so a child develops properly. If a pregnant mother has poor nutrition, the baby develops poorly and could be born with a low birthweight. Sickness and death are more common for babies who were born with low weight.

How many people are hungry?

- Across the world **795 million** people are hungry.
- Hunger causes **45 per cent** of child deaths.
- **One in four** children are not growing properly due to hunger.
- **66 million** children around the world attend school hungry.
- In New Zealand, **14 per cent** of children (**155,000** children) live in poverty that causes them to go without everyday needs such as meat.



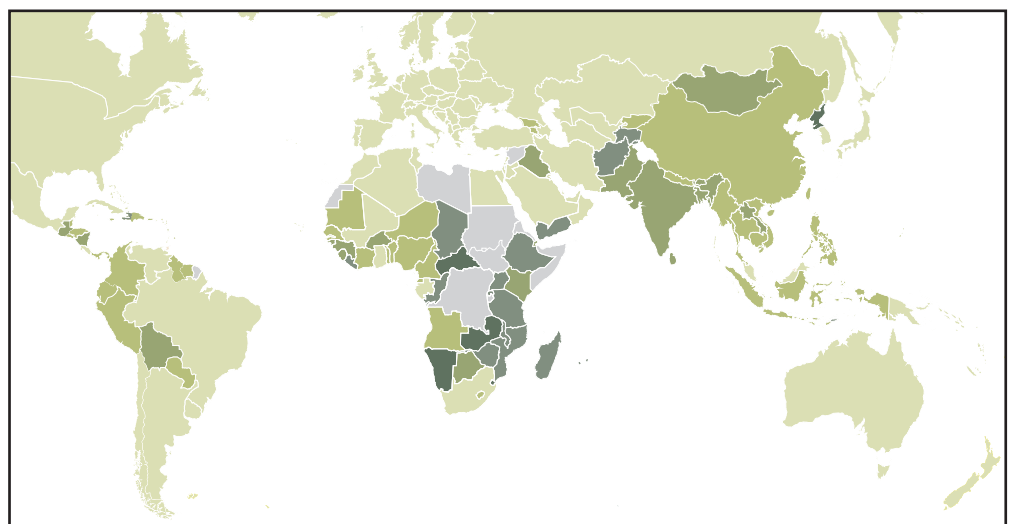
Where do hungry people live?

Most hungry people (98 per cent) live in developing countries, and 75 per cent of hungry people live in rural areas. According to the United Nations World Food Programme, hungry people "...are of all ages, from babies whose mothers cannot produce enough milk to the elderly with no relatives to care for them. They are the unemployed inhabitants of urban slums, the landless farmers tilling other people's fields, the orphans of AIDS and the sick, who need special or increased food intake to survive. Above all, children, women and rural communities are on the frontlines of hunger."

MAP OF WORLD HUNGER

The proportion of a country's population that is hungry

35.0% or more
25.0% - 34.9%
15.0% - 24.9%
5.0% - 14.9%
Less than 5.0%
No data



Source: www.fao.org/hunger/en/

Why are people hungry?

Although the global population continues to grow, the world produces enough food to feed everyone. However not all food is shared equally or used efficiently. There are nine main reasons that people are hungry:

Poverty

For most of the 795 million hungry people in the world, hunger is caused by poverty. Families living in poverty must make difficult decisions to prioritise their needs, including food, and make the food they have last longer. A healthy diet is often replaced with cheaper more filling foods. However, hunger reduces energy and hungry people get sick more often, trapping families in a poverty cycle (see page 2).

Discrimination

Discrimination within communities and even within families causes some groups of people to go hungry. Families without fathers to work, children whose parents live with HIV, children who are orphaned, and elderly widows all struggle to access enough food. When families face food shortages, tough decisions have to be made about who gets less. For example, in some countries girls are more at risk than boys because families choose to feed boys first.

Weather

Too little rain prevents crops from growing and too much rain can drown or rot plants. Weather-related natural disasters, such as droughts, floods and tropical cyclones/typhoons destroy crops. Disasters decrease the amount of food for sale and this increases the price, making it harder for families to afford to buy food.

Climate change

Climate change affects temperature and rainfall and increases extreme weather events, such as droughts and floods. As a result, farming patterns change, food availability decreases and food prices increase. Communities living in poverty live in more risk-prone areas and find it hardest to prepare themselves for the effects of climate change due to lack of resources.

Conflict

Wars disrupt agriculture. Soldiers eat or destroy food that belongs to their opposition. Whether families stay or flee their homes to be safe, they have no way of growing food or earning incomes.

Lack of investment in agriculture

Rural areas in developing countries lack investment and technology to help farmers improve, store and sell their harvests, including irrigation systems and well-maintained roads. Money also needs to be spent on research and development into finding better ways to sustainably grow more food.

International finance and trade

The local price of food is affected by things that happen internationally, such as increasing prices of fertiliser or fuel for transport. As food prices go up, families have to switch



Cambodia: Auntouch (10) eats rice and sugar when her mother doesn't have enough money for food. She says: "Sometimes I did not go to school if I did not have breakfast. What I want most is to have enough to eat." World Vision

to cheaper, less nutritious foods or reduce the amount they eat. Some price increases may be temporary but they can have long-term effects on children's development.

Competing demands

By 2050, it is estimated the world's population will be 9.7 billion. Each year, there are 80 million extra mouths to feed. This growth in population is increasing the demand for food and pushing up prices. World food production has also increased. However not all crops are used as food for people – some, such as sorghum, are used as feed for chickens and cattle. Others, including corn and sugar, are used to make bio fuels; this means we're feeding corn to our cars instead of people.

Food loss and waste

Around the world about one third of all food is spoiled or wasted, most before it reaches consumers. Cutting down food waste would be an easy way to feed more hungry people. New Zealanders throw away more than 122,547 tonnes of food each year. The average New Zealand household puts 79kg of edible food in the rubbish each year, which is \$563 worth of food per household. See www.lovefoodhatewaste.co.nz




Bangladesh: Rubi (11), who lives with her grandmother eats only two meals a day. She says, "Most of the days we eat two meals a day. My grandmother rarely affords my favourite dish, beef, twice a month." Juliet Mondol / World Vision

How can we create a world free from hunger?

Addressing the causes of hunger and breaking the poverty cycle require effort and cooperation at local, national and global levels. The United Nations, world leaders, governments, businesses, organisations like World Vision, communities and individuals are working together to make freedom from hunger a reality. Some examples include:

- The United Nations has two organisations which collaborate with governments and organisations to combat hunger:
 - The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations focuses on food security and rural development www.fao.org
 - The World Food Programme is a United Nations agency which collects donated food and supplies it to local organisations to distribute to people affected by disasters and conflict www.wfp.org
- Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights says: "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food." www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/
- Since 1974, world leaders have met at a number of international summits focussing on hunger and food
- Sustainable Development Goal 2 aims to End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030 www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/



Zambia: Abba and her son Ponsious and her husband learned to grow maize, cabbages, groundnuts (pictured), tomatoes, soybeans and pumpkins through World Vision. Now they have three nutritious meals each day and have enough to sell too.

Agatha Mali / World Vision

- The World Health Organisation has six global nutrition targets to be achieved by 2025 www.who.int/nutrition/global-target-2025/en/
- Each year on October 16, World Food Day is commemorated at events around the world which increase awareness of hunger
- Scaling Up Nutrition is a movement to strengthen political commitment and accountability to improve nutrition <http://scalingupnutrition.org/>
- Zero Hunger Challenge is a United Nations movement that anyone can join, including individuals. Sign up online and use #ZeroHunger to show your support www.un.org/en/zerohunger

What is World Vision doing about hunger?

Long-term solutions:

World Vision partners with communities in nearly 100 countries to help them find long-term solutions to hunger. Together World Vision workers and community members develop programmes that combat the causes of hunger in their community, for example:

- Teaching families and communities how to cook grow and nutritious foods
- Helping farmers increase the crops they harvest through better seeds and farming methods
- Improving ways of storing crops and processing them to sell
- Making better roads to get to the markets to help farming families earn more money
- Bringing farmers together (e.g. in cooperatives) so they have more power to negotiate the prices they sell their crops for, and can get support and loans to grow their businesses
- Educating about sustainable farming to prevent soil erosion, maintain soil fertility, use water more efficiently and protect the environment.



Uganda: Mothers learn to cook nutritious meals for their children using local ingredients.

John Warren / World Vision

What is World Vision doing about hunger?

Short-term assistance:

World Vision provides short-term assistance to make sure children and families get essential nutrients during a crisis such as a conflict, famine, drought or flood. World Vision combines short-term assistance with helping families to plan for and meet their long-term needs. Some key features of World Vision's response include:

- Deploying a Global Rapid Response Team of experts to support local communities, within hours of finding out about the crisis
- Working with the United Nations (e.g. World Food Programme) and other local organisations to meet people's needs quickly and effectively
- Committing to communities for several years to help them recover so families aren't hungry in the long term
- Teaching communities how to prepare for disasters
- Storing emergency food and supplies in warehouses in four strategic locations across the globe.



Vanuatu: World Vision volunteers measure rice to provide immediate help for families affected by Cyclone Pam in 2015.
Mike Wolfe / World Vision

How does World Vision help hungry communities?

No more hungry months

In Togogana, in the Sahel region of Mali, people from call June to September the "hungry months". During these rainy months families stretch out any food left from last year's harvest while they wait for their crops to grow. World Vision is working with the communities in Togogana to ensure food is available all year round through cereal banks, irrigation and vegetable gardens.

When hungry times hit, families can access grain from community run cereal banks that World Vision helped to establish. Families buying grain pay a lower price than elsewhere, or they can borrow grain and repay at harvest time, paying interest in the form of additional grain. The grain repayments and interest increase the amount of grain available from the cereal bank.

World Vision has installed borehole wells which provide safe water for drinking. Solar-powered drip irrigation systems attached to boreholes efficiently water community gardens. Through these gardens farmers learn about climate-suited crops and vegetables, including onions, lettuce, tomatoes, eggplant, chillies and sweet potatoes, which bring nutrition and diversity into family meals. They also learn techniques such as agroforestry which can increase their harvests and combat the effects of climate change.



Mali: Sama (56), gets food from the food bank World Vision established in her community. "With this cereal bank, no one starves in this village... because we borrow the cereal which we need to refund after the next harvest."
Amadou baraze / World Vision

World Vision has also equipped community leaders with tools to make community plans and prepare for disasters to minimise the impact of food crises should they occur.

Together these initiatives should mean there are no more hungry months for Togogana's children.

How does World Vision help hungry communities?



Feeding children well

The country of Myanmar used to be known as Asia's rice bowl. But now families in the central Magway region don't have enough food for their children. Years of late and insufficient rains, combined with the effects of cyclones, such as Cyclone Komen during July 2015, mean that only one-third of families have enough food for the whole year.

World Vision is partnering with the United Nations World Food Programme on two strategies to help the parents of the poorest families in Magway. One approach is to make sure children get enough vital nutrition during their first 1000 days from before they are born until they are 2 years old. Families receive "Wheat soya blend plus" for children under 2 years old and pregnant and nursing mothers. This rich multi-vitamin product can be made into a kind of porridge. The UN World Food Programme provides the food and World Vision distributes it to families.

A second approach is organising construction work for parents to do, so they can earn extra money for food and other needs. The UN World Food Programme provides money to pay the workers while World Vision is in charge of managing the work and payments. Parents build infrastructure that will help the whole community



Myanmar: Proper nutrition is important for children during their first 1000 days from pregnancy to age 2.
Thet Kaung Myat Oo / World Vision

to increase the amount of food they can provide for their children. They build irrigation canals and mini dams, repair village roads and develop farmland.

The partnership between World Vision and the World Food Programme in Magway is making it much easier for parents to feed their children well.



South Sudan: People who have fled to the Upper Nile region collect food from a World Vision food distribution.
World Vision

Life-saving food

The people of South Sudan, one of the world's newest nations, are facing famine caused by ongoing volatile conflict coupled with a devastating drought. World Vision is there for the long haul, working with affected communities in the Upper Nile region, Western Equatoria, and Juba.

One of the most urgent needs, which is worsening by the day, is access to food. As one of the United Nations World Food Programme's largest distributors, World Vision provides emergency food assistance and nutritional support to the most vulnerable children and their families. Food packs are airlifted to remote locations where World Vision staff and volunteers coordinate distribution. The food packs contain vital staples like cereals, pulses, salt, oil, and "Supercereal" made of fortified corn-and-soy-blend flour. Families also receive help in the form of cash and food vouchers so they can buy food locally.

Through its partnership with the World Food Programme, World Vision is providing life-saving food for South Sudan children and their families.

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