

ENDING HUNGER

HUNGER

A record one billion people worldwide are hungry. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) this number will only increase if governments do not spend more on agriculture. Hunger like so many other global issues is a stark reminder of our divided and unequal world. At its most basic, hunger is a lack of food but ultimately, it is a political issue; it is a man-made problem. The world has the economic and technical know-how to eradicate hunger, but the political will is missing. According to Jacques Diouf the Director General of the FAO investing in agriculture in developing countries is key to combating hunger, as a healthy agricultural sector is essential not only to overcome hunger and poverty; "but also to ensure overall economic growth, peace and stability in the world."

"Freedom without bread has little meaning"

Eleanor Roosevelt

DEFINING HUNGER

"HUNGER IS MUCH MORE THAN AN EMPTY STOMACH"

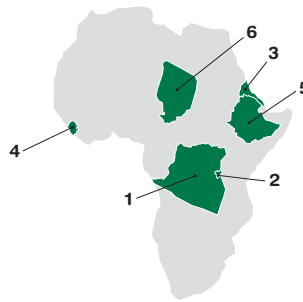
Hunger weakens the immune system. Without adequate nutrition people and especially children are unable to fight common, preventable diseases and treatable infections. Malnutrition is associated with 35 per cent of all under five mortalities accounting for over 3 million deaths each year.

Chronic Hunger: defined as the condition of constant undernourishment or recurring seasonal undernourishment. It is caused by a lack of both sufficient quantity and quality of food. Chronic hunger contributes to stunted growth in children and high mortality rates due to hunger related diseases.

Acute Hunger: involves severe undernourishment over a distinct period and is reflected in wasting and starvation. It is most often caused by emergency situations which require immediate food aid. This is the most extreme and life threatening form of hunger worldwide.

Hidden Hunger: refers to vitamin and mineral deficiencies found in people who otherwise have access to adequate calories and protein. This is the most difficult form of hunger to detect and it affects almost two billion people worldwide, including many in the 'developed' world with improper diets.

Countries with Alarming Levels of Hunger



Country	% of Population Undernourished
1. DR.Congo	76
2. Burundi	63
3. Eritrea	68
4. Sierra Leone	47
5. Ethiopia	46
6. Chad	39

Measuring Hunger

The Global Hunger Index measures hunger in relation to the following three areas;

- 1) **the proportion of undernourished people as a percentage of the population** (reflecting the share of the population with insufficient dietary energy intake)
- 2) **the prevalence of underweight children under the age of five** (indicating the proportion of children suffering from weight loss and or reduced growth)
- 3) **the under five mortality rate** (partially reflecting the fatal connection between inadequate food intake and an unhealthy living environment)

For many children in developing countries who die from infectious diseases, the indirect cause of death is a weakened immune system due to a lack of dietary energy, vitamins and minerals

KEY FACTS

1. 1.02 billion people do not have enough to eat, more than the populations of USA, Canada and Europe combined
2. Hunger claims 25000 lives every day
3. 60% of chronically hungry people are women
4. Hunger feeds shame so that those most in need of support are often the least able to call on it
5. The Asia and the Pacific region and Sub Saharan Africa account for over 80% of the world's hungry
6. Over half of the food produced today is either lost, wasted or discarded as a result of inefficiency in the human managed food chain. Almost a third of all food purchased in the UK is not eaten

CAUSES OF HUNGER

The current global financial crisis coupled with volatile food prices are just two of the many reasons why the number of hungry people in our world has increased from 854 million to over one billion people in the past two years. Other reasons include;

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1) Low agricultural productivity: in many areas of the Developing World food simply does not reach the areas where it is needed most. It is therefore imperative that special measures are implemented that create incentives for small holder farmers to increase their productivity and help them not only supply local and regional needs but also compete on a more equal footing on world markets.
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2) Gender Inequality: a woman's status in the community significantly affects child nutrition because women with higher status themselves are better cared for and provide higher quality care for their children. If men and women had equal status in regions such as South Asia it is estimated that the number of malnourished children would be reduced by 13.4 million. (Global Hunger Index, 2009)
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3) Falling Remittances: relatives who may have emigrated to countries where they had found employment but have now lost their jobs are no longer able to send money home (remittances) to support their families and relatives. Worldwide \$265 billion flowed to developing countries through remittances in 2007, surpassing official global development aid by 60 percent.
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4) Bio fuels: Attempts to reduce dependency on oil has seen a dramatic rise in the cultivation of crops used as bio-fuels. The diversion of crops from food to fuel has contributed to escalating food prices and a marked drop in the supply of crops for food purposes.
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5) Unfair Trade: the terms of international trade are for the most part stacked against poor or developing countries. Reform of global agricultural trade and increased international aid must go together if we are to get serious about ending hunger and poverty. The completion of the Doha round of World Trade Organisation talks is vital in addressing issues of trade barriers and subsidies.
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6) Conflict and Corruption: many nations with the highest levels of hunger are also gripped by violent conflicts or civil wars. As well as restricting access to fields to sow or harvest crops armed groups often use hunger as a weapon by cutting off food supplies, destroying crops and hijacking relief aid. Similarly countries that have weak, corrupt and ineffective government's are much more likely to suffer from chronic food shortages leading to wide spread hunger. It has been said that no country with a strong democracy has ever suffered from famine.
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7) Climate Change and Natural Disasters: while drought, floods and other natural phenomena have a role to play in reducing the global food supply they in fact only account for 8% of the world's hungry. However with the increased effects of climate change this percentage is set to increase significantly.
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8) HIV & AIDS: Both hunger and HIV & AIDS weaken the body's immune system making people more susceptible to preventable diseases. Without adequate nutrition those weakened by the disease are unable to work and provide for their families and unlike other diseases that affect the young and old, HIV & AIDS impacts most severely on the most economically active and productive groups.

"WE DRIVE, THEY STARVE"

Are GM foods a solution to World Hunger? Let's debate it...

YES
GM increases the length of time a crop can be stored

GM Makes plants unappealing to harmful pests and insects thus increasing yields

GM delays ripening making transportation easier and less time dependent

GM can enhance the nutritional value of crops making them healthier

GM provides the potential to breed shorter cycle or drought resistant crops

By 2050 the world's population will be over 9 billion people. We will need to increase current agricultural output by 70 per cent and GM foods will be vital in achieving this while using less land and water.

NO
GM uses 2-5 times more herbicides than conventional crops

GM could actually increase global hunger as many GM seeds cannot be used for replanting the year after harvest

GM will increase private sector control over food supply and distribution

GM could have health risks such as hidden allergens, increased plant toxins and spread resistance to antibiotics

GM crop developments have largely benefited northern countries and markets, not small scale farmers in the developing world. Food security lies in the more equal distribution of food, access to land and money by the poor.

Concern believes that GM technology may form part of future strategies to combat hunger however a much more open and genuine dialogue is required about the possibilities, risks and concerns about GM technology.

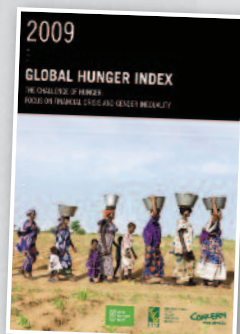
Ending world hunger...what needs to be done?

1) Achieve the Millennium Development

Goals: The International Community set the year 2015 as the target date for halving world poverty and hunger. With less than five years to go many of the gains made between 1990 and 2005 are now stalled or are being reversed. In its 2009 MDG report the UN admits that reaching the target is unlikely to be achieved, however "the war against hunger must be embraced with renewed vigour, especially in the interests of our youngest citizens." and calls on governments and their development partners to "implement measures to increase the availability of food, including raising production and strengthening social policies that address the negative effects of higher food prices especially on the poor. (www.un.org/millenniumgoals)

2) Focus on gender

equality: The 2009 Global Hunger Index (GHI) report focuses on the essential link between gender inequality and hunger. The report calls for targeted strategies including, 1) reduction of gender disparities in education 2) investment in women's health and nutrition including the promotion of breastfeeding, good weaning practices and good nutrition of pregnant women 3) reducing gender gaps in economic participation and opportunity (such as the right to own land) and 4) reforming legal systems to eliminate gender discrimination and political participation. (www.concern.net)



3) Increase ODA funding to agriculture: In 1980, 17% of aid contributed by donor countries went to agriculture however that share dropped to just 3.8% in 2006 and only slightly improved in the last three years. The European Union as a whole, including its member states, contributes over 60% of global Official Development Assistance (ODA), making the European Commission a critical partner in global efforts in tackling world hunger and poverty. **Irish Aid** is committing 20 per cent of its budget to hunger reduction and has appointed a special envoy for hunger to oversee all of the recommendations of the Irish Hunger Task force (www.irishaid.gov.ie) Such funding will be used to increase access to irrigation systems and modern machinery as well as build roads and train farmers.

4) Increase the productivity of small-holder farmers in Africa:

Agriculture is the primary source of income for about 65 per cent of Africans. Since small scale farms account for more than 90 per cent of Africa's agricultural production and are dominated by the poor, growth must be centered on the small farmer. Improvements in road and transportation networks, increased access to markets and better coordination among farmers, traders and buyers are critical to improving overall food production leading to increased supply and reduced prices.



Namangolwa Kandala in her Casava field, Zambia.
Photo: Garrett Bentley, Concern

5) Make Trade Fair: For the last number of years the World Trade Organisation has attempted to reach agreement on the terms and conditions of global trade. However discussions on the ending of subsidies, Common Agriculture Policy reform and trade barriers have been hotly contested and countries from the developing world have walked out on meetings arguing that current proposals do not represent a fair deal for poor countries. It is hoped that a new round of talks in 2010 will produce a fair and just deal for developing world producers that provides fair access to 'first world' markets.

INNOVATION AND IMPACT IN ENDING HUNGER



Food and Cash Transfers (FACT)...

In 2005/06 Concern pioneered a new and innovative programme in Malawi in response to acute food shortages that involved the distribution of both food and cash that allowed people to maintain their food consumption, ensure diversity in their diets and purchase essential goods during the crisis period. The programme reduced the need for people to sell their assets, borrow money at high interest rates and work on large farms thereby leaving their own land uncultivated. This new approach empowered people by offering them choices. It was cost effective, avoided dependency on food aid and had a positive impact on local markets.

An evaluation of FACT found that "the combination of food plus cash appears to have provided all the benefits of both while avoiding the limitations of each."

Another innovation in fighting hunger is Concern's Community Therapeutic Care programme. See www.concern.net

VOICES ON ENDING HUNGER...



"Not only can I feed all my family every day but I finally feel like I'm somebody in the community, selling my soap and eggs at the marketplace. It is great to be active!"

Lejimm Merilas, mother and member of a Concern microfinance Project in Haiti



"Women are on the front lines. They grow, process and prepare; they gather water and wood and they care for those suffering from HIV and AIDS. Yet women lack access to credit, technology, training and services and are denied their legal rights, such as the right to land"

Kofi Annan, former UN Secretary General



"World leaders have reacted forcefully to the financial and economic crisis and succeeded in mobilising billions of dollars in a short time period. The same strong action is needed now to combat hunger and poverty!"

Jacques Diouf, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)



"Food is a human right to which every woman, man and child is entitled. Everyone from political and business leaders to the world's hundreds of millions of small farmers must join together to solve this crises."

Mary Robinson former President of Ireland

CONCERN'S APPROACH TO ENDING HUNGER:

Concern has been a leading advocate in the fight against hunger in the developing world. The organisation's chief executive Tom Arnold was a member of both the United Nations Hunger Task Force and the Irish Hunger Task Force. The Concern **End Hunger Strategy** focuses on three main areas - social protection, marginal farmers, and strengthening of nutrition and health systems. Extensive Research and lobbying has been undertaken under all three themes across the organisation.

Concern believes that Ireland should become the global leader in the fight against hunger by building on our years of experience in combating hunger in the developing world and by using it to establish an international expertise in the area. Along with Concern's programmes in 28 countries, that directly reach an estimated 12 million people, Concern has established key relationships with other hunger experts such as the International Food Policy Research Institute, Valid International, the African Small Holders Farmers Group, the Kerry Group and other organisations in the food and business sector.

Learn more at www.concern.net/unheardvoices

The Price of Ending Hunger

According to the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation the world will need to increase agricultural productivity by 70% over the next 40 years. In order to do this the world will need to invest billions a year in agriculture in the following regions:

Sub-Saharan Africa	\$11 billion
Middle East and North Africa	\$10 billion
South Asia	\$20 billion
East Asia	\$24 billion
India and China	\$29 billion

Websites:

www.concern.net/unheardvoices
www.ifpri.org
www.fao.org
www.developmenteducation.ie
www.un.org/millenniumgoals

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

INFORM yourself further about hunger in our world. Visit the websites below and contact Concern for more information

SUPPORT campaigns that will make a difference in ending world hunger

CONTACT your TD or MEP and ask them what they are doing to ensure Ireland plays its part in ending world hunger

ORGANISE an awareness-raising or fundraising event in your school or workplace. To end hunger we all need to play our part. Often by teaching others you learn more yourself

THINK about how you shop by buying Fairtrade or ethically produced products, as well as how you consume, remember almost a third of food bought in shops is never eaten!

VOLUNTEER your time and energy with an ethical, responsible organisation working to end world hunger

CONNECT with people in Ireland or overseas who share your vision for a just, fair and hunger free world

TALK to your friends, family and colleagues about how we can all work to end hunger

WRITE a short story/opinion piece about hunger and send it to Concern or try to get it published in a local paper, or school/university magazine

Other topics in the Concern Development Issues Series include:

AID WORKS, CHILD LABOUR, CLIMATE CHANGE, HIV & AIDS, POPULATION

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CONCERN
worldwide