

Why Humanitarian Assistance Is Essential To Carry Out Hunger Relief Efforts

In 2017, the number of undernourished people is estimated to have reached 821 million, or around one in every nine people in the world.”¹ Women and girls constitute the majority of the undernourished and malnourished population.² **Malnourishment is defined as a lack of essential nutrients, vitamins, and minerals needed to live a healthy life, while undernourishment occurs when an individual lacks sufficient calories in food. The health effects of both of these conditions include cognitive and physical impairment, immune system suppression, illnesses such as anemia and hypothyroidism, and stunted growth.** Malnutrition causes the combined lack of the abilities to work and provide the means of survival.³ By evaluating the hunger crisis, this report will illustrate why humanitarian assistance is essential to combating the crisis.

After World War II, the United States and the United Nations appointed themselves as obligated to resolve the world’s crises. “In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirmed the right of everyone to adequate food.”⁴ Since 1954, the United States Government has passed the following laws and created the following programs to combat global hunger: Agricultural Trade and Assistance Act, the Farm Bill, the Global Food Security Act, the McGovern-Dole Fund for Education Program, and Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP) of the International Disaster Assistance Account.⁵ In the 1960s, the World Food Programme established relationships with the U.S. Department of State, USAID, USDA, and the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM).⁶

The United Nations’ Food Assistance for Assets program resembles the public works projects during The Great Depression in the United States since it requires people to work on community development programs for food funds. The Peace Corps performs food security humanitarian assistance efforts around the world.⁷ With the help of NGOs⁸, the United States Government’s Food For Progress program⁹ and the Local and Regional Food Aid Act Procurement Program¹⁰ promote community development as a way for developing countries to provide people with food and break the poverty cycle. Working with the United Nations’ World Food Programme, the United States Government’s McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program empowers developing countries’ females by feeding them at school, training them to be teachers, and providing programs similar to those offered by the Special Supplemented Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) in the United States.¹¹

The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet dietary needs for a productive and healthy lifestyle.¹² Also, NASA and the USGS provide developing countries with state of the art technology and intelligence for the raising of crops and livestock.¹³ SERVIR Global is NASA’s and USAID’s joint initiative in which science technology and its results are used to improve farming outputs and methods.¹⁴ In 2018, The Trump Administration reauthorized the Global Food Security Act of 2016, which executes the U.S. Global Security Strategy, for 2018-2023.¹⁵ In May 2018, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 2417 to ban starvation as a war tactic and the blocking of human assistance to those who need it.¹⁶ Also, the World Trade Organization’s “Green Box program covers many



government service programs including general services provided by governments, public stockholding programs for food security purposes, and domestic food aid-as long as the general criteria and some other measure-specific criteria are met by each measure concerned.¹⁷

Therefore, in spite of the various significant efforts made by both government and non-governmental bodies, malnourishment and undernourishment still exist on a global scale. Problem-solving approaches for resolving hunger problems consist of long-term solutions and short-term solutions. Short-term solutions intend to solve a problem in the immediate present or near future. According to U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley, developing nations would be experiencing extreme famine if short-term food assistance did not exist.¹⁸ The hunger relief crisis applies two short-term solutions. One option is to directly give to those in need via nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, food pantries, food banks, and soup kitchens. Emergency food efforts provide food to populations in emergency situations, i.e. climate change, disasters, budget shortfalls, etc.¹⁹ In normal and emergency circumstances, the anti-hunger efforts of nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, food pantries, food banks, and soup kitchens also supplement government food assistance.

In the United States, the most concentrated food insecure populations live in big cities, rural areas, and in the South.²⁰ The most at-risk Americans to experience hunger are “seniors, people with disabilities, veterans, and active duty military, American Indians, immigrants, and the formerly incarcerated.”²¹ According to the 2014 U.S. House Committee on Hunger, the causes of hunger in the United States are lack of education, underemployment, unemployment, inability to work at least a minimum-wage paying job, single parent households, racial discrimination, and personal responsibility.²² The following are two of the United States Government’s most popular hunger relief programs.

The first is the Supplemented Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Since 1939, the U.S. Government has been establishing and expanding its food stamp program to offer low income individuals and households with monthly food stamps to redeem at food retailers.²³ “In fiscal year 2017, the average SNAP household received about \$254 a month, while the average recipient received around about \$126 a month-about \$1.40 per meal.”²⁴ The second program is the Special Supplemented Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC). Since 1972, WIC provides nutritionally deficient low-income pregnant women and mothers with children from ages 1-5 with breastfeeding and nutrition education, and access to healthcare programs and services.²⁵ This program promotes children’s health, i.e. breast milk’s protein prevents stunted growth.²⁶ After all of a woman’s offspring are at least 6 years old, she must leave WIC and enroll into SNAP for government food assistance.

Short-term solutions enable the existence of long-term solutions. Long-term solutions are intended to solve problems in the future or distant future. Without humanitarian assistance, no one can effectively and efficiently respond to crises in the long-term. U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley believes that short-term food assistance efforts are essential to create an adequately-funded coalition of United Nations agencies, NGOs, and foreign countries’ governments needed to execute a long-term humanitarian-based strategy to eliminate global hunger.²⁷ When humanitarian assistance experiences shortfalls, “inadequate, inflexible, and short-term funding means that humanitarian organizations cannot effectively address complex needs that require long-term engagement and adaptive responses.”²⁸

Short-term solutions could also undermine long-term solutions in general. Since short-term solutions use most of the global hunger crisis’ foreign aid, a space is left for non-profit organizations to develop and maintain food sources in the long-run.²⁹ As a result, problems requiring long-term solutions involving NGOs (including nonprofit organizations) are conflict, climate change, weather, and natural disasters, poverty, and population growth.



Conflict is the top cause of global hunger. Under conditions of conflict, innocent people experience violations of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law. Since people are put in danger when they flee, material resources including food are often lacking. Starvation and undernourishment due to lack of resources directly or indirectly cause humanitarian crises. Also, those most in need of aid cannot access humanitarian assistance due to warring parties blocking access to it.³⁰ Also, according to the law of supply and demand, food prices rise since a shortage of food results.

“In order to prevent food crises and conflicts from escalating, the international community must take a holistic, preventable approach and strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus.”³¹ Early detection of potential hunger crises lead to more efficient and effective solutions to prevent, alleviate, and resolve them.³² These efforts are undertaken by collecting and analyzing political, historical, sociological, economic, and scientific data in the forms of statistics; scientific tests/experiments, visual aids, satellite images, studies/research papers, economic, meteorological, and climate forecasts.

Climate change is more of a concern for the world's rural areas than other geographical areas. Some pre-climate change problems impeding the growth of food include “low soil quality...lack of crop watering systems, lack of proper crop storage, [and] unhealthy livestock.”³³ Since climate change, weather, and disasters force rural areas to reformulate their macroeconomic and microeconomic policies in raising crops and livestock, the international community must be compelled to continue to combat climate change. Developing countries could revalue their currency since “depreciation against the U.S. dollar causes increases in food prices.”³⁴ Developing countries should use women's empowerment advocacy to battle the hunger crisis in rural areas. “[W]omen represent about 40 percent of the agriculture sectors labor force globally...Rural households in which women are empowered can improve their farming productivity and farming nutrition by 30 percent, reducing the number of hungry people in the world.”³⁵

In the developing world, rural areas are divided in low latitude areas (those that cannot adapt to climate change) and high latitude areas (those that can adapt to climate change).³⁶ Low latitude countries engage in trade for food for the following reasons, low latitude countries need to make up the food supply difference when their domestic food output cannot fulfill their countries' entire demand for food. Specialization suggests that low latitude countries should trade for goods and services from high latitude countries when the high latitude countries can produce the goods and services cheaper than the low latitude countries. Also, climate change makes low latitude countries more dependent on food trade with high latitude countries to feed their people. In lands at sea level, rising temperatures will lead to flooding that will wash all of the minerals from the soil.³⁷ Changes resulting in higher water temperatures will cause fish to die off or travel to high latitude waters that most resemble their original ecosystems. Since increasing changes in climate, [weather, and natural disasters] may lead to less crop yields for internal consumption and exports causing trade of food to slow down and food prices to increase since the world food supply will shrink.³⁸

Low latitude countries should take the following suggestions to adapt to climate change, improving agricultural financing institutions and their resources to farmers can help farmers maintain and expand their



operations, capital, and labor.³⁹ The World Trade Organization and The Paris Agreement's international trade law can be revised to promote food security via trade.⁴⁰ Farmers could plant crops that can survive extreme heat and increase the construction and use of irrigation systems to prevent the soil from drying out.⁴¹ The agricultural sector should be "spending more on research and development and agricultural extension services to encourage the use of climate smart technology by farmers [and] environmental programmes and ecosystem services that would reduce the negative effects of emissions..."⁴²

In order for people to afford imported and domestically produced food, developing countries need to promote anti-poverty initiatives. Some factors contributing to food insecurity are "a lack of natural resources and productive land...health constraints...and lack of transportation."⁴³ Poverty-induced hunger causes political instability and vice versa.⁴⁴ In order to obtain food in developing nations, desperate impoverished people endure famines, flee their homelands, and turn to the informal economy, among other coping mechanisms. Rebuilding infrastructure, retraining farmers (i.e. small holder farmers and women), and revamping laws regarding property rights, allocation, and government administration can increase crop production.⁴⁵ Especially giving women and children the resources to develop their communities and raise their own crops and livestock would break poverty and reduce the need for humanitarian assistance.⁴⁶ However, in the lack of state-led initiatives to address global hunger, non-governmental organizations seek to provide solutions.

In conclusion, hunger affects every country in the world. **Without humanitarian assistance, the international community would not even be able to attempt to alleviate the global hunger crisis. The global hunger crisis is fought on two time-tables: the short-term and the long-term.** Nonprofit organizations are needed to provide relief in both of these timeframes.

1 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO. 2018. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018. Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition. Rome, FAO, v. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO

2 World Food Programme, "Analyses and Assessments," Last Modified 2018. <https://www.wfp.org/analyses-and-assessments>

3 Action Against Hunger, "Conflict and Hunger: How The UN & Member States Can Help To Break The Cycle (Paris: Action Against Hunger, 2018), 1. https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/Conflict_and_Hunger_-_Briefing.pdf

The article cites the following as the quote's source:

"One. 2013. Food. Famine. Future. Breaking the Cycle of Malnutrition and Poverty. Available at <https://www.one.org/international/policy/food-farming-future-breaking-the-cycle-of-malnutrition-and-poverty/#ftn>

4 United Nations Development of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), "International Decade for Action "Water For Life 2015."" Accessed March 2, 2019. https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/food_security.shtml

5 World Food Program USA. Resourcing Report The World in 2017. (Washington, D.C.: WFPUSA, 2018), 11. <https://www.wfpusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Resourcing-Report-2017-Year-in-Review-A4-Final.pdf>

6 World Food Program USA. Resourcing Report The World in 2017. (Washington, D.C.: WFPUSA, 2018), 15. <https://www.wfpusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Resourcing-Report-2017-Year-in-Review-A4-Final.pdf>

7 Peace Corps, "Global Issues: Food Security," Accessed February 28, 2019. <https://www.peacecorps.gov/educators/resources/global-issues-food-security/>

8 United States Department of Agriculture, Food Agricultural Service, "Food For Progress," Accessed February 26, 2019. <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/progress>

9 United States Department of Agriculture, Food Agricultural Service, "Food For Progress," Accessed February 26, 2019. <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/progress>

10 United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, "Local and Regional Food Aid Procurement Program," Accessed February 26, 2019. <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/local-and-regional-food-aid-procurement-program>

11 United States Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service, "McGovern-Dole Food For Education Program," Accessed February 26, 2019. <https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/mcgovern-dole-food-education-program>

12 United Nations Development of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), "International Decade for Action "Water For Life 2015."" Accessed March 2, 2019. https://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/food_security.shtml

13 NASA, "NASA Food Security," Accessed March 1, 2019. https://science.gsfc.nasa.gov/610/nasa_food_security_initiative.htm

14 Sevir Global, "Sevir Global," Accessed March 1, 2019. <https://www.sevirglobal.net> USGS, "Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS) Center," Accessed March 1, 2019. <https://www.usgs.gov/centers/eros/science-topics/food-security>

15 Kimberly Flowers, "U.S. Policy Roadmap: A Drive To Transform Global Food and Nutrition Security" in CSIS Briefs, 1-10. (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2019), 3. https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/190104_GlobalFoodandNutrition.pdf

16 Action Against Hunger, "Conflict and Hunger: How The UN & Member States Can Help To Break The Cycle (Paris: Action Against Hunger, 2018), 2 and 10. https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/Conflict_and_Hunger_-_Briefing.pdf

17 World Trade Organization, "Domestic Support," Accessed February 22, 2019. https://www.wto.org/english/trap_e/agric_e/ag_intro03_domestic_e.htm

18 U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, "Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy Hearing," Congressional Documents and Publications; Washington (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2018). PRO-QUEST.

19 "World: As Climate Change Reshapes Agriculture, International Trade Will Be Increasingly Important To Feeding The World-Open, Predictable and Fair Global Food Markets Can Help Strengthen Climate Change Response Effects And Contribute To Fighting Hunger, Says New Report," Asia NewsMonitor, Bangkok, September 19, 2018. PROQUEST.

20 Alisha Coleman-Jensen, Matthew P. Rabbitt, Christian A. Gregory, and Anita Singh. 2018. Household Food Security in the United States in 2017, ERR-256, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, 15.

21 U.S. House Committee on Agriculture, "House Agriculture Committee Hearing," Congressional Documented Publications (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office,



- 2015) PROQUEST.
- 22 U.S. House Committee on Agriculture, "House Agriculture Committee Hearing," Congressional Documented Publications (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2015) PROQUEST.
- 23 United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Service Nutrition, "A Short History of SNAP" Last modified September 17, 2018. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/short-history-snap>
- 24 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "Chart Book: SNAP Helps Struggling Families Put Food On The Table." Last Modified February 14, 2018. <https://www.cbpp.org/research-food-assistance-chart-book-snap-struggling-families-put-food-on-the-table>
- 25 United States of Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, National-And-State-Level Estimates of Special Supplemental and Nutrition Program For Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Eligibles And Program Reach In 2016 (Summary) (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2019), 1. <https://fns.prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/WICEligibles2016-Summary.pdf>
- 26 Rosamond L. Naylor, "The Elusive Goal of Global Food Security" in Current History, 117, no. 795 (January 2018): 3-9. PROQUEST.
- 27 U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, "Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy Hearing," Congressional Documents and Publications; Washington (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2018). PROQUEST.
- 28 Action Against Hunger, Conflict and Hunger: How The UN & Member States Can Help To Break The Cycle (Paris: Action Against Hunger, 2018), 4. https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/Conflict_and_Hunger_-_Briefing.pdf
- 29 Rosamond L. Naylor, "The Elusive Goal of Global Food Security" in Current History, 117, no. 795 (January 2018): 3-9. PROQUEST.
- 30 Action Against Hunger, Conflict and Hunger: How The UN & Member States Can Help To Break The Cycle (Paris: Action Against Hunger, 2018), 2. https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/sites/default/files/publications/Conflict_and_Hunger_-_Briefing.pdf
- 31 Tharanga Yakupitryage, "Without Food Security, There Is No Peace." Inter Press Service; New York, September 27, 2018. PROQUEST.
- 32 Erica Martin, "Insights On Ending Famine and Creating Food Supply In A Changing World," Accessed March 1, 2019. <https://www.newsecuritybeat.org/2017/02/insights-famine-creating-food-security-changing-world>
- 33 Millenium Challenge Corporation, "Agriculture," Last modified February 28, 2019, <https://www.mcc.gov/sectors/sector/agriculture>
- 34 Food Security Information Network, Global Report on Food Crises 2018. (Thailand: Food Security Information Network, 2018), 34. www.fsincop.net/fileadmin/user_upload/fsin/docs/global_report/2018/GRFC-2018_Full-report_EN-Low_resolution.pdf
- 35 Feed The Future, A Decade of Progress: Feed The Future Snapshot Results Through 2018 (Washington, D.C.: Feed The Future, 2018), 23. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1867/2018-fff-snapshot.pdf>
- 36 "World: As Climate Change Reshapes Agriculture, International Trade Will Be Increasingly Important To Feeding The World-Open, Predictable and Fair Global Food Markets Can Help Strengthen Climate Change Response Effects And Contribute To Fighting Hunger, Says New Report," Asia NewsMonitor, Bangkok, September 19, 2018. PROQUEST.
- 37 African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, Department for International Development, United Kingdom, Directorate-General for Development, European Commission, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Development Cooperation, The Netherlands, Organization For Economic Cooperation and Development, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Environment Programme, and The World Bank, Poverty and Climate Change: Reducing the Vulnerability of the Poor Through Adaptation (Paris: OECD, 2003), 8. www.oecd.org/env/cc/2502872.pdf
- 38 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO. 2018. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018. Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition. Rome, FAO, 67. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO
- 39 Millenium Challenge Corporation, "Agriculture," Last modified February 28, 2019. <https://www.mcc.gov/sectors/sector/agriculture>
- 40 "World: As Climate Change Reshapes Agriculture, International Trade Will Be Increasingly Important To Feeding The World-Open, Predictable and Fair Global Food Markets Can Help Strengthen Climate Change Response Effects And Contribute To Fighting Hunger, Says New Report," Asia NewsMonitor, Bangkok, September 19, 2018. PROQUEST.
- 41 Rosamond L. Naylor, "The Elusive Goal of Global Food Security" in Current History, 117, no. 795 (January 2018): 3-9. PROQUEST.
- 42 "World: As Climate Change Reshapes Agriculture, International Trade Will Be Increasingly Important To Feeding The World-Open, Predictable and Fair Global Food Markets Can Help Strengthen Climate Change Response Effects And Contribute To Fighting Hunger, Says New Report," Asia NewsMonitor, Bangkok, September 19, 2018. PROQUEST.
- 43 Peace Corps, "Global Issues: Food Security," Accessed February 28, 2019, <https://www.peacecorps.gov/educators/resources/global-issues-food-security/>
- 44 U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, "Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy Hearing," Congressional Documents and Publications; Washington (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2018). PROQUEST.
- 45 Millenium Challenge Corporation, "Agriculture," Last modified February 28, 2019, <https://www.mcc.gov/sectors/sector/agriculture>
- 46 U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee, "Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Multilateral International Development, Multilateral Institutions, and International Economic, Energy, and Environmental Policy Hearing," Congressional Documents and Publications; Washington (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2018). PROQUEST.

