



# Some Causes of Hunger

***Food has never before existed in such abundance, so why are 925 million people in the world going hungry? In purely quantitative terms, there is enough food available to feed the entire global population of 7 billion people. And yet, one in nearly seven people don't have enough food or nutrition. One in three children are underweight. What causes hunger?***



## **Poverty**

The root of much of human underdevelopment, and also a result of it. Many of the world's poor are unable to afford sufficient food, or food of the required quality. As a result, their diets tend to be based on basic starchy foods such as potatoes, rice, maize (corn) and bread, with few fruits and vegetables or animal products. This provides the basis for nutrient deficiency, and ultimately hunger.

## **Disease and Illness**

Malnourishment and hunger lead to disease – but disease can also lead to malnourishment, as sick individuals grow too weak and unhealthy to work and thereby unable to access food (either directly, by tilling the land, or indirectly, by earning money).

## **War and Conflict**

The connections between hunger, war and conflict are obvious – people forced to flee conflict zones, long term internally displaced people and refugees, disruption to agriculture and to food supplies, the blocking of emergency supplies to 'enemy' areas and so on.

## **Famines and Other Climatic Unreliable Crops Due to Factors**

The worst-affected hunger and malnourishment hotspots are to be found in regions of climatic extremes: areas which experience drought, flooding, unpredictable rain patterns, soil erosion and desertification. Although technological advances have made it possible to produce food in even extreme climatic conditions, these hunger hotspots lack the money and infrastructure necessary for such investments.

## **Low Food Production**

Although not an issue on a global scale, some villages and specific groups often have difficulty producing enough food to feed everyone. Many of these areas have difficulty accessing markets – this means that their diet cannot be diversified and often remains tied down to staple foods. Due to poor agricultural methods, lack of fertiliser, climatic fluctuations as well as a sheer lack of usable land, significant numbers of people go hungry simply because they do not access enough food.

Many of the world's poorest countries are already suffering the effects of climate change. If the rains don't come as expected, and crops fail, whole communities suffer. Alternatively, flooding and other natural disasters are on the increase, leading to the destruction of food sources.

***Those who wish for a more peaceful, just and sustainable world are helping to make ending world hunger a major priority... Together we can end hunger.***

*Robert Alan*

***There are genuinely sufficient resources in the world to ensure that no one, nowhere, at no time, should go hungry.***

*Ed Asner*

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***Dare to Dream a Different World***



## **Soaring Food Prices**

By 2009, the total number of hungry people in the world had topped one billion, and with the continuing increase in food prices, that number has risen. From July to September 2010, wheat prices had surged by 60 to 80 percent in response to drought-fuelled crop losses in Russia. Rice and maize prices also rose during that period, and continue to rise. The cost of basic food staples remains high in many developing countries, making life difficult for the world's poorest people who already spend between 60 and 80 percent of their meagre income on food.

## **Trade Rules that Favour the Rich**

Trade can be a powerful engine for reducing poverty, but rich countries dominate the World Trade Organisation, which is where global trade rules are negotiated. They set rules under which poor countries continually lose out. Unfair trade robs poor people of a proper living and keeps them trapped in poverty.

## **Overfishing**

Everything comes down to one simple point: catching too much fish for the system to support leads to an overall degradation of the system. Overfishing is a non-sustainable use of the oceans. Overfishing is prevalent where populations are far too large to sustain the number of fish being caught. Not being able to catch fish and provide for families causes hunger.

## **Lack of Mother's Education and Health**

Women tend to be at the start of a vicious hunger cycle, often undernourished and under-educated throughout childhood. Married off at an early age, they often give birth to malnourished children, and lack the physical ability and

education to care for them properly. The child thus grows up malnourished, and the cycle continues.

## **Over-exploitation of the Environment**

Poor farming practices, deforestation, overcropping and overgrazing are exhausting the Earth's potential fertility and spreading the roots of hunger. Increasingly, the world's fertile farmland is under threat from erosion, salination and desertification. In many places, the environment simply cannot sustain the increasing population and the demands of the population on it.

## **Agricultural Infrastructure—**

In the long-term, improved agricultural output offers the quickest fix for poverty and hunger. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) 2004 Food Insecurity Report, all the countries that are on track to reach the first Millennium Development Goal have something in common - significantly better than average agricultural growth. Yet too many developing countries lack key agricultural infrastructure, such as enough roads, warehouses and irrigation. The results are high

transport costs, lack of storage facilities and unreliable water supplies. All conspire to limit agricultural yields and access to food. But, although the majority of developing countries depend on agriculture, their governments economic planning often emphasises urban development and industry.

***A man not only needs to know how to fish, he needs to have the freedom to do it and a place to do it. That's where community comes in. We have to help each other, and we feel government has a very important role therein.***

Bill Ayres

***There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread.***

Mahatma Gandhi

***If you want to eliminate hunger, everybody has to be involved.***

Bono



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