LIVING IN THE HOLLOW OF PLENTY

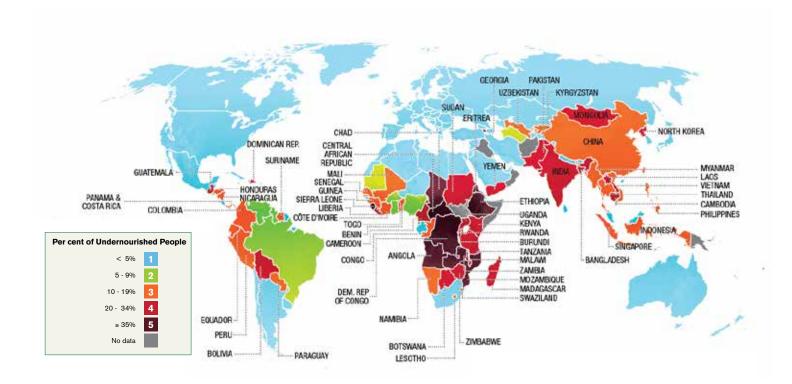


WORLD HUNGER TODAY

Although acute hunger or famine receives more attention from the world's news media, it should be remembered that the great majority of 'hunger deaths' come not from starvation but from nutrition-related sicknesses and disease.

The public image of hunger is the starving African child, whether witnessed as a victim of the Ethiopian famine of 1984, Niger in 2005 or the Horn of Africa drought and famine in 2011 – shocking and immensely tragic human events. Yet less than ten per cent of the world's hungry are involved in such crises or emergency situations – the scandal of our times is that millions more people suffer

from daily and persistent undernourishment, the less visible form of hunger, where its victims are unable to access the nutrients and energy their bodies need, where they become trapped in a cycle of hunger, their bodies stunted or underdeveloped, suffering sickness and weakness with little or no energy to earn a living, access services or ever reach their potential.



"Starvation is death by deprivation; the absence of one of the essential elements of life. It's not the result of an accident or a spasm of violence, the ravages of diseases of the inevitable decay of old age. It occurs because people are forced to live in the hollow of plenty. For decades, the world has grown enough food to nourish everyone adequately. Satellites can spot budding crop failures; shortages can be avoided. In the modern world, like never before, famine is by and large preventable. When it occurs, it represents civilization's collective failure."

NOTE TO TEACHERS

This briefing paper has been developed by Concern Worldwide, the Association of Geography Teachers of Ireland, 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World and www.developmenteducation.ie to accompany a world hunger map of the same title.

The resource is part of the **Food Right Now** education and awareness campaign and is designed to provide a set of briefing notes on different dimensions of world hunger today (definition, measurement, who's at risk, causes and debates) in addition to providing an annotated guide to readings plus relevant online sources of information plus a set of suggested activities for introducing and exploring the issue of hunger. It can be used flexibly to support the teaching of geography (and other subjects) at Junior and Senior Cycle.

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Food Right Now is a campaign run by five International NGOs including Concern demanding that the Right to Food is a reality for all of the world's people.

HUNGER

7

THE QUESTION OF DEFINITION

The terminology used to refer to different concepts of hunger can be confusing, but nonetheless it is important to make a distinction since their underlying causes and solutions differ. Similarly, although all three are food related, solutions are not uniform: there is no blanket, one-size-fits all approach to eliminating world hunger in all its forms.

■ Hunger

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) defines Hunger as consumption of fewer than 1800 kilocalories a day; the minimum that most people require to live a healthy and productive life (the Critical Minimum Limit is traditionally set at 1,500 kilocalories). The vast majority of the nearly one billion people deemed as hungry in our world suffer from Chronic Hunger caused by a lack of both sufficient quality and quantity of food.

■ Undernutrition

Undernutrition signifies deficiencies in energy, protein, essential vitamins and minerals, (or any or all of these). It is the result of inadequate intake of food, in terms of either quantity or quality, or poor utilisation of nutrients due to infections or other illnesses or a combination of these two factors. Severe undernutrition can be referred to as Acute Hunger and is associated with 35 per cent of all under five mortalities, accounting for nearly three million deaths each year.

■ Malnutrition

Malnutrition refers more broadly to both undernutrition (problems of deficiencies) and overnutrition (problems of unbalanced diets, such as consumption of too many calories in relation to requirements with low intake of micronutrient-rich foods, e.g. green vegetables). This type of hunger can also be referred to as Hidden Hunger and includes almost two billion people worldwide, including many people in the 'developed' world with improper diets.

■ Food security

Covers issues such as availability, access, utilisation and stability and exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

■ Famine

While there are many popular definitions of famine, it has a specifically technical definition from the World Food Programme based on food security and nutrition. In order for a famine to be declared, there must be evidence of the following three conditions:

- At least 20 per cent of the population has fewer than 2,100 calories of food a day
- The prevalence of acute malnutrition must exceed 30 per cent of children
- The death rate must exceed two deaths per 10,000 people, or four child deaths per 10,000 people per day.

Sources: UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, World Food Programme, International Food Policy Research Centre



HUNGER & AGRICULTURAL TRENDS TODAY



Hunger numbers for Sub-Saharan Africa are rising, and at an increasing rate:

- increased at about 2m a year between 1991 and 2000
- about 1m a year between 2000 and 2005
- about 3.5m a year between 2005 and 2008
- about 6m a year between 2008 and 2011

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012*, 870 million people, or 12.5 per cent of the global population are chronically undernourished. The vast majority of these live in developing countries where about 852 million, or slightly fewer than 15 per cent of the population, do not receive an adequately nutritious food supply.

Despite pessimistic forecasts to the contrary the report states that progress in reducing hunger since 1990 has been more pronounced than was previously believed however most of the progress was achieved before 2007-08, and since then global progress in reducing hunger has slowed and levelled off.

Overall, women and children account for the highest proportion of the chronically hungry. High food prices and lower incomes put poor households at an additional risk of not providing expectant mothers, infants, and children with adequate nutrition. Indeed, more than one third of child deaths worldwide are related to inadequate nutrition.

Most of the men and women, usually farmers, who live on less than \$1.25 a day (the Absolute Poverty Line – although most observers argue that this 'line' is way too low) are found in rural areas, lacking land tenure, infrastructure, and access to health services or electricity. Increasingly, however, cities are not immune to hunger. In the 1980s and 1990s urbanisation increased by four per cent each year, while poverty levels continued to increase as well. The population of slum dwellers is also growing worldwide – at almost one per cent each year. Rising food prices during the 2007/08 world food price crisis were especially hard on the urban poor. In Kenya, for example, FAO estimated that 4.1 million urban poor in 2009 were 'highly food-insecure' and as many as 7.6 million were unable to meet their daily food needs.

While world food prices have fallen since 2008, they remain well above pre-2007 levels, and the trend continued steadily upward in 2009 and 2010. Many food aid programmes have not been able to purchase as much food, and the recession has meant less money for food aid. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development reported that it was only able to donate \$2.2 billion in 2009 - a decrease of 15 per cent from 2008.

Funding for agricultural development is down as well. The new multibillion-dollar U.S. food security and agriculture initiative (Feed the Future) proposes to invest \$20 billion in African agriculture in the next decade. This is a timely recognition of the urgent need to invest more in this sector - but much of the money still needs to be raised.

Agriculture's share of global development aid has dropped from over 16 per cent to a meagre four per cent since 1980. Moreover, only nine African nations allocate even ten per cent of their national budgets to agriculture. Most of the continent's poor and hungry people depend on agriculture for all of their livelihoods. Yet public spending on agriculture is often lowest in countries with economies based on agriculture - in other words, farmers are, ironically, the hungriest people of all.

Increasingly, over the past two decades, the least developed countries have depended more on food imports. In 11 sub-Saharan African countries, half of the grain they used was imported in 2005–06. In seven other countries, imports accounted for 30–50 per cent of their grain.

Source: B. Halweil and D. Nierenberg (2011) Charting a New Path to Eliminating Hunger in Worldwatch Institute (2011) State of the World Report: Innovations that Nourish the Planet, Washington. The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012, FAO

MEASURING HUNGER

THE GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX

Measuring hunger like measuring literacy, poverty or child mortality is an attempt to capture the 'multi-dimensional' aspects of human development. Measurement tools, however, are not simply about counting numbers or noting trends but, when used effectively, are about raising awareness, drawing attention to regional disparities, providing insights into barriers to development and, perhaps most importantly, highlighting successful interventions. In the introduction to its 2012 Global Hunger Index report the authors remind us that even though 'abundant technological tools exist to collect and assess data almost instantaneously, there are still enormous time lags when it comes to reporting vital statistics on hunger!

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) was developed by the International Food Policy Institute (IFPRI) to provide a detailed statistical tool to measure and analyse the situation of hunger by country. It is published annually by IFPRI, German NGO Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide. The Index ranks countries on a 100 point scale, with 0 being the best score (no hunger) and 100 being the worst (neither of these is achieved in reality); the higher the score, the worse the food situation of a country. The different value ranges reflect the individual country situations - less than 4.9 reflects 'low hunger'; between five and 9.9 'moderate hunger; between ten and 19.9 'serious hunger'; between 20 and 29.9 'alarming' with values exceeding 30 being 'extremely alarming'.

The GHI combines three equally weighted indicators:

- the proportion of the undernourished as a percentage of the population
- the prevalence of underweight children (a body mass index of less than 18.5) under the age of five
- the mortality rate of children under the age
- of five (the number of children who die by
- the age of five, per 1,000 live births per year (the world average in 2011was 51 (5.1 per cent down from 87 or 8.7 per cent in 1990); the average was seven in developed countries and 57 in developing countries (109 in sub-Saharan Africa).

The data used in the 2011 Index are for the period 2004 to 2009 and are based on detailed analysis from the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN, from the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

The 2012 Index (the seventh edition) notes that:

- 15 countries reduced their scores by 50 per cent or more
- Burundi, Eritrea and Haiti currently have the highest proportion of undernourished people, more than 50 per cent of the population

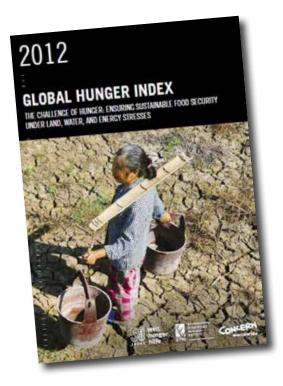
In terms of absolute progress, Angola, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, Niger, and Vietnam saw the largest improvements between 1990 and 2011

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- 20 countries still have levels of hunger that are 'extremely alarming' (Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Eritrea) or 'alarming' (most of the countries with alarming scores are in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia)
- Among the countries in which the hunger situation worsened, the Democratic Republic of Congo stands out as its GHI score rose by about 63 per cent due to ongoing conflict and political instability.

Each year the GHI report focuses on a specific topic. In 2011 the Index highlighted rising and volatile food prices in recent years and the effects these have had on hunger and nutrition. GHI 2012 focuses on the issue of how to ensure sustainable food security under conditions of water, land and energy stress.

The Index provides an excellent research and analysis opportunity for both teachers and students with effective infographics; background facts and figures; thematic analysis and country and regional case studies.



For more information or to order a copy of the Global Hunger Index go to: www.concern.net/resources/global-hunger-index-2012

ANALYSING THE CAUSES OF HUNGER

Low agricultural productivity:

Nearly half the world's hungry (some 400 million people) live on small farms that do not produce enough food to feed their families let alone earn an income. Yet, international aid to agriculture decreased from a high of 17 per cent in 1982 to 3.7 per cent in 2006. This reduction in aid, coupled with a shift in support to growing cash crops for export has meant that poor farmers have not had sufficient access to productive resources such as seeds, tools, training, fertilisers, extension to credit or secure access to land.

Poverty:

Poverty is the root 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 starchy foods, such as rice and bread, with few fruits and vegetables or animal products leading to low calorie intake and micronutrient deficiencies. In children particularly under the age of two years such inadequate diets lead to wasting, stunting and poor brain development, conditions that can never be reversed.

Gender Inequality:

More than 60 per cent of the chronically hungry people in the world are women. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Anan argued that in the developing world; '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.' It is estimated that 50 per cent of women in developing countries are lacking in iron, contributing to the deaths of over 500,000 dying in child-birth each year.



Conflict & Poor Governance:

It is a fact that no country with a strong democracy has ever suffered from famine and it is also true that 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 or ineffective governments are much more likely to suffer from chronic food shortages leading to wide-spread hunger.

Unjust Trade Regimes:

The terms of international trade are for the most part stacked against poor and developing countries. Currently, markets work against the poor in both directions. The poor cannot afford the price of food and, at the same time, they are unable to sell their produce on the market to earn a living. Reform of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy and of World Trade Organisation rules is a priority and must allow for fair access to international markets.

Climate Change & Natural Disasters:

The worst affected hunger hotspots are to be found in regions of climatic extremes; areas which experience drought, flooding, unpredictable precipitation patterns, soil erosion and desertification (increasingly as a result of

Climate Change patterns). Although technological advances have made it possible to produce food in extreme climatic conditions (Israel's drip irrigated desert fields or Dubai's lush expanses of greenery serve as examples), most hotspots lack the capital and infrastructure necessary for such investments.



Falling Remittances:

Worldwide, nearly \$300 billion was sent in remittances to developing countries in 2007 from relatives living outside their native country, surpassing global official development assistance (ODA) by 60 per cent. With the global financial crises and consequent increase in unemployment, many of these remittances have now dried up leaving family 'back home' even more vulnerable to poverty and hunger.

For more on this see Olivier De Schutter (2010) Facing up to the scandal of world hunger - how can we ensure food for all? Trócaire Development Review.

LINKING HUNGER AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



A CASE STUDY OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

In 2012, the United Nations Development Programme published its first comprehensive human development report for Africa (UNDP Africa Human Development Report Towards a Food Secure Future) in which it outlined and analysed the issue of hunger and its impact on human development and sketched out the priorities for the years ahead. The report paints a shocking picture of the reality today and its human consequences but it also highlights what could be done to tackle this reality if 'courageous citizens and dedicated leaders' take decisive steps and bold decisions.

The report provides a rich opportunity for teachers (especially geography teachers) and students as it contains:

- A powerful analysis of the nature and impact of hunger in human development terms
- An excellent overview of the natural, social, political and economic dimensions of the issue
- Sections on demography, environmental challenges and water and soil
- An assessment of the impact of climate change (with a section analysing natural disasters in Africa, their impact and Africa's vulnerability to weather patterns)
- An outline of what the immediate priorities should be in tackling the issue
- Maps, statistics, graphics, illustrative country, regional and sectoral case studies

It is a very rich source of information and analysis and could be effectively used for student research topics and skills development.

It can be downloaded for free from www.undp.org

Next we summarise the key points from the report and include a number of (limited) extracts.

Report Summary

■ For many decades, the dominant image of sub-Saharan Africa has been one of dehumanising hunger where more than one in four four Africans are undernourished and where food insecurity is widespread and consistent. Famine, which has virtually disappeared elsewhere in the world, continues to haunt parts of sub-Saharan Africa:

'Famines grab headlines, but chronic food insecurity and malnutrition are more insidious, often silent, daily calamities for millions of Africans'.

- Yet sub-Saharan Africa has ample agricultural land, plenty of water and a generally favourable climate for growing food; in the last ten years many African countries recorded world-beating economic growth rates and became among the fastest movers on the Human Development Index.
- Africans, including those in the Sahel, are not condemned to a lifetime of hunger and food insecurity. The knowledge, technology and resources for closing the food security deficit are available today but there is no 'one' simple solution. Economic growth alone will not solve the problem; interventions in agriculture, health, education and nutrition to research, support services, sanitation, local government, commerce and transport will be required.
- Building a 'food secure continent' will require very substantial change that will be most effective if accompanied by a shift of resources, capacities and decisions to smallholder farmers, poor communities and women. 'When women and other vulnerable groups gain a voice in the decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods, their capacity to produce, trade and use food is materially enhanced'.
- For decades the policies of national governments and international institutions neglected sub-Saharan Africa's rural and agricultural development in favour of urban populations and now population change, environmental pressure, and global and local climate change are hugely influencing the region's development options. Development strategies promoted 'self-defeating policies that put guns before bread, cities before farms and fatty foods before nutrition'.
- Building food security for all Africans requires focus and action in a number of critical areas from increasing the productivity of smallholder farmers to improving nutrition among children, building increasingly shock-resistant communities and sustainable food systems and, in particular empowering women and the rural poor. Many of these most critical and cost-effective nutrition interventions are not expensive.

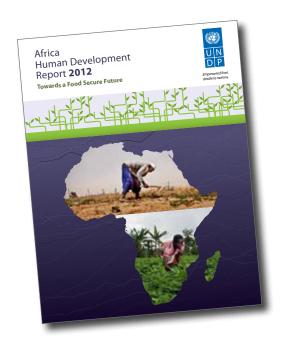
EXCERPTS FROM UNDP (2012) AFRICA HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT TOWARDS A FOOD SECURE FUTURE

... People are considered well-fed and wellnourished when they can obtain safe food of sufficient quantity, variety and quality to sustain their lives. They need food that provides energy for growth, physical activity and basic human functions, from breathing and thinking to circulation and digestion. When starvation terminates these vital functions, people die. But when poor nutrition insidiously compromises these functions every day, it is the future that is silently forfeited. Children, their development arrested, are denied the realization of their full potential. Malnourished adults fail to develop the full range of their capabilities and are unable to function at their best. And the human capital of nations erodes inexorably.

... Human development is the expansion of capabilities: the freedoms that people have to lead lives they value. Being well-nourished at all times without the threat of hunger is an important capability. The human development approach overlaps with the right to food through its focus on people's dignity and freedoms ...

... Hunger and malnutrition – direct outcomes of food insecurity – intercept human development on a basic level. These two scourges restrict vital human functions, threaten the right to life and block opportunities for developing capabilities. They foreclose people's choices by impairing physical and cognitive growth, increasing vulnerability to disease and shrinking people's scope in life to mere survival. Millions of Africans have suffered this plight of hunger and malnutrition for far too long ...

... Hungry children with weakened immune systems die prematurely from communicable diseases such as dysentery, malaria and respiratory infections that are ordinarily preventable and treatable. They start school late, learn less and drop out early. Malnourished mothers are at greater risk of dying in childbirth and of delivering low-birthweight babies who fail to survive infancy. Undernourished babies who make it through infancy often suffer stunting that cripples and shortens their lives.10 As adults they are likely to give birth to another generation of low-birthweight babies, perpetuating the vicious cycle of low human development and destitution ...



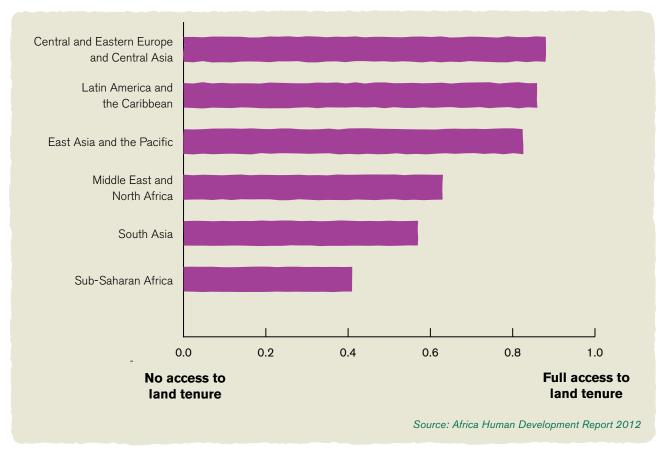
... Food insecurity debilitates society by increasing mortality, disease and disability. They inflate the direct economic costs of coping with health impacts. And they inflict on economies the indirect costs of diminished worker productivity, absenteeism and lowered returns on education. In extreme cases mass hunger becomes a powder keg that can bring down an entire political and economic order. None of this is conducive to human development ...

...There are strong and mutually reinforcing links between expanding women's capabilities and enhancing food security in sub-Saharan Africa. There is plenty of evidence ... that empowering women is a highly efficient way to achieve progress across the multiple dimensions of food security. But even beyond such instrumental qualities and possible gains in efficiency, women's empowerment must remain a central policy priority simply because equality and non-discrimination are of intrinsic value. Women's rights are human rights and deserve to be promoted for that reason alone. This principle is well-established among African governments, which have all ratified the global Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and through the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the rights of Women. But there is still much work to be done in turning these rights into reality ...

WOMEN, LAND AND INEQUALITY

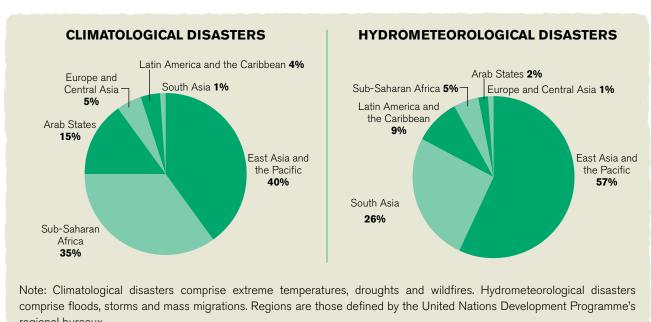


WOMEN HAVE LESS CONTROL OF LAND IN SUB-SAHARAN **AFRICA THAN ANYWHERE ELSE, 2009**



CLIMATOLOGICAL DISASTERS

SHARE OF NATURAL DISASTERS, BY REGION, 2005-2010



regional bureaux. Source: Africa Human Development Report 2012

FOOD AND NUTRITION: WHO DECIDES?

AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE



'At first glance, the question "who decides about food and nutrition?" seems to be a rhetorical one. It would seem natural that the people themselves decided about what to eat and what not. The right to decide and to control which food to have is inherent to the human right to adequate food. This decision is to be taken by the rights-holders themselves. However, in reality, hundreds of millions of persons on this planet, and especially those most affected by hunger and malnutrition, have lost this decision power, at least in part.'

This is the opening argument of the recently published Right to Food and Nutrition Watch Report *Who Decides About Global Food and Nutrition?* (the report is published by three German and Dutch NGOs with support from an additional 12 NGOs worldwide – the 2012 report is the 5th edition). The report argues that it is impossible to combat the causes of hunger while keeping existing power relations untouched.

According to Huguette Akplogan-Dossa (regional co-ordinator of the African Network on the Right to Food) '... food and power are related. It is almost impossible to find one person among the powerful in society and politics worldwide who does not have enough to eat...the tendency is for exclusion from economic and political decision-making to go hand in hand with incidences of hunger and malnutrition'.

The report is particularly concerned about the increasing influence and control of agribusinesses and financial companies over food and nutrition.

'...Far too often, agribusinesses and nutrition companies use their weight and influence to increase their profit margins, and to manipulate the rules to their interests and convenience, without regard for the best interests of small-scale food producers and the survival of their communities — let alone the moral and legal requirements of the human right to food...'

The NGOs highlight what they call a 'faultline' in how to deal with the challenge of food security – access to safe and nutritious food; the dominant 'mainstream approach' (favoured by governments and international organisations, such as Agra - Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa, backed by the Gates Foundation) focuses on 'technocratic' approaches – better seeds and technology – to boost productivity and access to markets.

In contrast, the NGOs and civil society groups behind the report place the emphasis on a rights-based approach arguing that an agricultural system that features large US and EU farm subsidies, along with a concentration of power among a few grain giants ADM, Cargill and Bunge (the main corporate beneficiaries of US food aid) actually contributes to food insecurity in poor countries. '... Allowing decision-making to be in the hands of a powerful but reduced group has led to a centralised model of food supply, which in many cases results in famines, political abuse, or infringement on the state's basic obligations when it comes to human rights: to respect, protect and fulfil them.'

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter has highlighted how the private sector tries to use technical solutions for what are fundamentally social problems. De Schutter has called on countries committed to scaling up nutrition to begin by regulating the marketing of commercial infant formula and other breast-milk substitutes. He has also noted the tension between a strategy that promotes processed foods, enriched with nutrients to the point that diets become 'medicalised', and one that promotes local and regional food systems, as well as a shift towards less heavily processed and more nutritious food.

A chapter in the report draws attention to the promotion of soft drinks on school premises in Mexico by companies – endorsed by many school authorities, which provide space for sales and advertising in exchange for school supplies or financial benefits. They note the serious problems in Mexico's regions with large indigenous populations, where obesity rates are growing faster within the poorest quintile. 'It is precisely in these indigenous regions where the most aggressive and unregulated marketing practices of sweetened soft drinks take place'; these practices include a 35 per cent price cut, promotion in Spanish and indigenous languages and numerous sales outlets within and around schools.

The Paradox of Today's Modern Agriculture

300,000 Known Plant Species

100,000 Used by humans

30,000 Edible for humans

7,000 Used as food at local level

120 Important at national scale

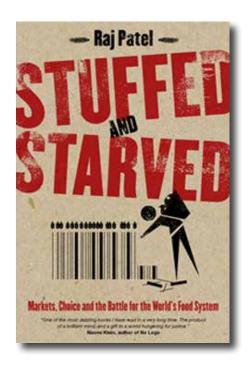
30 Provide 90% of calories

3 Make up 60% of food grown (Wheat, Rice, Maize) According to the report human rights are the most powerful tool to ensure progress against hunger and malnutrition and in tackling their structural causes. They highlight the importance of secure tenure rights and equitable access to land, fisheries and forests as a means of eradicating hunger and poverty, supporting sustainable development and enhancing the environment.

The report notes:

'... a clear trend of governments' and multilateral organisations' increased recognition and promotion of the private sector and related philanthropic foundations as important stakeholders in the struggle against hunger and malnutrition, including through public private partnerships (PPPs), and as key investors in agriculture and sustainable development, without adequate public regulation of existing conflicts of interest.'

For more on this debate,: Rajeev Patel (2007) Stuffed and Starved: the hidden battle for the world food system, Melville; R. Thurow and S. Kilman (2009) Enough: Why the Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty, Public Affairs and Michael Pollen's (2006) The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Search for a Perfect Meal in a Fast-Food World (Penguin).



The Right to Food: some examples from sub-Saharan Africa and around the world

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

- 1996 South Africa includes the right to food in its constitution
- 2006 Mali adopts its Agricultural Policy Act
- 2007 South Africa's Equality Court demands that the fishery policy be amended to comply with the right to food
- 2009 Malawi finalises its draft Right to Food Bill
- 2009 Mozambique establishes a drafting committee to elaborate a right to food framework law

INTERNATIONAL

- 1948 UN General Assembly adopts the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (Article 25)
- 1974 UN World Food Conference adopts the Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition
- 1976 The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) enters into force, including Article 11 on the right to adequate food
- 1987 The United Nations Economic and Social Council establishes the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to monitor implementation of the ICESCR, marking the beginning of a more precise legal interpretation of economic, social and cultural rights
- 1988 The States Parties to the American Convention on Human Rights adopt the Additional Protocol in the Area

- of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights including the Right to Food (Article 12)
- 1996 The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) World Food Summit announces the Rome Declaration on World Food Security, the first coherent plan to make the right to food a reality
- 1999 The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopts General Comment No. 12, the Right to Adequate Food, describing state obligations derived from the ICESCR regarding the right to food
- 2000 The Commission on Human Rights establishes a special rapporteur on the right to food.
- 2000 The Millennium Development Goals, arising from the UN General Assembly Millennium Declaration, includes Goal one to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015
- 2002 The Rome Declaration at the World Food Summit calls for establishing an intergovernmental working group to develop voluntary guidelines for the progressive realisation of the right to food
- 2004 The FAO adopts the Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food which offer guidance to states on how to implement their obligations on the right to food.
- 2009 The UN General Assembly adopts the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR, making the right to food justiciable at the international level

Based on work of Olivier De Schutter (2010) UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

DEBATING HUNGER



The World Food Programme in association with www.dosomething.org offers these 11 'myths' about world hunger for discussion and debate.

There isn't enough food to feed the world

Argument → there is enough food in the world today for everyone to have the nourishment necessary for a healthy and productive life. There is, however, a need to be more efficient, sustainable, and fair in how we grow and distribute food. This means supporting small-scale farmers and making sure that food 'safety nets' are in place to protect the most vulnerable people from hunger.

Resolving hunger means ensuring people have enough to eat

Argument → hunger involves the type of food you eat; good nutrition means having the right combination of nutrients and calories needed for healthy development. It's especially important for infants, pregnant women and young children.

Droughts and other natural disasters are to blame for hunger

Argument → communities that build irrigation systems, storage facilities, and roads to connect them to markets are able to improve harvests. Then people can survive even during times of drought; nature is only one factor when it comes to hunger. The proportion of food crises that are linked to human causes has more than doubled since 1992. Conflict is often at the heart of today's worst food crises.

Dry Earth, Chalbi Desert, Kenya. The Chalbi Desert was part of Lake Turkana.

As the lake receded due to climate change, the desert was formed.



Hunger exists when food is unavailable in shops and markets

Argument → people can go hungry even when there's plenty of food around. Often it's a question of access - they can't afford food or they can't get to local markets. One way we can help is through cash transfers and electronic vouchers which give people the ability to buy nutritious foods in local markets.

All of the world's hungry live in Africa

Argument → of the world's nearly one billion hungry, over half live in Asia and the Pacific; hunger is also a relevant issue in the United States, where 50 million Americans are food insecure.

Too many people go hungry in my own country for me to worry about hunger abroad

Argument → One in seven people in the world are hungry, which means one in seven people can't create, study, or reach their full potential as human beings. That affects all of us. Hunger slows progress on other important areas that connect nations, including security.

Hunger and famine are not easy to predict and can't be prepared for

Argument → tools exist to monitor and predict trends in food production as well as food prices. For example, the Famine Early Warning System Network analyses meteorological and economic factors to alert the world to the possibility of hunger hotspots and famine.

Hunger is basically a health issue

Argument → This issue also affects education and the economy. Hungry children struggle to focus, learn, or even attend school. Without education, it's much harder for them to grow up and contribute to the growth of the national economy. A study in Guatemala found that boys who received fortified food before the age of three grew up to have wages 46 per cent higher than those in a control group.

People are only hungry during emergencies or disasters

Argument → Emergencies only account for eight per cent of the world's hungry; there are close to one billion hungry people in the world who do not make the headlines and yet they go to bed hungry every night. This is why long-term efforts like school meals programmes are so important.

There are more pressing global issues than hunger

Argument → when populations are hungry, economies suffer, people fight, and farmers can't grow their crops effectively. We need to tackle hunger to be able to resolve environmental, economic, and security issues.

There is nothing we can do to help hungry people

Argument → there's plenty you can do, as individuals or as part of a group. Signing on to ACT NOW, 1000 DAYS, Fairtrade or Stop Climate Chaos campaigns are all ways we can support efforts to end world hunger.

Suggested activity:

Use the internet and the references provided to find a statistical basis for each of the arguments provided above – these can be found from a variety of websites associated with the issue of world hunger. The research could be undertaken in groups and the evidence collated could then be compared and discussed.

OPINION: THE REAL HUNGER GAMES

Hunger and malnutrition are man-made. They are hardwired in the design of the industrial, chemical model of agriculture. But just as hunger is created by design, healthy and nutritious food for all can also be designed, through food democracy.



... chemical fertilisers, which are essentially poison, undermine food security by destroying the fertility of soil by killing the biodiversity of soil organisms, friendly insects that control pests and pollinators like bees and butterflies necessary for plant reproduction and food production. Industrial production has led to a severe ecological and social crisis...

It also determines distribution patterns and entitlements. If we grow millets and pulses, we will have more nutrition per capita. If we grow food by using chemicals, we are growing monocultures — this means that we will have less nutrition per acre, per capita.

... The agrarian crisis, the food crisis and the nutrition and health crisis are intimately connected. They need to be addressed together. The objective of agriculture policy cannot be based on promoting industrial processing of food. The 'chemicalisation' of agriculture and food are recipes for 'denutrification'. They cannot solve the problem of hunger and malnutrition.

... Industrial chemical agriculture also causes hunger and malnutrition by robbing crops of nutrients. Industrially produced food is nutritionally empty but loaded with chemicals and toxins. Nutrition in food comes from the nutrients in the soil. Industrial agriculture, based on the NPK mentality of synthetic nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium-based fertilisers, lead to depletion of vital micro-nutrients and trace elements such as magnesium, zinc, calcium, iron. The increase in yields does not translate into more nutrition. In fact, it is leading to malnutrition. To get the required amount of nutrition people need to eat much more food.

... The most effective and low-cost strategy for addressing hunger and malnutrition is through biodiverse organic farming. It enriches the soil and nutrient-rich soils give us nutrient-rich food.

... Plants, people and the soil are part of one food web, which is the web of life. The test of good farming is how well it works to increase the health and resilience of the food web.

POPULATION GROWTH AND HUNGER



The population of the planet is projected to reach over ten billion by 2050 which has given rise to a heated debate about the carrying capacity of the earth across a whole range of issues, not least of which is the world's ability to feed its ever-growing population. Below, we have summarised some of the arguments in the current debate.

Suggested activity:

Use the information below to initiate a debate on the subject; add in additional materials and arguments; identify the two major competing frameworks of analysis on the subject. Also search for the arguments of, for example, Raj Patel, Gordon Conway, Vandana Shiva, Lappé/Collins/Rosset, Bjørn Lomborg, Paul Ehrlich (including his recent arguments) and those of the Worldwatch Institute and the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex etc.).

For more information go to: Can the world feed seven billion on www.dochas.ie

World Hunger and Poverty on www.globalissues.org



Reduce Population to feed the world

First of all, there are about one billion people who are chronically hungry. Given the tremendous burden of food production on the earth's ecosystems, given the fact that we have not properly fed all the people on the planet to date and given the fact that pressures are going to increase, population growth remains a significant problem.

Norman Borlaug, founder of the Green Revolution, said that the success of the past century is only a 'breathing space' to deal with the need to slow population growth.

In order for the food supply to meet the demand, we must slow down population growth, and at the same time, invest in agricultural research.

About 70 per cent of consumption of freshwater is for irrigation for agriculture. Our heavy uses of resources, along with intensive methods of farming degrade the environment over time. These practices aren't sustainable into the future.

We have over seven billion people, and they are on the search for enough food, water and energy to meet their needs, to make economic progress. But when you add it all up, we are already an unsustainable world society. Climate change, water stress, environmental degradation, species extinction are all increasing in importance and the challenges they pose are immense without adding larger numbers.

The FAO estimates that food production must rise by 50 per cent by 2030 to meet growing demand...an unsustainable prospect.

Population is not a cause of hunger

Rapid population growth is not the root cause of hunger. Like hunger itself, it results from underlying inequities that deprive people, especially poor women, of economic opportunity and security.

Rapid population growth and hunger are endemic to societies where land ownership, jobs, education, health care, and old age security are beyond the reach of most people.

Nowhere does population density explain hunger. For every Bangladesh, a densely populated and hungry country, we find a Nigeria, Brazil or Bolivia, where abundant food resources coexist with hunger. Or we find a country like the Netherlands, where very little land per person has not prevented it from eliminating hunger and becoming a net exporter of food.

If the so-called developed world is serious about protecting the planet, its people simply need to start consuming less; it is the developed world which is more of a threat to the long-term sustainability of the planet.

The carbon footprint of the average Tanzanian (and indeed the average African) is a fraction of that of their counterpart in the West.

Keeping girls in education, upholding women's rights, and improving their access to effective reproductive health services is the ultimate answer to not only hunger but many of the challenges the world faces Reduce Population to feed the world Population is not a cause of hunger

Source: Michael Doorly (2012) 'Living in the hollow of plenty' World Hunger Today in C. Regan (ed.) 80:20 Development in an Unequal World, Bray and Pretoria, 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World and UNISA Press

1/3 OF FOOD

PRODUCED FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION IS WASTED



According to a 2011 study undertaken by Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology (for FAO – Global Food Loses and Food Waste), a full one-third of the food produced for human consumption winds up lost or wasted globally, about 1.3 billion tons a year. The report highlights that the amount of food lost or wasted annually is almost equal in industrialised countries (222 million tons) and developing countries (230 million tons) but that over 40 per cent of waste in industrialised countries occurs at retail and consumer levels. In contrast, in developing countries, food loss occurs during the post-harvest and processing stages of the food supply chain.

The total per capita production of edible parts of food for human consumption in Europe and North America is about 900 kg/year, while it is only 460/kg a year in Sub-Saharan Africa and South/Southeast Asia. In industrialised countries food 'is thrown away even if it is still suitable for human consumption'. This helps explain why the food wasted per capita in Europe and North America is 95 to 115 kilos per year but only six to 11 kilograms a year in Sub-Saharan Africa and South/Southeast Asia.

According to the FAO 'Food commodities are traded at an international market, and waste in one part of the world affects prices in other parts of the world ... when food is thrown away in rich countries this affects the availability of food in poor countries ...'

The report argues that the reasons why produce that is less visually appealing is thrown away include:

■ The argument of supermarkets that they have 'high appearance quality standards' for fresh products which leads to food waste; the report suggests that supermarkets should conduct surveys among its

- consumers and then offer a broader quality range of products in the retail stores
- Supermarkets throw out less visually appealing produce because it is cheap to throw away such food
- Supermarkets also display large quantities of produce which leads to food waste; '...when shopping, consumers expect store shelves to be well filled' - continually replenished supplies mean that food products close to expiry are often ignored by consumers

Consumer attitudes and the abundance of produce lead to high food waste. Educating people about food waste through school and political initiatives will help change people's attitudes, according to the report.

On the significance of the issue, the report has this to say:

'The issue of food losses is of high importance in the efforts to combat hunger, raise income and improve food security in the world's poorest countries. Food losses have an impact on food security for poor people, on food quality and safety, on economic development and on the environment. The exact causes of food losses vary throughout the world and are very much dependent on the specific conditions and local situations in a given country. In broad terms, food losses will be influenced by crop production choices and patterns, internal infrastructure and capacity, marketing chains and channels for distribution, and consumer purchasing and food use practices. Irrespective of the level of economic development and maturity of systems in a country, food losses should be kept to a minimum.'



ONE THOUSAND DAYS

1000 DAYS OF BABY NUTRITION THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING

In January 2008 the medical journal Lancet published a series of articles defining the magnitude and consequences of under nutrition and demonstrating the availability and potential benefits of proven interventions focusing on a child's development from pregnancy to 24 months of age (a thousand days). These interventions include:

- empowering women so they can pursue optimal nutrition during pregnancy and when children are born (including breast feeding, ante-natal supplements, appropriate complementary feeds from age six months and food-related hygiene),
- enabling adequate intake of vitamins and minerals among those most in need through diverse diets, fortified foods and supplements
- ensuring that those who are at risk of malnutrition can access and benefit from the food and nutrients they need for growth and good health (through special attention to the development of communities at risk of malnutrition, nutritional management of infections and therapeutic feeding of individuals who are malnourished). Special care will be needed to ensure that hard-to-reach populations can access the interventions that are being offered.

Improved access to, and availability of, nutritious food will have significant impacts on under nutrition. Direct food-based interventions usually combine support to, and diversification of, food production as well as improved food storage and processing, reliable access to bio-energy for cooking and labour-saving interventions to enable households to have more time available for adequate nourishment and care of children and other dependents. Surplus production can be sold or bartered locally, generating additional income for household food purchases, and facilitating the access of local consumers to nutritious foods. Macro and micro nutrient rich foods are particularly important as contributors to better nutrition. Societies may benefit from a fuller understanding about the nutritional benefits of different dietary, consumption and hygiene practices. Establishing the context within which households and communities can improve nutrition may also require the development of local institutions so as to improve food hygiene practices, local production systems, safety nets and, where necessary, cash transfer systems.

Download the advocacy toolkit available on www.thousanddays.org

For more on Concern's involvement with the 1000 DAYS movement, download the report from www.concern.net/1000days and explore the suggested 13 actions that could make a significant difference.



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES



The individual sections in these briefing notes are designed to be photo-copied and used in small and large group work.

They can form the basis of debate and discussion as well as of additional research and reporting.

Review the Hunger Map itself; brainstorm immediate reactions. What does the map say about the shape of our world? Use the information to make four key points about the geography of world hunger today; consider the following questions:

- What human rights issues does the Hunger Map raise?
- What challenges does hunger raise for the societies or countries shown?
- What challenges does it raise for us here in

The answers to these questions could then form the basis for additional debate and discussion focused on how such challenges might be met.

The cartoon on page three of this publication is but one focused on the themes of hunger and famine on www.developmenteducation.ie/cartoons-andphotos/there are over 25 cartoons in the collection. Encourage students to choose the one they think most captures a key point or argument about hunger and explain their choices. Check out the cartoons on the theme at www. cartoonmovement.com/cartoon/240 and discuss how cartoonists depict the issue (e.g. the images, words, links and styles used).

Ask the students to review this site www. gapminder.org/ and to explore the huge range of resources and arguments included by Hans Rosling and his colleagues (see his presentations on www.ted. com) and choose which item relates most directly to the theme of world hunger. The site is a very rich and creative source of information on a massive variety of themes directly related to geography and has a teachers section also.

Pick four images of hunger from varying time periods and countries using the internet or magazines - these can be photographs, political cartoons, famine relief campaign posters etc. Take note of the year, country and any captions or background information that accompany the images - these will be given to the students later.

Divide the class into four groups; ask each group to describe the image that they see by making a list of keywords. Now distribute the relevant captions/ information and ask them to compare these with their own descriptions. Are there differences? Are the words largely positive or negative? What do they think the photographer/artist is trying to say? How accurate are the images? Should an alternative image(s) have been used?

A general discussion of all of the images can follow assessing the use of images to depict situations of hunger, deprivation and famine. Students should question how influential images are in their everyday lives. This activity calls into question the way in which images are constructed, portrayed and to what ends they are used. The notion of the role of the media and how they control access to images of hunger can be applied to any of the images.

See also www.dochas.ie/Code/ to explore the voluntary code on images and messages adopted by Irish aid and development organisations.

Imagine you are the editor of a national newspaper and have been asked to write an editorial based on the content of either one of the following facts recently published in a report on world hunger.

- 870 million people do not have enough to eat. 98 per cent of these people live in the developing world (FAO 2012)
- Overweight and obesity are the fifth leading risk for global deaths with 2.8 million adults dying each year as a result. In 2008, over 200 million men and 300 million women were obese (WHO 2010)

Invite students to review internet sites (and especially their blogs) such as Pambazuka News, Socialwatch, International Food Policy Research Institute, Girl Effect, Guardian Newspaper London etc. What do they have to say on world hunger?

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Split the class into groups of thress or four.

Give each group a copy of the quotes below on a page and ask them to read through and pick a quote which strikes them most. Ask them to give feed back to the class as to why they picked the quote they did and what its implications might be?

'The loss of human life [due to hunger] is as great as if an atomic bomb – similar to the one that destroyed Hiroshima during the Second World War – were dropped on a densely populated area every three days.'

Source: Womenaid Press Release on hunger

It's been called the invisible killer, the silent emergency. It is not famine and it does not make the headlines. It is the grinding poverty which, day in day out, deprives millions of people across the globe of the essentials of a decent life. In particular, they are deprived of an adequate diet. This 'normal hunger' will kill their children in the first year, destroy their health in adulthood, and take them to an early grave...They die very quietly. They are the brothers and sisters of Alberto, who died aged six months from malnutrition and infection, because his father, a cocoa worker in Brazil, does not earn enough to buy sufficient food, let alone medicine. They are the cousins of Hassan, who died aged three months from malnutrition and TB in a hospital ward in Sudan, long after the famine had ended.'

Source: Chris Bryer: The Hunger

'Starvation is death by deprivation; the absence of one of the essential elements of life. It's not the result of an accident or a spasm of violence, the ravages of diseases or the inevitable decay of old age. It occurs because people are forced to live in the hollow of plenty. For decades, the world has grown enough food to nourish everyone adequately. Satellites can spot budding crop failures; shortages can be avoided. In the modern world, like never before, famine is by and large preventable. When it occurs, it represents civilization's collective failure.'

'...[it is] a man-made catastrophe, caused by one anonymous decision at a time, one day at a time, by people, institutions, and governments doing what they thought was best for themselves or sometimes even what they thought at the time was best for Africa'.

Source: Thurow and Kilman (2009) Enough: Why the Poorest Starve in the Age of Plenty

'Rather than promoting food production for the domestic market, the donors were encouraging the development of so-called 'high value-added' fruits, vegetables, oilseeds and cotton for export on the best irrigated farmland' - Q for students: What high value food products from developing countries are available in your supermarket - Kenya peas/beans; American asparagus; etc. - consequences?'

'On the contrary, famines are spurred on as a result of a global oversupply of grain staples. Since the 1980s, grain markets have been deregulated under the supervision of the World Bank and US grain surpluses are used systematically as in the case of Somalia to destroy the peasantry and destabilise national food agriculture. The latter becomes, under these circumstances, far more vulnerable to the vagaries of drought'

Source: Professor Michel Chossudovsky of the University of Ottawa

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Discuss the facts below with students and review 'The Girl Effect' – this can be found on **www.thegirleffect. org** How do these facts relate to world hunger?

- Women perform 66 per cent of the world's work, produce 50 per cent of the world's food, but only earn ten per cent of the world's income and own only one per cent of the world's property.
- A study by London School of Economics found that boys are more likely to receive preferential treatment in rescue efforts following natural disasters and that girls suffer more from shortages of food and lack of privacy and security.
- Drought and food shortages have led to higher rates
 of early marriage for girls or famine marriages
 as they have been called. In Uganda, for example,
 daughters are often exchanged for commodities by

their family.

Women make up just a little over half of the world's population, but they account for 60 per cent of the World's hungry

Take a look at Concern's 1000 days campaign (www.concern.net/1000-days). In 2008, medical journal The Lancet compiled a research report which stated that if a child does not have adequate nutrition in the 1000 days between a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday, the damage is irreversible. Ask the students to read the facts and information around this campaign. Ask them how do the above facts relate to the 1000 days campaign – what are the links?

See also **www.thousanddays.org** especially essential documents (the advocacy toolkit)

Distribute copies of the Oxfam Ghanaian case study

on biofuels below and use it as the basis of a discussion in groups around the role of Irish people in causing and challenging world hunger. What is the problem with Europeans using biofuels? How is a pro-environmental policy – like biofuels production – problematic for people in Ireland? Isn't the creation of new market opportunities and economic growth in Ghana supposed to be a good thing?

OXFAM GHANAIAN CASE STUDY

In 2003, smallholder agriculture accounted for about 80 per cent of total agricultural output in Ghana, and large-scale agriculture tended to involve medium-sized plantations of about 3,500 hectares. Since 2006, investors have shown an unprecedented interest in acquiring much larger tracts of land to grow crops for biofuels. The biofuels sector in Ghana is still in its infancy, but most biofuel crops grown in Ghana are likely to be exported to the EU to make biodiesel. Supply chains between Ghana and European countries have already been established.

Case study evidence of one biofuels plantation in Ghana shows that land deals for biofuel production can exacerbate rural poverty, as communities lose access to vital resources. 69 families lost their land when a 14,000 hectare plantation of jatropha plants for biodiesel production was established in northeastern

Brong Ahafo, but these families neither participated in the negotiations nor received any form of compensation for their loss. Only 18 of these families received replacement land, for which they had to pay themselves.

Women in particular lost out: they had used much of the land taken over by the plantation to grow food like groundnuts, peppers, okra and tomatoes, or to collect highly nutritious food like mushrooms and small game, as well as shea nuts and locust beans to sell at local markets. The story isn't over yet. 1,500 more families could lose land should the plantation develop as planned over the coming years.

Extract from page 17, The Hunger Grains (September 2012) by Ruth Kelly, Monique Mikhail, and Marc-Olivier Herman. Oxfam Briefing Paper no.161

Now ask the group to read George Monbiot's extract below and to discuss the roles and responsibilities each of us has in terms of our use of biofuels and the impact that this has on others, such as the families from Brong Ahafo. Is it our responsibility, as individuals, to act on this, or does it fall on the Irish government?

Biofuels are the means by which governments in the rich world avoid hard choices. Rather than raise fuel economy standards as far as technology allows, rather than promoting a shift from driving to public transport, walking and cycling, rather than insisting on better town planning to reduce the need to travel, they have chosen to exchange our wild overconsumption of petroleum for the wild overconsumption

of fuel made from crops. No one has to drive less or make a better car: everything remains the same except the source of fuel. The result is a competition between the world's richest and poorest consumers, a contest between overconsumption and survival.'

Must the poor go hungry just so the rich can drive? George Monbiot (13th August 2012) The Guardian newspaper

Note the points down from the discussions as sign posts for further action – such as investigating NGO campaigns already active on these issues and for further reading/research work (i.e. Monbiot's full article about the impact on global food prices due to the biofuels industry), to draw up a manifesto of what we should start/stop doing with relation to the biofuels and world hunger.

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Ask students in groups of two - three to prepare a research report on one of the following topics:

- Hunger amongst plenty
- Food security for human development requires the empowerment of the rural poor and particularly women.
- The right to food is not about charity. It is about ensuring that all people have the capacity to feed themselves, in dignity.

The reports could be presented in a variety of media and styles (e.g. powerpoint, posters, video, collage, art piece etc.).

SUGGESTED READING



FAO (2011) State of World Food Insecurity: how does international price volatility affect domestic economies and food security? Rome, FAO (annual)

B. Halweil and D. Nierenberg, (2011) State of the World, Innovations that Nourish the Planet, Worldwatch Institute

International Food Policy Research Institute (2012) Global Hunger Index, Washington (annual)

Wayne Roberts (2008) The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food, London, New Internationalist

R. Thurow and S. Kilman (2009) Enough: Why the Poorest Starve in an Age of Plenty, New York, Public Affairs

Jo Walker (2010) Who's Really Fighting Hunger, London, Action Aid

Environmental Protection Agency, Royal Irish Academy, Mary Robinson Foundation (2011) The Geography of Climate Justice: An Introduction **www.ria.ie**

MORE INFORMATION AND DEBATE

www.fao.org - UN Food and Agriculture Organisation

www.ifpri.org - International Food Policy Research Institute

www.worldhunger.org - solid information and education site on world hunger

www.globalissues.org/issue/6/ worldhunger-and-poverty - extensive website on a range of development issues including world hunger

www.bread.org/hunger/global/ - US, faith based site on world hunger and related issues

www.wfp.org/hunger - World Food Programme site

www.worldmapper.org - thematic maps of the world

This resource accompanies a Hunger Map which can be accessed free on:

www.concern.net/hungermap
www.agti.ie/hungermap

www.developmenteducation.ie/hungermap





Food Right Now is a campaign run by five International NGOs including Concern demanding that the Right to Food is a reality for all of the world's people. Follow us on www.concern. net/foodrightnow













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