

Hunger is the world's greatest solvable problem.

1

Solving hunger boosts economic development.

2

Solving hunger builds the brains and bodies of the next generation.

3

Solving hunger builds a stronger, more prosperous and secure world.

We - citizens, employers, corporate leaders and government officials - must work together to end hunger.

What is hunger?

Hunger means different things to different people but there are two basic meanings (*Life Sciences Research Office, 1990*):

- **the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food**
- **the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food**

Why hunger matters

Hunger kills, lowers IQ, decreases wages, reduces school attendance and undermines economic growth.

- While food is the most basic of human needs required for survival, **1 in 8 people do not have enough to eat**, most of them women and children.

- **Hunger kills.** In fact, it kills more people every year than HIV, malaria and tuberculosis combined.
- **Other development issues cannot be achieved without first addressing this fundamental and basic human need.** Hunger makes medicine less effective, learning more difficult and economies less productive.



World Food Programme

Solving hunger boosts economic development

Nutrition is a “best buy” in today’s tough economy. *When nations work together to solve hunger and invest in good nutrition, they increase productivity and create economic opportunities.*

- We are only just beginning to document evidence of hunger’s link to economic development, but its impact on societies is overwhelming.
- Over the last decade, Brazil reduced the proportion of hungry people by one third, lifted 24 million people out of extreme poverty and cut malnutrition by 25 percent. Over that same period its gross domestic product (GDP) more than tripled. A WFP beneficiary country in the 1990s, in 2012 Brazil was WFP’s 10th largest donor. Brazil achieved this by committing to programmes to eradicate hunger and increase food production.
- A daily increase in consumption of 500 kilocalories corresponds to an annual increase of 0.4 percent in the growth of GDP in developing countries. (FAO 2003)
- Investing in hunger solutions accelerates progress on key economic development and global health targets. Eradicating iron deficiency – the most common form of micronutrient deficiency worldwide – can improve a nation’s productivity by as much as 20 percent. (WHO)
- The World Bank estimates that US\$50 billion in worldwide GDP is lost due to iron deficiency and anaemia alone. (World Bank 2004)
- One study found that seven Central American and Caribbean countries lost as much as US\$6.6 billion in economic output due to childhood undernutrition – equal to 6 percent of their GDP. (ECLAC/WFP 2007)
- A healthy child is more likely to attend school which leads to higher incomes in adulthood. In a study of Central America, an additional year of schooling was associated with a 12-14 percent increase in lifetime earnings. (Maternal and Child Undernutrition Study Group)

Solving hunger builds the next generation

Hunger lays the foundation for all other development issues, including health and education.

- Well-nourished women have healthier, heavier babies whose immune systems are stronger for life. But undernourished mothers may pass undernutrition on to the next generation by giving birth to smaller, weaker babies.
- Children who are critically undernourished suffer irreversible damage. Science has proven that a child’s first 1,000 days – from conception up to 2 years old – are critical to their physical and mental development.
- The combination of low birth weight, stunting, chronic undernutrition and iodine deficiency can result in a reduction of up to 30 points in IQ and render the body unable to resist chronic disease, such as diabetes or cardiovascular disease, for life. (World Bank)
- As a result of malnutrition, individuals may lose more than 10 percent of lifetime earnings due to decreased productivity. (World Bank)

Addressing hunger and poor nutrition improves the overall well-being of individuals and enables them to reach their full potential.

- Eliminating anaemia results in a 5 to 17 percent increase in productivity in adults. (World Bank)
- Proper nutrition during the first two years of life can result in an increase in lifetime earnings by as much as 46 percent. (J. Hoddinott, *The Lancet*)

“End childhood stunting. It affects almost 200 million children today, with a profoundly negative impact on future generations. Proper nutrition between the beginning of pregnancy and a child’s second birthday is the foundation for an entire life. We can end hunger in our lifetime.”

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at launch of Zero Hunger Challenge, June 2012

Solving hunger builds a stronger and safer world

Hunger leads to civil unrest, undermining peace and stability.

- When governments can no longer guarantee adequate food supplies, states are prone to fail. Volatility on food markets can quickly translate to volatility on the streets.
- From the food riots that ignited the French Revolution to the overthrow of the Haitian Government in 2008 following high food price protests, the link between food prices, hunger and insecurity has been demonstrated time and again.
- From 2007-2009, the US State Department estimates more than 60 food-related riots happened worldwide as a result of higher food prices and food insecurity. The 2011 Arab Spring arose out of a variety of sources of unrest, one of which was high food prices.
- In times of trouble, food assistance helps to promote peace and stability, bringing calm in the face of volatility and meeting a fundamental human need.

“Food security is a moral imperative, it's an economic imperative, and it is a security imperative.”

US President Barack Obama at the Symposium on Global Agriculture and Food Security, 2012

We can do it!

Solving hunger requires no scientific breakthrough. Today's scientific knowledge, tools and policies, combined with political will, can solve the world's greatest problem.

There is enough food in the world to feed everyone. In the last 40 years, per capita food availability in the world has increased by 17 percent, to more than 2,700 kilocalories per person per day. (FAO)

“If you care about the poorest, you care about agriculture. Investments in agriculture are the best weapons against hunger and poverty, and they have made life better for billions of people.”

Bill Gates, IFAD Governing Council, February 2012

Hunger Price Tags

It costs on average just 25 US cents a day to feed a hungry child and change his or her life forever.

It would cost US\$3.5 billion to feed every hungry schoolchild in the world.

It costs US\$50 to feed a schoolchild for one year.

It costs US\$10 to feed a child in a Kenyan refugee camp for three weeks.

One sachet of ready-to-use food to treat malnutrition in a small child is just 20 US cents.

16 days' worth of life-saving High Energy Biscuits for an earthquake survivor cost US\$8.

How WFP is already solving hunger

WFP food relief saves lives. Providing emergency food rations after a man-made or natural disaster can save many lives. It can also safeguard the physical and mental development of children by preventing malnutrition.

WFP nutrition programmes nourish mothers and ensure healthier babies. Providing the right nutritious food to women when they are pregnant or breastfeeding – and to children under the age of two – ensures children get the nutrients they need to develop healthy minds and bodies.

WFP school meals help kids learn and act as an investment in the next generation. Providing free meals for children in school means they get the food they need to concentrate on their lessons. It also means they stay in school and get an education, which will help them move out of poverty and hunger.

WFP's take-home rations help educate girls now to build stronger families in the future. Giving take-home rations of rice or oil to girls who attend class is a further incentive for parents to send their daughters to school.

WFP support to farmers strengthens communities and builds markets. Providing training and support to smallholder farmers and helping them connect to markets allows communities to develop resilient food production systems. This allows local economies to better resist future disasters and shocks.

WFP food-for-training activities provide skills for life. Giving poor men and women food rations in return for attending training courses in gardening, bee-keeping or other trades helps provide a sustainable means to support themselves and their families in the years ahead.

WFP empowers women and girls living in rural areas. We and our partners help women farmers become competitive players in the marketplace by producing food for sale and for use in WFP programmes.

WFP vouchers enable hungry people in cities to feed their families. When there is food in the markets, but poor people simply can't afford it, food vouchers or cash transfers help ensure vulnerable families get the food they need. Vouchers also help support the local economy.

If we all do a little, we can achieve a lot

Millions of small actions by individuals can help solve hunger.

- **Freerice.com** is not your average online game. For every correct answer, the World Food Programme receives 10 grains of rice to feed the hungry. Almost 100 billion grains of rice have been purchased with funds generated by Freerice since 2007 – enough to feed over 5 million people for a day.

- People playing hunger knowledge quizzes on **wfp.org** have provided more than 175,000 school meals to needy children.
- **WeFeedback.org**, WFP's online giving platform, demonstrates how a shared love of food can create a community of people committed to ending hunger. To date, over 430,000 children have received meals.

The first step to fighting hunger is learning more about it.
www.wfp.org/get-involved