

Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication

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From Millennium Development to Sustainable Development: 'This Is the Year'

In September 2000, the 191 member nations of the UN adopted a set of international development goals in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. These came to be known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). They included pledges to achieve the following goals by 2015:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empower women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Develop a global partnership for development.

In 2010, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on world leaders to attend a September summit in New York, NY, in hopes of accelerating progress toward the goals.

In June 2013, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) announced that 38 countries had met the MDGs, and that 18 of them had also met a more stringent World Food Summit goal of reducing by half the number of undernourished people.

It is now 2015, and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) is declaring this year a "once-in-a-generation opportunity" for sustainable development. In September, UN member nations will meet to decide on new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will guide global development priorities for the next 15 years.

Helen Clark, the UNDP's administrator, declared in January that, while there is tremendous volatility and turmoil around the world, this year presents a "unique opportunity to eradicate poverty and agree on a path for sustainable development."

Several 2015 events will be critical to global development: the UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled for March in Sendai, Japan; the Third International

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Responding to Senior Hunger

by Elizabeth Bellinger

Many individuals and families across the United States confront a diverse and extensive range of barriers in their procurement of adequate food—such as financial constraints associated with income and job loss, the high cost of a nutritious diet, and limited access to large stores with more variety and lower prices. These households are classified as food-insecure.

Moreover, “very low” food security is characterized by disruptions, at some point during the year, in eating patterns and reductions in food intake of one or more household members from inability to afford enough food.

These disruptions are even more common in households with children under 18. Indeed, the existence of so many people without secure access to adequate nutritious food represents a serious national concern.

Hunger and food insecurity, however, is also a problem for older adults. Getting by is getting harder for a lot of older people. Nearly one-tenth (9.9 percent) of US adults who are 65 and older currently live at or below the federal poverty level, according to the National Council on Aging (NCOA). And even more (31.4 percent) are considered to be economically insecure, which the NCOA defines as living at or below 200 percent of the poverty level.

Start breaking that down by gender, race and narrower age groups, and the economic picture for older people looks even worse:

- 37.8 percent of women and 23 percent of men 65 and older are economically insecure.
- 49.2 percent of black women 65 and older live at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
- 19.2 percent of black Americans 65 and older live in poverty, and 43.4 percent are economically insecure.
- Among Hispanics who are 65 and older, 16.8 percent live in poverty and 39.2 percent are at risk economically.
- 12 percent of Americans 75 and older (7.4 percent of men and 12.8 percent of women) live at or below the poverty level.

The recent economic downturn forced older adults into poverty as they continued to experience high unemployment, faced severe losses in home equity and retirement savings, and relied more heavily on credit cards and other unsecured debt to make ends meet.

All of the current hunger studies show that, holding all other factors constant, age—that is, being between 60 and 64—was a primary risk factor for hunger. In fact, a 64-year-old senior is one-third more likely to be at risk of hunger than an 84-year-old.

In 1977, Hubert H. Humphrey said: “The moral test of government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the aged; and those in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.”

The paradox of modern societies is that they provide the stability and affluence that enable many people to grow old, while at the same time denying older people a suitable role within the social order. While theories of aging evolve over time within gerontology, it is apparent that social policy and public opinion are often slow to catch up.

In public discourse and policy, aging is still largely defined by a biomedical perspective that emphasizes dependency, loss and decline. Not surprisingly, the proposed solutions are rooted in the same soil. As a consequence, more than 70 percent of long-term-care dollars are spent on skilled nursing facilities, or nursing homes, that conform to the medical model.

While our culture seems to revere the notion of aging in the homes we love (in place), our public policy continues to favor institutionalization for those requiring long-term-care services. The conflict between what people say they want (to receive services in their own homes), and the way their tax dollars are spent, has become especially acute.

This situation exists despite studies showing that, on average, it costs about half as much to maintain an elder at



The paradox of modern societies is that they provide the stability and affluence that enable many people to grow old, while at the same time denying older people a suitable role within the social order.

home as compared to placement in a nursing home. Given that three-fourths of the nation's long-term-care budget is spent on nursing homes, and Medicaid is the largest source of payment for that care (about half), the need for a rebalancing of the public funds committed to meeting the needs of frail elders becomes clear.

A new AARP¹ study reports that if every state in the "lower 48" expanded the number of seniors receiving meals by just 1 percent, 1,722 more Medicaid recipients could avoid living in a nursing home and most states would experience a net annual savings from implementing the expansion. The program would help seniors who live independently—except for meals—to remain in their homes, regardless of whether or not they are on Medicaid.

Across the country, the 1-percent expansion would bring meals to 392,594 more seniors at a cost of more than \$117 million. We must support the SNAP benefit program (formerly known as Food Stamps).

Our state governments need to accept the Medicaid funding available from the Federal government that many of them leave on the table every year. This would bring a large increase in funding into these states for health insurance, SNAP, WIC² and other meal programs.

McLennan County in Central Texas, where I live and work for Meals & Wheels³, has a population of 213,517. Of that number, 12.8 percent are 65 or older.

By 2025, the 65-and-older group is expected to increase to 21 percent of the population. Meals & Wheels, through its home-delivered and congregate meals program, is only serving 1,515 individuals in the city of Waco and McLennan County. It doesn't have the funds to increase service.

The challenges for our area will be to provide services to meet the projected increase in need. There are communities like this all over the US. Our communities must come together. We can see that federal and state funding for social services is dwindling and, in some cases, has vanished.

We will need everyone in our communities to address the issue of hunger around the corner and across the street, both the hunger we see in our children and that of our vulnerable older adults.

—Libby Bellingier is the Associate Director of Meals & Wheels in Waco, TX. An

ordained Baptist minister, she holds a degree in gerontology from Baylor University.

Endnotes

1. Formerly American Association for Retired Persons, now AARP, Inc.
2. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.
3. Waco's Meals & Wheels works to "nourish the bodies, minds and spirits of older adults in the Heart of Texas through meals, transportation, activities and volunteer support." It has been connected with the national Meals on Wheels Association (MOWA) for 42 years, although the local agency has been around since 1967, before MOWA was organized.

Development Goals

continued from page 1

Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled for July in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and the UN Climate Change Conference, scheduled for December in Paris, France.

"The combined outcomes of these major processes are a once-in-a-generation opportunity to set a transformational global agenda for sustainable development," Clark said.

"This is an exceptional time for the development community," said Fernando Carrero, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the UN and the newly elected President of the UNDP Executive Board. "The months leading up to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals offer a unique opportunity for all of us to shape a global agenda for the next generation that will ensure a reduction of poverty and inequality for the world's poorest and most vulnerable."

In their current form, the SDGs are more focused on building productive capacity and giving more weight to economic and environmental factors—a focus which is applauded by a group of African leaders who came up with a similar set of goals in 2014 called the Common African Position (CAP).

About the time the CAP was drawn up, a working group from the UN General Assembly started on a plan to fulfill objectives set at the 2012 Rio+20 summit on sustainable development. Both the CAP and the UN Assembly group have placed stress on the economy and on empowerment.

—From the UNDP Newsroom, *Africa Renewal and Hunger News & Hope (HNH)*.

For more information about the Millennium Development Goals, see "Millennium Development Goals: How Far Have We Come in Eight Years?" "The US Responds to Millennium Goals" and "Praying Toward the Millennium Development Goals," HNH, Vol 9 No 4, Spring 2008; "Special Section: UN Summit to Accelerate Progress on Millennium Development Goals," HNH, Vol 11 No 2, Summer 2010; "UN Summit Pushes toward 2015 Goals," HNH, Vol 11 No 3, Fall 2010. For more information about preparation for the September Sustainable Development Goals summit, go to <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015>.



A Look at Food-Rescue Programs

by Kristin Waites

Americans waste more than 40 percent of the food produced for consumption, and food-rescue programs are trying to change that by giving the food directly to people in need. This benefits not only the 10 percent of Americans who don't have enough to eat, but also the environment, because it diverts many tons of food from landfills and dumps.

In popular culture, food rescue is often shown on a relatively small scale—sometimes focusing on a family or a group of people who dumpster-dive instead of grocery shopping, or who donate their unused food to pantries. While this is impressive, food-rescue is an ongoing process on a much larger scale. Some food-rescue programs deliver upwards of 15 million pounds of food a year to the hungry and homeless.

Rescued food is saved from being thrown into the dumpster or otherwise wasted, but this doesn't mean the products are expired or inedible.

In general, food that can be rescued is either excess (for example, if a restaurant ordered too much of one type of food) or past its sell-by date (which is not a hard-and-fast deadline) or just not aesthetically pleasing enough to be bought in stores (a bruised apple, for instance).

Because of their short shelf life, perishable foods like fruit, vegetables and meats are most likely to be wasted, making them a prime target for many food-rescue programs.

Though food-rescue programs all over the country work with food banks, grocery stores and restaurants, they often have to overcome many hurdles to create those partnerships. Business owners want to make sure the agreement is beneficial

to them as well, which means making sure that they will be covered legally and that their participation won't mean excess work for them.

Fortunately, there are many protections and benefits in place that businesses can take advantage of. The US Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Donations Act, signed into law in 1996, ensures that donors are protected from any liabilities unintentionally caused by their donated products.

However, many stores aren't aware of this legal protection, or still don't want to take the chance. This can prevent companies from becoming a part of these beneficial programs. Helping to bring about a change in this is the presence of parent organizations that can vouch for the validity of local food-rescue programs, often making restaurants and stores less hesitant to join.

Feeding America (formerly known as Second Harvest), the world's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, is doing just that. The network contains smaller food banks and food-rescue programs throughout the country (200 Second Harvest/Feeding America food banks throughout the country and 60,000 affiliated food pantries), creating a network of workers and volunteers who work together to get food to people in need.

Below are brief profiles of just a few of the hundreds of food-rescue programs across the country.

- **Second Harvest Heartland (St. Paul, MN)**

Second Harvest Heartland's food-rescue program collects food from more than 275 retail grocers in Minnesota, including large retail stores like Wal-Mart, Target and Sam's Club. With the help of drivers and volunteers, 18 million pounds of food were rescued and donated in the last year.

- **Capital Area Food Bank (Austin, TX)**

The Capital Area Food Bank of Texas (CAFB) food-rescue program distributes rescued food to people in 21 counties around Texas. In 2013, the food bank rescued over 13 million pounds of perishable food that would have otherwise gone to waste. Its list of donors is extensive, including retail grocers as well as food manufacturers, growers and distributors. CAFB is a Feeding America food bank.

- **City Harvest (New York, NY)**

In the upcoming year, City Harvest estimates that it will rescue 50 million pounds of food, which is more than the past 14 years combined. City Harvest's food-rescue program is notable in that it collects food from many different sectors of the food industry, including supermarkets, bakeries, farms and cafeterias. This food is distributed to more than 500 community food programs in New York City seven days a week with the help of over 8,000 volunteers. City Harvest, organized in 1982, claims to be the world's first food-rescue organization.



Photo by Susan Mvullally

- **Three Square (Las Vegas, NV)**

Three Square's food-rescue program focuses on getting donations of perishable food that can no longer be sold from partners. The food is picked up and redistributed within 48 hours to those in need. Some of the program's partners have donated over 1 million pounds of food. Three Square is a Feeding America food bank.

- **Lovin' Spoonfuls (Boston, MA)**

Lovin' Spoonfuls has rescued over 1.8 million pounds of food since the program began in 2010. Unlike many food-rescue programs, Lovin' Spoonfuls picks up food from its partners and then delivers it to those in need in the same day. The quick turnaround makes sure that the food delivered is as fresh as possible and prevents the need for large warehouses or storage facilities.

- **The Campus Kitchens Project**

The Campus Kitchens Project states that its mission is to

strengthen bodies, empower minds and build communities. It partners with high schools, colleges and universities to rescue food from their kitchens and create nutritional meals that can then be given to those in need. Last year, volunteers in 36 programs around the country saved 939,034 pounds of food, with which they made 271,967 meals.

—Kristin Waites, a native of the Dallas, TX, area, is a Professional Writing student at Baylor University and just completed an editorial internship at Seeds of Hope. Sources: Feeding America (www.feedingamerica.org), Second Harvest Heartland (www.2harvest.org), Capital Area Food Bank (www.austinfoodbank.org), City Harvest (www.cityharvest.org), Three Square (www.threesquare.org), Lovin' Spoonfuls (www.lovin Spoonfulsinc.org), Campus Kitchens (www.campuskitchens.org).

Editor's note: If you work for a food-rescue organization and would like to share information about innovative projects, please email seedseditor1@gmail.com.

2015 Bread for the World Hunger Report: When Women Flourish... We Can End Hunger

The 2015 Hunger Report from Bread for the World Institute, *When Women Flourish... We Can End Hunger*, identifies the empowerment of women and girls as essential in ending hunger, extreme poverty and malnutrition around the world and in the United States.

"We have made great strides in reducing hunger and poverty at home and around the world, yet women continue to be treated like second-class citizens," said Rev. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World. "Progress towards women's empowerment has been slow due to discriminatory laws, unpaid work caring for the family, and traditions that demean their capacity as decision makers."

The 2015 Hunger Report comes at a time when the 114th US legislative session, which started in January, includes 100 women legislators—the largest number in US history. Despite the fact that 22 percent of the world's legislators are female, women face barriers that limit their ability to engage fully in economic activity. Women are also more likely to earn less or work in low-wage jobs.

The report also shows that women's willingness to share men's bread-winning responsibilities has not been matched by men's willingness to share unpaid household work or caregiving

responsibilities. Though domestic work is a public good in the same way that education, clean water, clean air and the food supply are, it is not recognized as such. Women constitute half the global population.

"Eliminating barriers and empowering women around the world is key to ending hunger in our time," said Asma Lateef, director of Bread for the World Institute. "We must not tolerate discrimination against women and instead, demand a comprehensive approach to women's empowerment that includes applying a gender lens to all programs and policies."

In many countries, women and girls are more likely to suffer from hunger and malnutrition than men and boys.

Poverty and lack of education contribute to this disparity. However, giving women greater control of their income and assets would increase their bargaining power in the household and the market economy. Research has shown that this benefits their families and leads to widespread improvements.

Two current representatives of Congress, Kay Granger (R-TX) and Nita Lowey (D-NY), wrote a section in the report on the importance of US foreign aid in empowering women around the world.

—For more information and to download a copy of the 2015 Hunger Report, visit www.hungerreport.org.



Central American Children Driven to US by Violence, Poverty & Coffee Rust

by Kristin Waites

In the past year, the number of unaccompanied children attempting to cross the United States border has increased exponentially—more than three times the 2013 numbers. The majority of them are coming from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. In 2014, more than 50,000 children have come from these three Central American countries alone.

Many reasons are cited for this increase, though violence is the most supported one. These three countries have some of the highest murder rates in the world. Honduras is home to San Pedro Sula, the world's deadliest city, where gang activity is high and widespread. In many cases, children are targeted by these gangs and are often kidnapped and used to carry drugs.

Though it is obvious that violence is one of the main "push" factors, the role of poverty in the immigration of these children is just as important. El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras all have recurrent food insecurity, which means that a high number of people don't have access to enough nutritious food to maintain a healthy life.

This is partly caused by the highly variable Central American climate. Extreme weather is more common there than in most parts of the world. An uncertain climate not only ruins crops, it can decrease access—especially in rural areas—to food and other supplies necessary for survival.

El Salvador, in particular, is at the mercy of Mother Nature. Though it is considered a middle-income country, El Salvador has had eight major weather disasters in the past ten years, resulting in losses of lives and money that continue to take their toll on food security in the area.

The economies of these countries are highly agricultural, and many rural families rely on small-scale farming or daily labor as their main source of income. Coffee is one of the most economically important crops—especially in Honduras, which is the top producer of coffee in Central America—and a recent outbreak of a fungus called "coffee rust" is making it more difficult for many to make a living.

Coffee rust is the most devastating coffee disease in the world. It is present in most coffee-producing regions, but changes in temperature and rainfall can make plants more susceptible to the fungus than usual. Since the outbreak became widespread in Central America in 2013, it has caused the loss of more than US\$1 billion in revenue and threatens 500,000 jobs.

Last year, Guatemala declared a state of emergency because of the disease, which had

damaged more than 70 percent of its coffee plants. The effects on the Central American coffee industry are expected to be long-lasting, with a full recovery not predicted until 2016.

This is a crushing blow to an already unstable food situation. These countries are burdened not only with poverty, but with malnutrition. According to the UN's World Food Programme, one in four children in Honduras suffer from chronic malnutrition.

The problem is even more drastic in rural areas, where 75 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty. Guatemala has the highest rate of malnutrition in Latin America and the Caribbean. El Salvador's unequal distribution of wealth means that malnutrition's effects—most notably stunted growth and weight loss—paint the all-too-heartbreaking picture of children who don't have enough food to survive.

Poverty is the root of many of the problems these countries face. It can encourage the spread of gang activity, often resulting in a vicious cycle of negative feedback. It causes parents to take any opportunity to feed their young. Some turn to gangs. Others try to escape.

Many of the children who try to cross the border have been sent thousands of dollars from parents or other family members in the United States to help them make the trip safely. In most cases, they never make it, or, if they do, they are sent back to the troubled places they were trying to leave behind.

—Kristin Waites, a native of the Dallas, TX, area, is a Professional Writing student at Baylor University and just completed an editorial internship at Seeds of Hope. Sources: World Food Programme, New York Times, New Orleans Times Picayune, National Public Radio.



Right: These children are part of a family that fled from civil strife and economic hardship in their home country. Photo by Elizabeth Ross.

Resources

Photo by Joe Molieri/Bread for the World



2015 Bread for the World Offering of Letters: Feed Our Children

This year's Bread for the World Offering of Letters focuses on child nutrition in the US. Legislators will examine the law that governs national child-nutrition programs this year, so the letter-writing campaign is designed to urge Congress to reauthorize and strengthen these programs.

"One in five children in the United States lives at risk of hunger," said Christine Melendez Ashley, senior domestic policy analyst at Bread for the World. "Child nutrition programs are vital because they ensure that our children get nutritious meals and have the energy to grow and learn."

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 funds and sets policy for national child-nutrition programs and must be reauthorized every five years. It includes school-lunch and breakfast programs, summer feeding programs, after-school and child-care feeding programs, as well as The Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Together these programs serve about 29 million low-income children annually.

This year's letters will urge Congress to continue its strong investments in national child-nutrition programs and to improve children's access to feeding programs. For every seven low-income children who get a lunch at school, only four get breakfast, and only one receives meals during the summer, a time when children are most at risk of hunger.

"Both sides of the aisle agree that having hungry children, especially in a wealthy country like ours, is unacceptable," Ashley said. "The various child-nutrition programs are testament to the bipartisan support that is still found in Congress, support that will hopefully continue to ensure that nutritious food for children is not a privilege."

For more than 40 years, Bread for the World members have written hundreds of thousands of letters to Congress every year, consistently bringing about lasting victories for children, men and women who struggle to put food on their tables.

For more information, or to download the Offering of Letters kit, go to www.bread.org/OL. Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice urging US legislators to end hunger at home and abroad.

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Seasons

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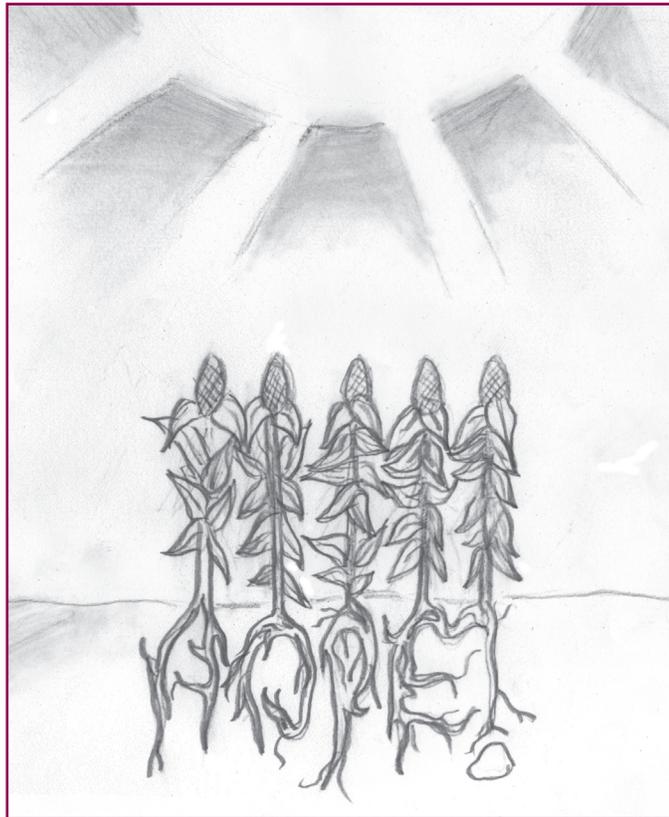
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Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry of God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group seeks out people of faith who feel called to care for poor and hungry people; and to affirm, enable

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings



Art by Jesse Manning

To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is history not only of cruelty, but of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there have been so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act... And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think humans beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.
 —Howard Zinn

and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Editorial Address

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Seeds of Hope also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for the liturgical year—with an attitude “toward justice, peace and food security for all of God’s children.” These include litanies, sermons, children’s and youth activities, bulletin art and drama.

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