

Hunger News & Hope

A Seeds of Hope Publication

Putting the Hope Back in Hunger News & Hope

by Katie Cook

Word has been coming in from the World Food Programme and others that a huge, global hunger crisis is well underway—one that will surpass the food crisis of 2009. The world was (and is) still in the throes of the coronavirus pandemic and its fallout, both of which raised the numbers of food insecure people—especially minoritized populations and people in developing countries. Widespread and increasingly frequent climate disasters continue to destroy crops and infrastructure. So it was a pretty grim outlook by the end of 2021.

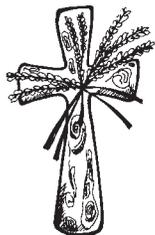
And then, in February 2022, along came the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which threw the global economy and food supply chain into further chaos. Relief and development organizations are struggling to get access to food that is vital to prevent outright famine. This is made even harder by the soaring price of food. These organizations are having to reduce the amount of food they were intending to deliver to areas where food is scarce.

These things are real, and we must respond quickly. All of us.

However, one of the promises that Seeds as a ministry has made all these years since our beginning in Decatur, GA, is that we will not paralyze our readers with the enormity of the problems of hunger. And, with all the bad news in this issue, we're getting awfully close.

So I want, in these few words, to emphasize the "hope" in *Hunger News & Hope*. The anti-hunger community has been here before, and we've worked together until the numbers of hungry people started to go down again. We've been knocked back to Square One a number of times, and we have picked ourselves back up and doubled down on the work. And we will do so again.

I want to hold up to you a few seemingly small examples of the kind of thing that can and will save the world. Four-year-old Austin Perine wants to help homeless people in some way, so he regularly puts on a Superman suit and delivers sandwiches to people on the street in Birmingham, AL. An obviously impoverished man comes into Long John Silver's in Amarillo, TX, and asks for a disposable cup that he can put water in, and the woman at



Please see "Hope" on page 15.

What You'll Find Inside:

2

Current Issues in the Latin American Coffee Trade

5

The Cappuccino Trail: Global Economy in a Cup
A Film about the Coffee Trade

6

A Magnet for Exploitation: *Haiti's Long Struggle for Sustainable Recovery*

11

Knowledge is More Powerful than Criticism: *A Review of the Book Killing with Kindness*

12

The Power of Sheer Determination: *A Review of the Film Darfur Now*

13

The Seeds Creating Hope Project

14

A Hunger Glossary

16

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

art on the left by Erin Kennedy Mayer

Current Issues in the Latin American Coffee Trade

by Michael Williamson

Although coffee production originated in Africa in the 15th century, most of the world's coffee has been produced in Latin America since the mid-18th century. Latin America's coffee is cultivated in a mosaic of tropical highlands contained within a vast area that ranges from Brazil in the south to Mexico in the north, and from Peru in the west to Puerto Rico in the east.

Within this area, coffee is produced in three major regions. First is the Caribbean, where the coffee plant was

Over the last 20 years, coffee farms and landscapes across the region have undergone rapid and profound biophysical changes in response to low coffee prices, changing climatic conditions, severe plant pathogen outbreaks and other drivers.

first introduced in the early 18th century. In the Americas, it was the home of plantation coffee, produced by slaves. The second region is Brazil, which has been the world's largest single producer of coffee since the mid-19th century. Brazil produces much of the world's commodity-grade Arabica coffee. The third major coffee region is the Cordillera, an archipelago of coffee zones that encompasses nine major producing countries along the mountainsides of the American Cordillera, from Peru north to Mexico, including Central America and Colombia.

Coffee farmers in the Cordillera—unlike those in Brazil—have historically focused on quality rather than volume—although Colombia was the world's second-largest producer of coffee for most of the 20th century. They produce some of the world's highest-quality, wet-processed Arabica coffees, known as “milds.”¹

Often, small and medium farms in the Americas have been more successful than large farms, largely because they were less dependent on wage labor. Farms were also shaped by a complex set of legal and institutional infrastructures in each country, which defined patterns of land tenure, labor, transportation infrastructure (ports, roads, and railroads), technical assistance and credit. Coffee farms were also shaped by transnational and global forces—especially the workings of the international coffee market.²

But international commodity agreements (the Inter-American Coffee Agreement, and the International Coffee

Agreement) played a role, too. Finally, farms have been shaped in complex ways by a host of organizations and institutions at all levels, from national institutions such as the Colombian Federation of Coffee Growers, to transnational and international organizations (the International Coffee Organization), bilateral aid organizations (USAID,³ GTZ,⁴ CIRAD⁵), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Institute, and transnational corporations such as Nestlé.

The structure of any coffee farm at any given moment is intensely historical and encompasses both local and global processes. In Latin America, the cultivation of Arabica coffee (*Coffea Arabica*) plays a critical role in rural livelihoods, biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Over the last 20 years, coffee farms and landscapes across the region have undergone rapid and profound biophysical changes in response to low coffee prices, changing climatic conditions, severe plant pathogen outbreaks and other drivers.⁶

In the present, coffee farms are facing three issues: technological changes (genetic engineering leading to pest-resistant crops and improved crop yields), fair trade issues, and climate concerns.

Coffee intensification has significantly increased crop yields and coffee productivity per hectare within coffee farms.⁷ However, the overall impact of intensification on farmer income, livelihoods and well-being is uncertain due to the high demand for labor and inputs (which are costly), the need to more frequently renovate coffee plantations due to the shorter lifespan of coffee bushes under intensive management, and the homogenization of coffee farming systems and landscapes which makes farmers more vulnerable to soil degradation and climatological or ecological shocks.⁸

Although the fair-trade mechanism is a valid method of promoting sustainable development in developing countries, its implementation in developing nations and marketing should be more thoroughly refined. This would enhance its efficiency in promoting sustainable development and enhancing consumer credibility and support.

The most beneficial link, provided by the fair-trade mechanism, is the direct relationship link it creates between the small-scale producers and the roasters. Cooperative membership has shown improvements in the capacity of the smallholder's human capital, which is vital to achieving sustainable development and improving the international

negotiation power of the smallholders on the coffee market.⁹

But fair-trade agreements have not been beneficial to everyone.

In theory, fair trade agreements give historically marginalized communities (as a result of factors like race and religion) control over their lands, which they often use for small-scale agriculture. Unfortunately, this does not always happen in practice. In many cases, these agreements are violated with impunity¹⁰.

Even the larger economies suffer in certain ways.

For example, Colombia (the world's second largest coffee producer after Brazil) signed a free trade agreement with the United States in 2012. Since that time, Colombia has gone from a trade surplus to a trade deficit, and its dependence on primary material exports—like oil, coal, coffee and bananas—has increased. That free trade agreement lowered tariffs on imported goods, making them cheaper than those produced domestically. In fact, productive sectors of the economy such as the industrial sector, have decreased as a percentage of the gross national product (GDP).¹¹

Food sovereignty is another issue. In 2012, US corn represented 5 percent of the market share in Colombia, but, by 2018, it represented more than 97 percent of the market share. The US's superior infrastructure, technology, machinery, genetically modified seeds and state subsidies give US corn a competitive advantage.

On the horizon is an existential threat to the coffee industry: climate change. A report from Australia's Climate Institute says that the world's coffee supply may be in danger owing to climate change.¹² In the world's biggest coffee-producing nation, Brazil, the effects of warming temperatures are already being felt in some communities.

Australia's Climate Institute says coffee production *worldwide* is in danger because of climate change. It cites a study that says, "hotter weather and changes in rainfall patterns are projected to cut the area suitable for coffee in half by 2050."

Four of the top five producers of coffee in the world (Brazil, Vietnam, Colombia and Indonesia) are projected to have their best areas for growing coffee decrease in size and suitability in the next few decades. Ethiopia, the native home for the plant, is ranked fifth in production and its suitability for coffee growing is expected to mainly stay the same. Some countries—such as the United States, Argentina, Uruguay and China—are likely to see an increase in coffee growing suitability.¹³

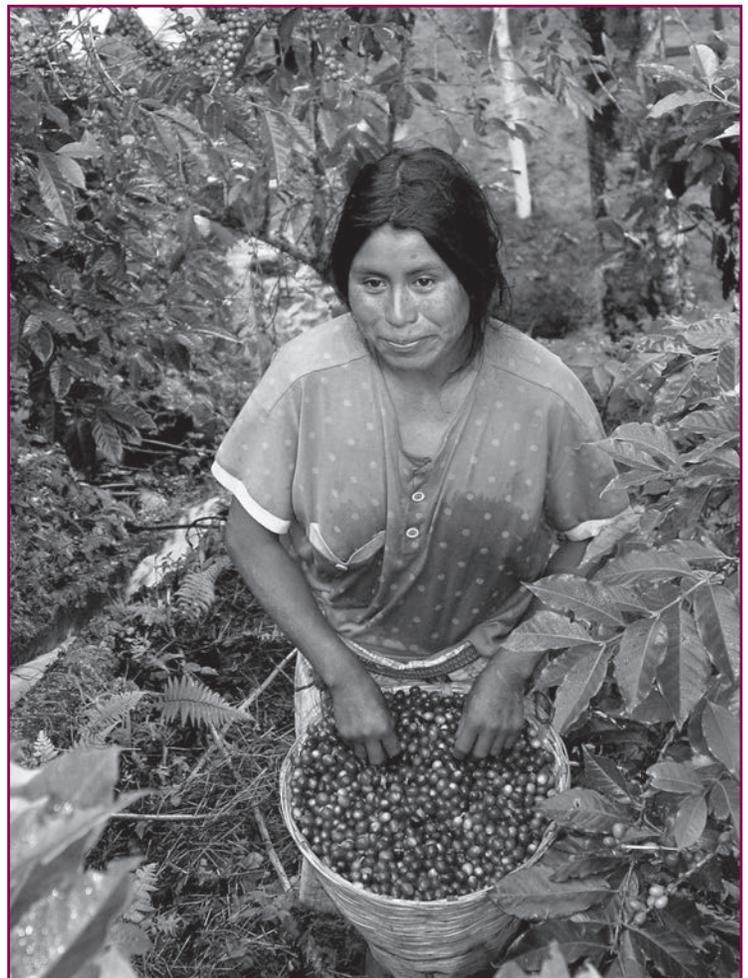
By the year 2050, the world's agricultural landscape could look very different than it looks now.

Around 10 billion people will need to be fed—up from the nearly 8 billion on Earth today—and climate change will alter where that food comes from. Already, warming temperatures are allowing tropical foods to thrive in growing regions further north, where they haven't before. Citrus, for example, is being grown in Georgia and avocados on the Italian island of Sicily.¹¹

However, coffee is the crop most severely affected by global warming. Fifty percent of its current suitable areas will likely be lost soon. While it is quite possible that the difference in production can be made up through technology and new growing areas in previously unsuitable regions, what happens to the regions which have grown coffee for centuries and become economically dependent on it? This question will have to be addressed if the interests of farmers (particularly small-scale) are to be heard. The big corporations will just move elsewhere. The poor farmers cannot leave so easily.

Ultimately, the history of the coffee trade in the Americas has been a brutal one full of exploitation. Slave labor has been a big part of it. While genetic engineering and fair-trade movements offer hope for a better future, climate change is projected to wreak havoc and nullify any improvements.

Please see "Coffee Trade" on page 4.



Right: A woman harvests coffee beans in Latin America. Photo courtesy of USAID.

Coffee Trade, continued from page 3

In fact, the next few decades could produce changes on a scale not seen in the last 500 years. The suffering of the poor farmers will continue unless significant changes are made now.

—Michael Williamson, an ordained minister and hospital chaplain, is a former *Seeds* intern and wrote, for *Seeds*, *A Guide to World Hunger Organizations*, Volume II (Jones Press, 1994). He has served in cross-cultural urban ministry with Latino immigrants in Los Angeles, a cross-cultural mission in the Mississippi Delta, and economic development/public health mission projects in the Balkans and Mexico. He lives in Clinton, MS, with his wife Amy (also a former *Seeds* intern) and their daughter Rosemary.

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Left: A farmer picks beans from a coffee tree.

Cappuccino Trail: The Global Economy in a Cup

A Film about the Coffee Trade

A 150-pound bag of coffee might earn a farmer \$50. The street value of that same bag—10,000 cups of coffee—is approximately \$20,000. The coffee industry employs roughly 125 million people around the world through its production, processing and trading. And while the coffee trade is vital to the politics, economies and survival of many developing nations, the industry's pricing and futures are decided in conference rooms and on stock exchange floors in some of the world's wealthiest cities.

The 2001 film *Cappuccino Trail*, which examines this truth in a creative way, is surprisingly relevant in the world of coffee today. By following the trail of two coffee beans grown in the Peruvian Andes, this film takes a distinctive look at this universal stimulant which, only after oil, is the most globally traded commodity.

One of the beans takes the route of the open market where its price is determined by commodities, traders and analysts such as Merrill Lynch's Judy Gaines—the industry oracle who discusses factors influencing the market's volatility.

The other bean finds its way into Café Direct, a new gourmet coffee launched in Britain by a company dedicated to paying fair prices to farmers for their high-quality organic crop. In addition to portraying the Andean smallholder



—Seeds Council member Sara Alexander shared this review with us. She uses it in anthropology classes and finds that students respond well to it. It can easily be found on YouTube. The DVD price is somewhat prohibitive.

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producers and their business dealings with Café Direct, these two journeys are brought to the viewer through the three lenses: that of a family shopping for dinner in Britain, discussing the features they consider of each product before purchase; that of a specialized trainer leading a barista class in New York City to elucidate the critical elements of what goes into a perfect cup of brew; and that of a group of professional tasters searching to find the perfect product for the companies they represent.

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A Magnet for Exploitation: *Haiti's Long Struggle for Sustainable Recovery*

by Sara E. Alexander

Thirty years ago, when such terminology was widely used, Haiti was recognized as one of only two “Fourth World” countries in the world, with Bangladesh being the second. Haiti has been the poorest country in the western hemisphere for many decades and, unfortunately, still holds this distinction today. Regardless of billions of dollars of aid going into Haiti since 2011—targeted both for development as well as emergency relief and reconstruction assistance after a number of disasters, be they earthquakes, hurricanes, or cholera epidemics—Haiti’s distinction persists as being the poorest and least developed nation in the western hemisphere.

This conundrum has been fiercely debated since the devastating earthquake of 2010 and the cholera epidemic that followed shortly thereafter. The questions hanging out there: “How can this be?” and “What happened to all of the financial resources extended to Haiti?” must be answered if any stability and ultimate sustainable development is to take place.

On January 12, 2010, a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit Haiti and killed between 90,000 and 316,000 people in just thirty-five seconds.¹ This earthquake was very concentrated and destroyed over 80 percent of Port-au-Prince, the

Haitian capital² [see map on page 7]. This earthquake was considered “the worst national disaster in the history of the western hemisphere.”³ The earthquake was particularly disastrous because of the poorly built infrastructure, with an estimated 300,000 buildings destroyed or damaged.⁴ It also destroyed all three branches of government buildings and 15 out of 17 ministries.⁵

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To compare the Haitian earthquake to the earthquake in Chile only a few months later, the 8.5-magnitude earthquake killed less than 1,000 people, and very few buildings collapsed.⁶ In addition to poor infrastructure and overcrowded living conditions, the severity of the Haiti earthquake could be further explained by a weak government, the country’s background of poverty and economic difficulty and the ineffective use of resources extended to

NGOs working in the country.

Let’s remember, Haiti’s history shows fragile and weak governance structures since its independence in 1804. The government has not been able to provide necessary services—even food—to its population. Food insecurity has been a major and recurring issue for many Haitians for a long time. In 2008, the Prime Minister was fired because of riots over food prices and shortages. After the 2008



Haitian schoolgirls before the 2010 earthquake. Photo by Swain Taylor.

hurricanes and the 2010 earthquake, the situation in Haiti was so dire the international community pledged billions to assist in the country's reconstruction.

However, vast amounts of aid flowing to Haiti was seemingly "lost" as effective progress was not being made in recovery efforts, a situation that prompted research by a number of scholars to investigate the work of NGOs and the effectiveness of the aid being extended in Haiti.

Haiti had nearly 10,000 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating there, giving it the nickname "Republic of NGOs" even prior to the earthquake.⁷ The international response to the earthquake was impressive, with nearly US\$2 billion donated to charities during a span of hours and another US\$6 billion pledged by governments and institutions.

Yet, four years later, in September 2014, more than 85,000 Haitians were still living in tents and did so through December 2015, which indicates that dwindling reconstruction and development efforts were slow despite having billions to spend on rebuilding the country.⁸ Again, these results beg the question, "How can this be?"

The history of the international community—including government agencies, NGOs, the United Nations—assisting in development efforts began when World War II ended, when various countries became independent from their colonial powers. Early aid was usually not successful in terms of the objectives defined, largely due to lack of sensitivity to local needs. It took several decades to learn better practices and to include the idea of sustainability in the work.

In more recent history, effective aid has come to be defined as those efforts that extend resources and processes that specifically promote sustainability. Still, most NGOs and recipients today focus on one or two dimensions of sustainability, usually economic and/or environmental, while the social and cultural components are often neglected.⁹

Please see "Haiti" on page 8.

Note from the US Geological Survey: The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the US government.

EARTHQUAKE INTENSITY		
The Modified Mercalli (MMI) Intensity Scale		
ESTIMATED MMI INTENSITY		POPULATION EXPOSED TO SHAKING
4	LIGHT	5,887,000
5	MODERATE	7,261,000
6	STRONG	1,049,000
7	VERY STRONG	571,000
8	SEVERE	314,000
9	VIOLENT	2,246,000
10 [^]	EXTREME	332,000

*MMI is a measure of ground shaking and is different from overall earthquake magnitude as measured by the Richter Scale.

[^]This area on the map may fall within MMI 9 classification, but constitute the areas of heaviest shaking based on United States Geological Survey (USGS) data.

Source: USGS/PAGER Alert Version: 8

Note: The numbers above correspond to the map below.



Haiti, *continued from page 7*

Funding and funding horizons are two of the major issues that impede the promotion of sustainability, in addition to communication and collaboration in the design of plans, their execution and the final follow-up. Recipient education, paternalistic attitudes and poverty levels also play a major role in promoting sustainability. Effective aid is that which “reduces dependence on future aid.”¹⁰ Today, aid is effective when it promotes all of these systems—the economic, social, environmental and cultural dimensions of sustainability.¹¹

In Haiti, there have been many criticisms of the NGO sector for failing to deliver effective humanitarian aid after the earthquake, the cholera epidemic the same year, as well as six additional earthquakes and four major hurricanes that have occurred between 2011 and July 2022.

When the earthquake occurred, one of the major reasons behind the ineffectiveness of aid was that much of the money never actually reached Haiti. “[M]uch of it went to salaries, accommodation and transport for the NGO workers themselves,”¹² many of whom were working in home country offices. Scholars agree this discrepancy wastes substantial resources, considering there are many local workers, such as medical personnel, unemployed in their camps because of the destruction of their own workplaces.¹³ And of the money that did reach Haiti, these funds were usually temporary or targeting programs that the population expressly did not need or want. They were supporting ‘Band- Aid’ solutions applied until the next disaster.¹⁴

Additionally, NGO budgets are at least partially supported through donor funding and must operate relative to the donors’ agendas. They do not always have control over how their own resources should be allocated. Donors often want to use aid as a way to enhance their own

commercial positions or to present a “carrot and stick” to modify recipient behavior¹⁵ instead of responding to the needs, wants or desires of the target populations. In addition, NGOs see these disasters as fundraising opportunities, raising money whether they can deliver it or not.

Another complication involves NGOs that are constantly in competition with one another over both financial and human resources. A shared goal, such as the eradication of cholera in the case of Haiti, became more difficult to achieve, due to their competitive fundraising systems.¹⁶ While it is important to work with governments in disaster situations, NGOs are not intended to be the

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long-term solutions.¹⁷ In the case of Haiti, citizens would only become more dependent on NGOs than before when the organizations decide to leave. As Kathie Klarreich and Linda Polman write in *The Nation*, “[T]he recovery effort has been so poorly managed as to leave the country even worse than before.”¹⁸

On the other hand, the NGO sector should not fully be blamed for ineffectiveness in providing humanitarian aid. There were many challenges and limitations which hindered these organizations’ efforts. The first factor was the scale of the earthquake. A 7.0-magnitude earthquake is considered to be major in the Richter magnitude scale. Although these earthquakes could happen once a year, the situation was aggravated because the city of Port-au-Prince was so populous and lacked urban planning or building regulations.¹⁹

This links in to the second challenge, the poor and limited infrastructure of Haiti. This earthquake was so severe that it left behind more than 25 million cubic yards of fallen buildings.²⁰

The third factor was the number of homeless and displaced persons, considering that approximately 300,000 buildings were destroyed or damaged. Fourth, it was also medically challenging, as many Haitians were suffering from diseases even prior to the earthquake. Although more than 70 percent of available health care was provided by NGOs,

Left: This map shows the location of Haiti in the Western Hemisphere.



72 percent of the population did not have any access to health care at all.²¹ Moreover, the cholera epidemic severely heightened the situation and challenged NGOs' ability to provide effective aid.

The fifth challenge was the communication between NGOs, local residents and governments. The influx of "amateur" aid workers and ad hoc NGOs meant that many of them could not efficiently communicate with the locals. Many NGO personnel could not speak Creole or French. In addition to the language barrier, local Haitians were rarely invited to provide input as to their needs, insights and feedback.²²

Thus, there were many challenges and limitations that hindered the NGO sector in its effectiveness in providing humanitarian aid, yet one area that has since received much attention and hopefully will provide better results in the future concerns the coordination of efforts by NGOs. After the earthquake, these 10,000 NGOs (the presence of 10,000 NGOs in a country the size of Haiti suggests gross inefficiency) were all trying to do some good, but the absolute lack of coordination of their work meant inefficient programming, inappropriate targeting of recipients, repetitive projects in locations, and little if any communication of results and best practice findings.

"We learn by our mistakes" applies here in more ways than one. Let us all hope that the international development community working in Haiti (and other countries with similar situations) has learned from these unacceptable results. There is reason for hope; in other regions of the world (such as southern Africa), NGOs have established formal collaborative groups with precisely defined goals and objectives, based on conversations with recipients, to ensure their work is addressing local needs and will be sustained.²³

This photo shows workers removing rubble from the streets of Martissant, a suburb of Port-au-Prince very near to the epicenter of the 2010 earthquake. The workers were participating in the United Nations Development Program "Cash for Work" project. Photo by Adam Rogers/ UNDP.



Given the persistent severe struggles in Haiti, the NGO sector ought not to be the only one held responsible, condemned and criticized for failing to deliver effective humanitarian aid. The Haitian earthquake was quite an extreme situation and good intentions lay behind their work.

—Sara Alexander is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at Baylor University and a consultant with TANGO International (an NGO that provides technical assistance). As a social anthropologist, she has worked in Central America, West and East Africa, and Appalachia. Her research focuses on developing countries in such matters as livelihood security and vulnerability, food security, ecotourism, natural resource management, the human dimensions of climate change and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. She is a frequent contributor to Hunger News & Hope and a member of the Seeds Council of Stewards.

Editor's note: For background reading, see the special Hunger News & Hope issue on Haiti, Vol 11 No 1, Spring 2010—particularly Audrey Cary's two-page timeline chart, "How Haiti Got to Where It Is Today" on page 4.

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Please see "Haiti" on page 10.

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continued from page 7

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Teach Justice through Worship.



art by Sally Lynn Askins

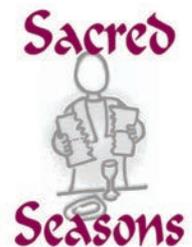
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Knowledge Is More Powerful than Criticism

A Review of the Book Killing with Kindness

by Sara E. Alexander

Killing with Kindness: Haiti, International Aid, and NGOs by Mark Schuller, assistant professor of anthropology and NGO Leadership Development at Northern Illinois University, received the 2015 Margaret Mead Award from the American Anthropological Association and the Society for Applied Anthropology. A writer for *Huffington Post*, Mark Schuller is the coeditor of four books, including *Tectonic Shifts: Haiti since the Earthquake*, and codirector of the documentary film *Poto Mitan: Haitian Women, Pillars of the Global Economy*.

After Haiti's 2010 earthquake, over half of US households donated to thousands of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in that country. Yet we continue to hear stories of misery from Haiti. Why have NGOs failed at their mission and continue to struggle?

Killing with Kindness is set in Haiti during the 2004 *coup d'état* that ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and its aftermath, and is enriched by research conducted after the 2010 earthquake. The book analyzes the impact of official development aid on recipient NGOs and their relationships with local communities. Written like a detective story, the book offers detailed ethnographic comparisons of two Haitian women's NGOs working in HIV/AIDS prevention, one with public funding (including the US Agency for International Development, USAID), and the second with private European NGO partners.

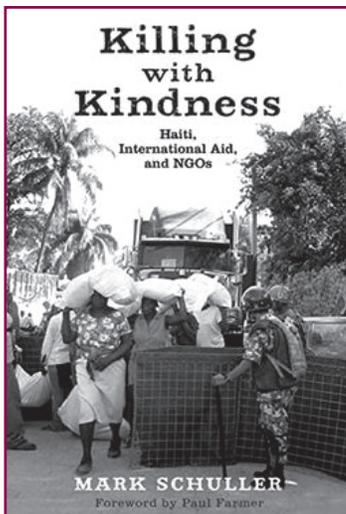
The author examines both participation and autonomy, analyzing donor policies that impede these goals. He focuses on NGOs' roles as intermediaries in bonding the contemporary world system together and shows how power functions within the international aid system as these inter-

mediaries compel interpretations of unclear mandates down the chain—a process Schuller calls “trickle-down imperialism.”

Faye V. Harrison, author of *Outsider Within: Reworking Anthropology in the Global Age*, writes of the book, “Mark Schuller's ethnography of pre- and post-earthquake disaster Haiti is profoundly riveting, poignant and courageous. It offers a timely no-holds-barred critique

and theoretically nuanced analysis of neoliberal “NGO-ization” and humanitarian aid. The book also provides an inspiring vision and thoughtful recommendations for remedying the problems of “trickle down imperialism.” This is an important contribution that convincingly explains why we should care about what's happening in Haiti and the troubling implications for elsewhere—including right here in the USA.

—Sara Alexander is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at Baylor University and a consultant with TANGO International (an NGO that provides technical assistance). As a social anthropologist, she has worked in Central America, West and East Africa, and Appalachia. Her research focuses on developing countries in such matters as livelihood security and vulnerability, food security, ecotourism, natural resource management, the human dimensions of climate change and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. She is also a member of the Seeds Council of Stewards.



Looking for ways to introduce your congregation to hunger issues?

Hunger in God's World

Email seedseditor1@gmail.com for a pdf of this four-session workshop from Seeds of Hope. If you are in the Central Texas area, a Seeds representative will lead the workshop for you for gas money.

The Power of Sheer Determination

A Review of the Film *Darfur Now*

by Sara E. Alexander

Editor's note: Although this documentary is fifteen years old and the crisis to which it responds began to show up in the global news in 2003, the story is still ongoing. The events that led up to the genocide began decades ago, and the violence—although not as widespread since 2016—continues. People continue to flee from Darfur into the neighboring country of Chad. During the worst days of the “ethnic cleansing,” Sudanese government troops and Sudanese Arab tribesmen called Janjaweed (“demons on horses”) systematically perpetrated atrocities against people of “Black African” descent.

Darfur Now (2007) is a powerful, documentary film examining the genocide in Darfur from the work of six individuals involved from a range of perspectives. The film was written and directed by Ted Braun and produced by Don Cheadle, Mark Jonathan Harris and Cathy Schulman. *Darfur Now* premiered at the 2007 Toronto International Film Festival and was released in the United States and Canada on November 2, 2007.

The film is a call to action for people all over the world to respond to the ongoing crisis in Darfur. Individuals from all walks of life—movie stars, activists, politicians and others—campaign to raise public awareness about the situation in Sudan’s western Darfur region and the urgent need for collective action. Through steps both small and large, these individuals do what they can to halt the genocide and generate sufficient humanitarian aid for the millions who are facing severe oppression. “This crisis,” they argue,

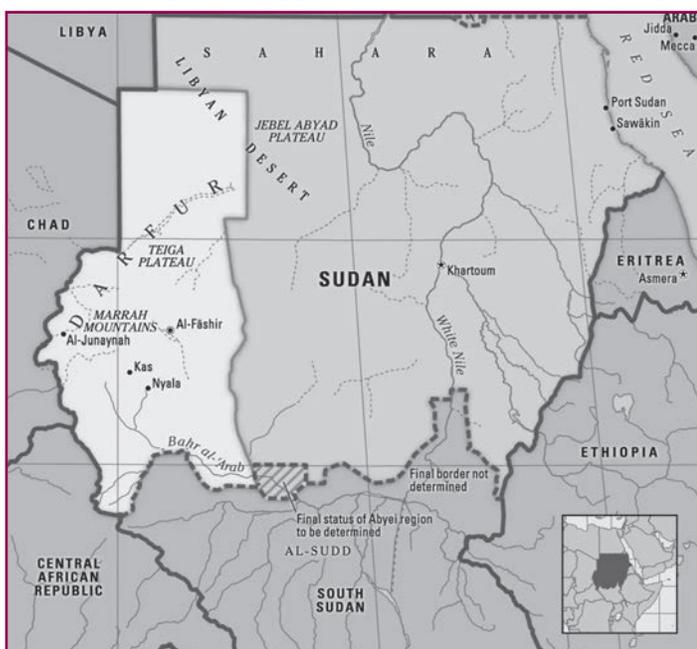
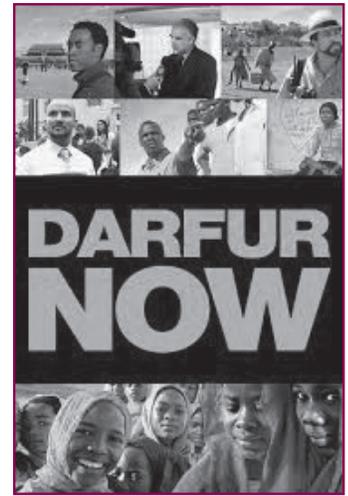
“does not belong just to the inhabitants of Sudan, but to all citizens of the earth.”

Darfur Now follows the story of six individuals, who do not necessarily know each other but are united by the same cause: the crisis in Darfur. These individuals include Don Cheadle, who uses his celebrity status to draw attention to the issue; Californian Adam Sterling, a 24-year-old waiter and activist who is working with friends to implore Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to sign a bill to keep California funds from investing in companies with interests in Sudan; and Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, who works to gather substantial, credible evidence to ultimately prosecute those responsible.

Then there are presented stories of those who are situated in Darfur: Hejewa Adam, a woman whose baby was beaten to death by Janjaweed attackers, who now fights in the Sudanese Liberation Army; Ahmed Mohammed Abakar, a displaced builder and farmer who now serves as leader and head sheikh of a camp of 47,000 other displaced Darfurians; and Pablo Recalde, leader of the World Food Programme in West Darfur, who is in charge of overseeing the safe delivery of emergency food relief to a number of the refugee camps.

Demonstrating the passion of the various subjects working their angles of this genocide, the film offers commanding evidence to the changes that may come when people make an effort to let their voices be heard, at times with the coordination of others, and at other times through their own sheer determination.

—Sara Alexander is a professor in the Department of Anthropology at Baylor University and a consultant with TANGO International (an NGO that provides technical assistance). As a social anthropologist, she has worked in Central America, West and East Africa, and Appalachia. Her research focuses on developing countries in such matters as livelihood security and vulnerability, food security, ecotourism, natural resource management, the human dimensions of climate change and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. She is also a member of the Seeds Council of Stewards.



The Creating Hope Project

from Seeds of Hope

Some *Hunger News & Hope* readers have probably not heard anything about one of our favorite endeavors—the Creating Hope Project, so this is an attempt to give you a brief introduction. The project has two major components: the “Writing to End Hunger” workshop and the “Theatre of the Oppressed” workshop.

Writing to End Hunger

The Seeds “Writing to End Hunger” workshop has taken many incarnations. The first was a children’s day camp at Seventh & James Baptist church in Waco, TX, in which children daily visited agencies that work to get food to hungry people. The children came back from their field trips and wrote stories about the agencies, about the people they met, and about their impressions of the work. They drew pictures and took photos. At the end of the week, we compiled a newsletter, called *Hungry for Hope*, which was printed and presented to the church.

Two more recent incarnations were at the Baylor University Freedom School, a summer program in Waco, TX, for low-income youth. In 2018, we worked with elementary and middle-school students to create a newsletter about hunger in the Waco area, called the *Freedom School Press*. In 2019, we worked with homeless high-school students. This group named their newsletter *The Outcast Project: The Secret Lives of Homeless Youth*.

Also in 2019, a Seeds team traveled to Tbilisi, Georgia (the republic), to conduct the same workshop. Participants came from an interfaith student group based out of the Peace Cathedral in Tbilisi. Their newsletter, which they named *The Hunger Journal*, includes interviews with guests and volunteers at a soup kitchen in the town of Gori, where

many people were displaced by two Russian invasions. The journal included background information about the conflicts and what has happened to the people since.

—This workshop is led by Katie Cook, who has been the Seeds of Hope editor since 1991. In addition to editing the Seeds publications *Hunger News & Hope* and *Sacred Seasons*, Katie also leads a *Hunger in God’s World* workshop for church groups and seminary classes. Seeds also offers (free of charge) curriculum for a do-it-yourself version of this workshop. Contact seedseeditor1@gmail.com for more information.

Theatre of the Oppressed

In 2019, the “Writing to End Hunger” workshop was joined by the “Theatre of the Oppressed” applied theatre workshop. The “Theatre of the Oppressed” concept was developed by Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal during the 1950s and 1960s. In an effort to transform theatre from the “monologue” of traditional performance into a “dialogue” between audience and stage, Boal experimented with many kinds of interactive theatre.

Boal’s explorations were based on the assumption that dialogue is the common, healthy dynamic between all humans, that all human beings desire and are capable of dialogue, and that when a dialogue becomes a monologue, oppression ensues. With this in mind, theatre then becomes an extraordinary tool for transforming monologue into dialogue. “While some people make theatre,” says Boal, “we all are theatre.”

The Seeds “Theatre of the Oppressed” workshop includes exploring the games and techniques of August Boal. Participants learn through these activities about themselves and their community, looking for ways that art and theatre

can inform our experience and challenge our perceptions. One of the activities is constructing a Brave Space where participants can address social identities and faith expressions, while devising a piece of theatre reflecting these encounters.

—This workshop is conducted by Guilherme Feitosa de Almeida, a senior lecturer in musical theatre at Baylor University. A native of Brazil, Guilherme specializes in liturgy that promotes liberation theology. Guilherme is a member of the *Sacred Seasons* liturgical team and serves on the Seeds Council of Stewards. Contact guilherme_almeida@baylor.edu for more information.

Left: Guilherme Almeida (far right) and Katie Cook (third from right) with project participants in Tbilisi, Georgia.



A Hunger Glossary

from the Hunger News & Hope Editorial Team

- **FAMINE:** According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), a famine is "the absolute inaccessibility of food to an entire population or sub-group of a population, potentially causing death in the short term."

- **FEEDING PROGRAM:** A federal, school or private program or agency that serves prepared food to hungry people. Examples include soup kitchens and school meal programs.

- **FOOD DESERT:** a district, usually a low-income area, where healthy, nutritious food is difficult to obtain. The Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines a food desert as a low-income census tract where a substantial number of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store.

In the 2008 Food, Conservation and Energy Act (the 2008 Farm Act), Congress directed the USDA to assess the extent of food deserts in the United States. These regions of the country often feature large proportions of households with low incomes, inadequate access to transportation, and a limited number of food retailers providing fresh produce and healthy groceries for affordable prices. In response to this directive, USDA published *Access to Affordable and Nutritious Food: Measuring and Understanding Food Deserts and Their Consequences* (USDA, 2009).

Recently, some food justice activists have been calling for the term to change to "food apartheid," to call attention to the effect of systemic racism that causes this disparity.

- **FOOD RESCUE:** The practice of obtaining prepared food from restaurants, packaging it according to health codes, and making it available to feeding programs.

- **FOOD SECURITY:** Having enough food to be healthy and productive. The World Food Summit of 1996 defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life." According to the UN World Health Organisation, food security is built on three pillars: food availability, food access and appropriate food use.

Census workers in the US use the terms "high food security," "marginal food security," "low food security" and "very low food security." According to the USDA, a household has very low food security if the food intake of one or more household members is reduced or disrupted at times during the year because the household lacks the money or other resources for food.

- **FOOD SOVEREIGNTY:** A movement that seeks to establish the rights of those who grow food to determine

what foods to grow, how food is grown, and how and by whom foods are produced, processed and distributed. It also seeks to provide fair compensation for those involved in bringing food to our tables.

The movement was launched at the 1996 World Food Summit by La Via Campesina. The 2007 Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali, with 700 delegates from five continents, clarified the economic, social, ecological, and political implications of the movement and created an international process to achieve recognition of the right to food sovereignty. The forum issued the following declaration:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations.

For those who eat (which is everybody), it is the right to know where your food comes from, how the food was produced, how safe and healthy it is, and who benefits from the food's production and distribution.

—See pages 3-9 of the summer 2012 issue of Hunger News & Hope for more about Food Sovereignty.

- **HUNGER:** The body's way of signaling that it is running short of food and needs to eat something. It is described as an uncomfortable or painful physical sensation caused by insufficient consumption of dietary energy. It becomes chronic when the person does not consume a sufficient number of calories (dietary energy) on a regular basis to lead a normal, active and healthy life. The Food and Agriculture Organisation estimates that almost 690 million people are going hungry chronically. According to the UN's World Food Programme (WFP), the average person needs 1,200 calories a day to lead a healthy life.

- **MALNUTRITION:** According to the World Health Organisation, "malnutrition" refers to deficiencies or excesses in nutrient intake, imbalance of essential nutrients or impaired nutrient utilization. This includes undernutrition, obesity and diet-related noncommunicable diseases. There are four types of malnutrition:

1. **ACUTE MALNUTRITION** is defined by Save the Children as "recent, severe weight loss as a result of acute food deprivation with or without illness; it refers to wasting and/or nutritional oedema."

2. **CHRONIC MALNUTRITION** is defined by the FAO as “an abnormal physiological condition caused by chronic deficiencies or imbalances in one or more nutrients. This condition may result in impaired physical and/or mental development and can possibly result in *kwashiorkor* and/or *marasmus*.”

3. **OBESITY** is now recognized as a form of malnutrition. It leads to its own set of diet-related noncommunicable diseases. High numbers of obesity cases often occur in low-income neighborhoods and food deserts.

4. The FAO describes **UNDERNUTRITION** as “an abnormal physiological condition whereby individuals do not consume sufficient food to meet dietary energy and nutrient requirements over a prolonged period of time.” According to the WHO, it manifests in four broad forms: wasting, stunting, underweight, and micronutrient deficiencies:

a. **WASTING** is defined by the WHO as a person having low weight for their height. It often indicates recent and severe weight loss, although it can also persist for a long time. It is usually associated with starvation and/or disease. It occurs when a person has not had food of adequate quality and quantity and/or they have had frequent or prolonged illnesses. It is calculated by comparing weight-for-height of a child with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children. Wasting in children is associated with a higher risk of death if not treated properly.

This measurement is often used to assess the severity of emergencies because it is so strongly related to mortality.

b. **STUNTING** is defined as low height-for-age. It is the result of chronic or recurrent undernutrition, usually associated with poverty, poor maternal health and nutrition, frequent illness and/or inappropriate feeding and care in early life. Stunting prevents children from reaching their physical and cognitive potential. It is calculated by comparing the height-for-age of a child with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children

c. **UNDERWEIGHT** is a state measured by comparing the weight-for-age of a child with a reference population of well-nourished and healthy children. It is estimated that the deaths of almost 4 million children aged less than 5 are associated with the underweight status of the children themselves or their mothers. A child who is underweight may be stunted, wasted or both. (WHO)

d. **MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES** are a lack of vitamins and minerals that are essential

for body functions such as producing enzymes, hormones and other substances needed for growth and development. (WHO)

- **SNAP:** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program) is a federal program in the US administered by the USDA.

- **UNDERNOURISHMENT:** the status of people whose food intake does not include enough calories to meet minimum physiological needs. The term is a measure of a country’s ability to gain access to food and is normally derived from Food Balance Sheets prepared by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

- **WIC:** The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, a federal program in the US administered by the USDA. The WIC program has been shown to save \$5 in future social services for every \$1 it spends. ■

A Word of Hope

continued from page 1

the register brings him a plate piled with food and takes him to a table.

A public library in New York City, NY, decides that it isn’t enough to just allow homeless people to come in and get out of the weather; it hires a social worker to help meet their needs. Someone driving a truck in Waco, TX, hands a gallon jug of water out his window to a panhandler standing in the 108-degree heat just off the highway.

Also in Waco, a woman with all her worldly possessions in a stroller knocks on the door of a church, and the pastor welcomes her in out of the heat.

Television chef José Andrés, who founded World Central Kitchen after seeing the devastation of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, keeps a backpack ready so that he can go, at a moment’s notice, wherever in the world people are suddenly in need.

An employee of Church World Service works around the clock to pair refugees with communities in one of 70 host countries. A whole Polish village greets displaced Ukrainians at the border with food and blankets. Deeds like these are everywhere.

We must not lose heart. We must go and do likewise. Yes, we must support the groups doing the big work. Yes, we must contact legislators and tell them that hunger issues are important to us. But we must also look around for the person in need right next to us.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow once said, “Give what you can. To someone it may be better than you dare to think.” ■

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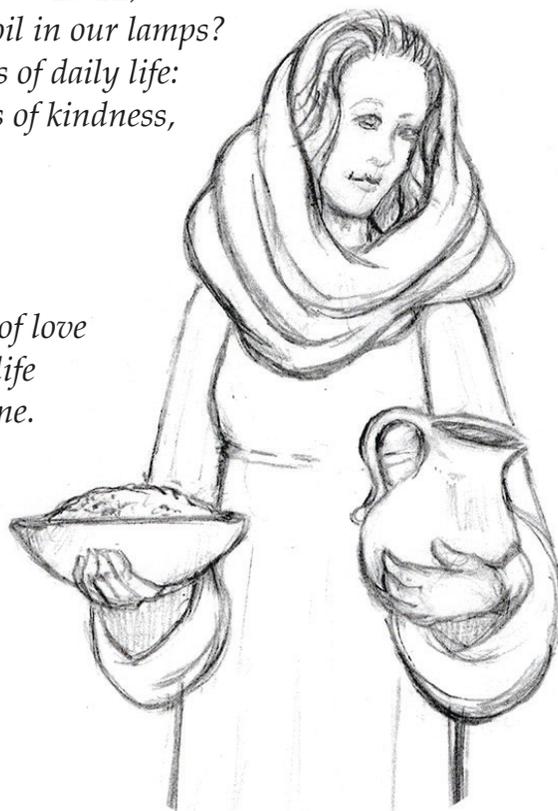
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Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry people in 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 vulnerable people; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings

*Do not think that love,
in order to be genuine,
has to be extraordinary.
What we need is to love
without getting tired.
How does a lamp burn?
Through the continuous input
of small drops of oil.
If the drops of oil run out,
the light of the lamp will cease,
and the bridegroom will say,
"I do not know you" (Matt. 25:12).
What are these drops of oil in our lamps?
They are the small things of daily life:
faithfulness, small words of kindness,
a thought for others,
our way of being silent,
of looking, of speaking,
and of acting.
These are the true drops of love
that keep your religious life
burning like a living flame.
—Mother Teresa*



art by Sally Lynn Askins

Editorial Address

Seeds is housed by the community of faith at Seventh & James Baptist Church. Mailing address: 602 James Ave., Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor1@gmail.com. Web: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2022; ISSN 0194-4495. Seeds of Hope, Inc., holds the 501(c)3 nonprofit tax status.

Seeds also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for Advent, Lent and an annual Hunger Emphasis—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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