

# 2013 Facts about Hunger

compiled by Natalia Alas

## Hunger Around the World

- The vast majority of hungry people (98 percent) live in developing countries, where almost 15 percent of the population is undernourished. Around three-quarters of these undernourished people live in low-income rural areas, principally in higher-risk farming areas. *World Food Programme (WFP)*

- Approximately 870 million people in the world do not eat enough to be healthy. That means that one in every eight people on Earth goes to bed hungry each night. However, there is hopeful news: the number of people living with chronic hunger has declined by 130 million people over the past 20 years. *United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)*

- Hunger is number one on the list of the world's top 10 health risks. It kills more people every year than AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined. *Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)*

- Between one-third and one-half of all deaths in children under the age of 5 in developing countries are linked to poor nutrition. Some studies estimate this to include 3.1 million children. *WFP, UN Inter-Agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (IGME)*

- The first thousand days of a child's life, from pregnancy through age 2, are the critical window in which to tackle undernutrition. A proper diet in this period can protect children from the mental and physical stunting that can result from malnutrition. *IGME*

- It costs just US\$0.25 per day to provide a child with all of the vitamins and nutrients he or she needs to grow up healthy. *WFP*

- If women in rural areas had the same access to land, technology, financial services, education and markets as men, the number of hungry people could be reduced by 100-150 million. *FAO*

- It would cost US\$3.5 billion to feed every hungry schoolchild in the world. That's around two times the takings from the movie *Titanic*, which grossed US\$1.8 billion worldwide. *WFP*

- Asia and the Pacific have the largest share of the world's hungry people (some 563 million). *WFP*

- One out of six children in developing countries is underweight. *WFP*

- About 180 million children under the age of 5 suffer from stunting and are not reaching their potential. About 80 percent of these stunted children live in just 20 countries. *WFP, UNICEF*

- 66 million primary school-age children across the developing world are hungry when they attend classes, with 23 million in Africa alone. US\$3.2 billion would feed all of the hungry school-age children in the world for one year. *WFP*

- Under-nutrition among pregnant women in developing countries leads to one out of six infants born with low birth weight. This is not only a risk factor for neonatal deaths, but also causes learning



disabilities, mental retardation, poor health, blindness and premature death.

—*World Hunger Education Service (WHES)*

- There is enough food to provide everyone in the world with at least 2,720 kilocalories (kcal) per person per day. The principal problem is that many people in the world do not have sufficient land to grow, or income to purchase, enough food. *FAO*

- As of 2008, the World Bank has estimated that there were an estimated 1,345 million poor people in developing countries who live on \$1.25 a day or less. *WHES*

- By causing poor health, low levels of energy, and even mental impairment, hunger can lead to even greater poverty by reducing people's ability to work and learn, thus leading to even greater hunger. *WHES*

- One out of three people in developing countries are affected by vitamin and mineral deficiencies. *World Health Organization (WHO)*

- A child dies from hunger-related causes every 13 seconds. That's as many as 7,000 children younger than 5 killed every day. *30 Hour Famine*

## Hunger in the US

- Nearly 49 million people in the United States are living in food-insecure households or a household where the members are unable to consistently access the adequate amount of nutritious food necessary for a healthy life.

—*USDA*

- A key cause of food insecurity in the United States is the lack of sufficient resources to cover the cost of food in addition to meeting other basic needs.

—*Feeding America*

- Ninety percent of all counties in the US have a majority of food-insecure children living in households with incomes at or below the federal poverty line.

*Feeding America*

- One in six people in America face hunger.

*Do Something*

- Households with children reported a significantly higher food-insecurity rate than households without children. *Do Something*

- Food insecurity exists in every county in America. *Do Something*

- In the US, hunger isn't caused by a lack of food,

but rather the continued prevalence of poverty. *Do Something*

- One in seven people are enrolled in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Nearly half of them are children.

*Do Something*

- Forty percent of food is thrown out in the US every year, or about \$165 billion worth. All of this uneaten food could feed 25 million Americans. *Do Something*

- More than one in five children is at risk of hunger. Among African-Americans and Latinos, nearly one in three children is at risk of hunger.

*United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)*

- Of the more than 20 million children who receive free or reduced-price lunch each school day, less than half receive breakfast and only 10 percent go to summer feeding sites. *USDA*

- About half of all American children will receive SNAP benefits at some point before age 20. *Bureau of Labor Statistics*

- Low-income households spend a greater share of their income on food. Food accounts for 16.4 percent of spending for households making less than \$10,000 per year compared to the US average of 12.7 percent. *Bureau of Labor Statistics*

—*Natalie Alas, a native of Pearland, TX, is a Professional Writing student at Baylor University and a Seeds of Hope intern.*

We want to take people's success stories and re-write the "story" of hunger. There are things that have been working, and things we know can work. It may once have seemed like a hopeless story, but we're changing it to a hopeful one.

—*Bill Ayres, cofounder of World Hunger Year*