

What You Can Do

7

CHAPTER

The problem of hunger can appear overwhelming if all you see are the numbers: 852 million hungry worldwide, 36 million here in the United States.



After reading this report, we expect you can also see there are manifold ways to strengthen rural communities. Knowledge exists to increase the capacity of land to produce more food in areas where scarcity has seemed intractable. We know that technology exists to connect people in rural America to college and university classrooms hundreds of miles apart, providing rural residents with access to knowledge they need to compete in the twenty-first century economy. We know that a network of roads in sub-Saharan Africa could prevent tragedies where food rots in storage facilities while in other parts of the same country people go hungry.

Knowing what we do, it is also fair to ask those in positions of leadership why are so many people in rural communities still suffering from hunger and poverty.

Photos by Margaret Nea

Bread for the World members do ask this question of leaders. Empowered by their knowledge, and committed to changing this world for the better, members have had many successes. Since 1974, Bread for the World members have been urging policymakers to bring resources to bear on alleviating hunger and poverty around the country and throughout the world.

Most recently, Bread for the World members worked hard to encourage Congress to support the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). The MCA directs aid to countries to improve education, health care and employment for people who desperately need help. Money invested in the MCA does exactly what we have argued throughout this report needs to be done to free countries from the yoke of poverty and hunger.

For two years, Bread for the World members have kept MCA funding on the

front burner with letters, meetings and calls to legislators and administration officials, with media attention, and by building support from influential organizations such as the major Christian churches. Efforts by Bread for the World members have also contributed to significant improvements in child nutrition programs.

Bread for the World has had many successes, and so its reputation as a leader in the fight to end hunger is taken seriously by Congress and the president. These successes have benefited hundreds of millions of hungry people.

Here are a few examples of what Bread for the World members have accomplished in the last year:

Karen Fitzpatrick, a Bread for the World member in Minnesota, with a small cadre of others, helped register hundreds of people to vote in Washington County. They went door to door in federally subsidized apart-

ments for seniors and to mobile-home parks, domestic violence shelters and food pantries. These new voters, mostly low-income people registering for the first time in their lives, got to exercise one of the most valuable tools against hunger, political participation.

In Alabama, longstanding members Pat Pelham and Elaine Van Cleave were so pumped up about Bread for the World joining the ONE Campaign, they decided to educate their fellow citizens in the Birmingham area. They organized a meeting with more than 300 people, many of them college students from six universities in the Birmingham area, and shared the goals of the ONE Campaign and encouraged them to join.

For more than 30 years, Bread for the World has reached out to people and taught them about how they too can make a difference in the fight against hunger.



Jim Stipe

Cost estimates for ending hunger in America range from \$6 billion to \$10 billion per year in additional federal funding—or roughly between a nickel and a dime per American per day.

“Most people are aware there are problems, but they also think there isn’t anything that can be done,” said Kathy Pomroy, director of organizing for Bread for the World. “Most people think hunger is intractable. I tell them stories of how regular people have made a difference and I see the lights flash in their eyes.

“These are people who want to make a difference in the world—and Bread is an organization that has made a difference. What gets these people excited is knowing they will be working with a group that understands how to make a difference. They realize they can bring their energy to this organization, and they know they will get energy back.”

In earlier chapters of this report, we have included stories, or case studies, by or about other individuals—some of them Bread for the World members, others affiliated with different groups—involved in the fight to end hunger, doing what they can at a grassroots level. These stories should be inspiration to anyone trying to understand what they can do in their communities.

One such story is on page 54, told by Bread for the World member Jim Hanna about a program in Maine to help Hispanic and African immigrants use their expertise in farming to serve a local community and also help themselves achieve a better life in America.

Another is on page 123. This is a strong reminder that faith-based choices do not have to end where business begins. On their apple orchards in eastern Washington, Bread for the World members Cheryl and Ralph Broetje show how their Christian faith has informed the way they run their business.

“The social justice component is a strong motivating factor in these people’s lives,” says Kathy Pomroy, referring not just to the Broetjes, but to most of Bread for the World’s 54,000 members. “The fact that Bread is a faith-based organization gives them inspiration. They hear their faith pointing them in the direction of action, and Bread is there as a means for them to achieve that.”

Grace Changes Things

Jaime Steiert

The choir at the Berean Baptist Church, the largest African American church in Marion, Alabama, sang joyfully, and the music struck a chord deep inside me. The choir loft rose above the congregation on each side of the pulpit, full of swaying, clapping and smiling faces.

Uncertain of the environment at first, I allowed the vibrations to scatter my fears. I was in my first week of a summer mission assignment with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship program Sowing Seeds of Hope, assigned to Perry County, whose greatest distinction so far in my mind was being labeled “one of the five poorest counties in the United States.”

The rich tones of “Let us break bread together on our knees” echoed throughout the church. Within the walls of the church, we were all on level ground. No matter what or where we came from outside this sanctuary, inside “we was all the same.”

On the leveling surface of the communion table, we were all invited to partake of the fullness of Christ together. I thought of the Scripture so many of us claim when working with *the poor*: “Whatever you did for the least of these, you did to me.”

Unity comes when we are willing to be real about the poverty of the soul that plagues all of us. It is easy to say God is at work on poverty, racism, and injustice and picture missionaries flooding in to enlighten, inspire and “fix things.” But we all come as paupers, and we all come to the table of Christ as people in need. To work beside the poor is to confess this together and join in the unity that Christ desires for his church.

I had to wonder were the people in this church tired of the labels they’ve been assigned. How long have we been telling them that they are poor and needy without confessing the impoverished condition of our own lives?

What is the agent of change in areas of poverty like Perry County? My good friend Rev. John Fender reminds us that the real change agent for anything is the Gospel, carried and lived out by the most ordinary of people. This Gospel works by way of its own logic, and yet through every system,

task force and group of volunteers there are people—people who are living houses for the presence of Christ.

Poverty has a way of holding a mirror up to you. The faith of these people I was going to talk with over kitchen tables, meet at the grocery store, restore houses and pray with could move mountains, and it has. And as the presence of Christ, which is love itself, lives and moves and acts through the people of Perry County, then I believe hope is alive here.



Broetje Orchards

Lives are being changed in Perry County. I am just not sure it is always the ones we think are changed. Perhaps the greatest lesson I learned during my summer in Perry County was that grace could overcome the most insurmountable challenges. The voice that calls us all heavenward to the same home unites us by grace.

As I think of the seeds of hope that are being planted daily through construction and school enrichment programs, clothes banks, and worship celebrations, I am reminded of something more amazing. The grace that transforms is not confined to a building, education system, or county—it is the grace that changes our own lives.

I claim the words sang on my first Sunday in the Berean Baptist church: “Grace changes things. Grace is changing me.”

Jaime Steiert is a student at Texas A&M and participated in the Sowing Seed of Hope program in the summer of 2004.

Every year Bread for the World members organize offerings of letters in support of anti-hunger legislation. For example, members of a church congregation will write letters to Congress in support of hunger-fighting legislation during the coffee hour following their Sunday service.

In Sunday school classrooms, both adults and children watch a short video about a family struggling with hunger. Afterwards, everyone—even the kids—writes to a senator or representative, asking them to keep their promises and support legislation increasing funding to fight hunger, poverty and disease in some of the poorest countries in the world.

On a college campus, student leaders encourage their peers to write letters to Congress after a hunger awareness event or a group meeting.

These examples are just a few of the forms an offering of letters can take. But all offerings serve the same purpose: using the gift of citizenship to take steps toward ending hunger. You, too, can organize an offering of letters in your church or community.

Bread for the World's 2005 offering, *Make Hunger History*, is urging Congress and President Bush to begin a national effort to cut U.S. hunger in half by 2010.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, the United States undertook initiatives and put in place programs that substantially reduced the number of people who struggle to feed their families in our nation. For 30 years, the percentage of hungry people in our country remained largely unchanged. But in recent years, the numbers have begun to go up. While government programs keep the numbers from expanding faster, they obviously aren't reaching all the people who need help. The *Make Hunger History* campaign will call on Congress and the president to develop specific plans for ending hunger.

Make Hunger History will also seek to deepen anti-hunger advocacy, expand research on hunger, and take steps to strengthen and improve our national nutrition programs.

With hunger, poverty and disease rampant in our world, the United States needs to step up the effort to provide assistance focused on helping hungry and poor people improve their lives. That's why Bread for the World has joined with other organizations in the ONE Campaign, a coalition of anti-poverty advocates as well as hundreds of thousands of people across the United States, coming together as ONE to fight global AIDS, extreme poverty and hunger. This coalition is calling for an additional 1 percent of the U.S. budget to help poor countries fight poverty. An additional 1 percent is a mere fraction of what this country spends on arms each year.

You can support these efforts by signing a declaration on the Bread for the World website at www.bread.org and by ordering resources such as the *Power of ONE*, a Bread for the World campaign handbook.

There are a variety of ways you can get involved. Most citizens want tragic injustices like hunger corrected. Year after year, when the public is asked how important is ending hunger, it never ceases to be a cause people say should be of primary importance.

Out of despair, perhaps, people feel like one person's contribution is insignificant in the face of such huge numbers like 852 million. Their hearts harden to hope. Don't think this way, please. Hearts are powerful and the will to act on them fills the emptiness of despair with a whole new vision of the future. You can make a difference. To each what he or she can contribute, but all who want to contribute should know, to be sure, all contributions matter.

Some Other Voices for Hungry People:

America's Second Harvest: America's Second Harvest is the nation's largest domestic hunger relief organization. Through a network of more than 200 food banks and food-rescue programs, America's Second Harvest provide emergency food assistance to more than 23 million hungry Americans each year, 8 million of whom are children. Last year, America's Second Harvest distributed 1.7 billion pounds of food to needy Americans, serving all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Second Harvest



In 2004, Bread for the World members helped organize 1,100 offerings of letters, generating at least 134,000 letters to Congress and the president urging them to increase poverty-focused development assistance around the world.

Business as Ministry

Roger Bairstow

Cheryl Broetje often describes the Bible as a book of migrations. “God uses migrants to move history, while calling people of faith to action,” she says.

As Christians contemplating the needs of their employees, Cheryl and her husband Ralph clearly felt called to understand their employees’ plight and stand with them in their struggle to meet the needs of their families.

While many other businesses, particularly family-owned agricultural operations, are fighting to survive, Ralph and Cheryl Broetje are using their proceeds for ministry. Broetje Orchards in eastern Washington, one of the largest privately owned apple orchards in the world, manages more than 5,300 acres of Fuji, Gala, Braeburn, Granny Smith, Red and Golden Delicious apples, as well as 115 acres of cherries. The Broetjes’ business-as-ministry model involves the dedication of over 900 people, primarily Latinos, working year-round in the fields and the warehouse.



Broetje Orchards

Cheryl and Ralph Broetje, owners of Broetje Orchards in eastern Washington, have committed themselves to the belief that faith and business can thrive together.

Perspectives

In 1983 the Broetje family went to Mexico on a “trip of perspective,” as Cheryl likes to call it. They saw first-hand what their workers had left. They met families living on barren land alongside mosquito-infested riverbanks in active garbage dumps and in cardboard boxes the size of clothes dryers.

The Broetje family went to Mexico hoping to learn why so many Mexicans lived as migrants, leaving their families, their communities and the country they love behind to seek a better life north in the United States. They learned that the reasons were quite simple—economics. At the conclusion of their trip, the Broetjes understood that the people working in their apple fields are largely economic refugees, without access to health care, education and a place of social belonging.

Hearing their need and understanding God’s call to serve the most vulnerable, the Broetjes built the New Horizon Preschool to “house” their employees’ children during the day. Once New Horizon was built and occupied, Ralph and Cheryl began to hear stories about the lack of decent, adequate and affordable housing in the surrounding communities where the families were staying—stories about children being bitten by rats at night, leaky and broken plumbing and roofing, and outrageous rents. These hardships led Ralph and Cheryl to further action.

“Vista Hermosa,” meaning Beautiful View, was designed to be transitional housing, where workers coming from a migrant lifestyle have the opportunity to become part of a safe, nurturing community and gain additional skills through various educational programs offered after-hours. Vista Hermosa provides housing for 600 people, including 285 children.

In addition to the housing, the community includes a chapel, pre-school, post office, laundry facilities, the Orchard View market store, a gymnasium, soccer field, playground and garden plots. The average home provides approximately 1,400 square feet of living space and comes with a family room, kitchen, two bathrooms and an attached garage.

The rental cost structure is designed so that the cost of renting a house at Vista Hermosa equates to approximately 60 percent of comparable housing elsewhere in the area, and is balanced to ensure that it does not exceed 30 percent of a family’s monthly income. Because of the low rental fees and reduced cost of childcare, many families are able to save money and move out of Vista Hermosa to purchase their own homes

Because many Vista Hermosa families came to the United States as economic refugees,

making enough money to pay for food, rent and transportation is their primary focus. Meeting the educational needs of their children is not always possible. Thus an on-going task is showing children how to be change agents in their own lives and ultimately be responsible for their learning, personal development and achievement.

A Fruitful Harvest

The Broetjes know that their success and prosperity are gifts of God, not given in order to line their personal pockets; rather, given so that they might be shared with those around them.

Recognizing the Christian mandate to serve the common good, especially the “least of these,” the Broetjes have committed themselves to the belief that faith and business can thrive together. Business as much as any other institution has the obligation to serve.

Roger Bairstow is currently an executive of two Broetje Orchard-affiliate organizations. He is chair of Snake River Housing, an affordable farmworker housing organization, and director of Mano à Mano, a non-profit dedicated to asset building for low-income and disadvantaged populations.

Push-and-Pull Politics to End Hunger: The More and Better Campaign and the International Alliance to End Hunger

Richard A. Hoehn

It takes push-and-pull politics to end hunger—pushing by grassroots organizations and pulling by legislators. The more people push and the more legislators pull together, the more likely it is that the first Millennium Development Goal of cutting hunger and poverty in half by 2015 will be achieved.

The More and Better Aid Campaign and the International Alliance Against Hunger are recent examples of push and pull efforts to fighting hunger and poverty.

Early in 2003, David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, and Jacques Diouf, director-general of the FAO, conceived the idea of an international campaign of NGOs to lobby governments to increase aid for agriculture. Today, the More and Better Campaign for agriculture, rural development and food aid includes 77 organizations in 42 countries from five continents with hundreds of affiliates. Under this one umbrella, they advocate for increases in both the quantity and quality of assistance to cut extreme poverty and hunger.

The NGOs range from farmer organizations such as the International Federation of Agricultural Producers to Via Campesina, a movement of peasant organizations, to international lobbying organizations such as Action Aid International. Even though they may disagree about various policy issues, they share information, build national campaigns and explore ways to work together across national boundaries.

While Bread for the World members are lobbying the U.S. Congress, activists in other developed countries are doing much the same. NGOs in Canada and Norway, for example, have convinced their governments to commit to an increase in aid for agriculture and rural development.

In the developing world, grassroots organizations such as the Green Movement of Sri Lanka, the Christian Relief and Development Association of Ethiopia and ROPPA, an umbrella organization of West African NGOs, are lobbying their governments to be more responsive to the needs of hungry and poor people within their borders.

The idea of an International Alliance Against Hunger was proposed by Johannes Rau, president of the Federal Republic of Germany, on World Food Day in 2001. Rau urged the formation of an alliance to counter the faltering political will that prevented nations from allocating adequate resources to fight hunger and poverty. FAO asked Eva Clayton, a former member of Congress and Bread for the World's board of directors, to come to Rome to promote the idea.

More than 80 nations have expressed an interest in forming their own national alliances. In Brazil, for example, the Zero Hunger Project (Programa Fome Zero), launched by President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2003, has established a wide network of alliances among

public sector institutions and civil society organizations.

Although More and Better and the International Alliance Against Hunger had separate origins, both rose at a time when there is increasing awareness of the need for individuals and governments to band together across national lines to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The 180+ nations that signed onto the Millennium Development Goals would like to see all the goals achieved. Cutting hunger and poverty is only the first goal.

Richard A. Hoehn works in the church relations department at Bread for the World and is former director of Bread for the World Institute (1992-2001).



has developed an important program of public-policy advocacy. Its goals is to end hunger in America.

35 East Wacker Drive, Suite 2000
Chicago, IL 60601
Phone: (312) 263-2303
Fax: (312) 263-5626
Web site: www.secondharvest.org

Center for Rural Affairs: The Center for Rural Affairs is committed to policies that strengthen family farms and rural communities. Begun by two ex-VISTA volunteers in 1973, the Center for Rural Affairs is committed to building communities that stand for social justice, economic opportunity and environmental stewardship. They work on issues ranging from environmental conservation and problems facing rural schools to market access for farmers. In order to keep in touch with the rural communities they assist, the Center for Rural Affairs is located in Walthill, Neb., population 900.

Center for Rural Affairs
101 S. Tallman St.
P.O. Box 406
Walthill, NE 68067
Phone: (402) 846-5428
Fax: (402) 846-5420
Web site: www.cfra.org

Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC): CFSC is “dedicated to building strong, sustainable, local and regional food systems that ensure access to affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food for all people at all times.” CFSC helps develop self-reliance among all communities in obtaining their food by creating a system of growing, manufacturing, processing, marketing and selling food that is regionally based and grounded in the principles of justice, democracy and sustainability.

CFSC actively promotes local farmers’ markets and local buying programs to help both local farmers sell their produce and low-income areas obtain fresh fruits and vegetables. They have more than 250 member organizations in the United States where members are active.

Community Food Security Coalition
P.O. Box 209
Venice, CA 90294
Phone: (310) 822-5410
Web site: www.foodsecurity.org

DATA (Debt, Aid, Trade for Africa):

DATA is a new organization that is being spearheaded by rock star Bono of the Irish group U2. DATA seeks to help Africa through pressuring developed country governments to cancel unpayable debt, fight HIV/AIDS, and reduce trade barriers. Bono is using his status as a public figure to bring attention specifically to Africa and some of the major problems troubling the continent. In addition to talking to developed countries, DATA also is encouraging African governments to practice democracy and be accountable to the poor in their respective countries. DATA hopes to help by “working to bring people and organizations from all around the United States and the world together to stop the spread of AIDS and extreme poverty in Africa.”

DATA
1400 Eye St., NW Suite 1125
Washington, DC 20005
E-mail: data@data.org
Web site: www.data.org

Food Research and Action Center

(FRAC): FRAC is a national organization working to improve public policies to eradicate hunger and undernutrition in the United States. Founded in 1970 as a public interest law firm, FRAC is a nonprofit and non-partisan research and public policy center and hub of an anti-hunger network of thousands of individuals and agencies across the country.

1875 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 540
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: (202) 986-2200
Fax: (202) 986-2525
Web site: www.frac.org

Heifer Project: Begun in Spain in the 1930s, Heifer International is based on the idea that to become self-reliant, people need not a cup of milk but a whole cow.

Since then, it has grown into a worldwide organization that seeks to help poor farmers by providing them with animals to raise in environmentally friendly ways. In return for the animals, families then pass on some of the offspring to other farmers nearby, thus making it a gift that keeps on giving.

Selected by *Worth* magazine as one of the 100 best charities in the United States, this organization gives tangible help to those in need all around the globe by connecting sponsors with farmers and their families.

Heifer International
P.O. Box 8058
Little Rock, AR 72203
Phone: (800) 422-0474
Web site: www.heifer.org

InterAction: InterAction is the largest alliance of U.S.-based international development and humanitarian NGOs. With more than 160 members operating in every developing country, it works to overcome poverty, exclusion and suffering by advancing social justice and basic dignity for all.

1717 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Suite 701
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 667-8227
Fax: (202) 667-8236
Web site: www.interaction.org

MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger has granted more than \$28 million since 1986 to nonprofit organizations confronting hunger in the United States and abroad. MAZON (the Hebrew word for “food”) awards grants principally to programs working to prevent and alleviate hunger in the United States. Grantees include emergency and direct food assistance programs, food banks, multiservice organizations, anti-hunger advocacy/education and research projects, and international hunger relief and agricultural development programs in Israel and impoverished countries.

1990 South Bundy Drive, Suite 260
Los Angeles, CA 90025
Phone: (310) 442-0020
Fax: (310) 442-0030
Web site: www.mazon.org

NETWORK: A Catholic social justice organization, NETWORK has been a persistent voice for economic justice on Capitol Hill for 30 years. Through lobbying and grassroots work, NETWORK encourages both Congress and the president to bring about a more fair and equitable world. Its issues range from domestic concerns, such as welfare, housing and health care, to international concerns, such as sustained peace and international trade and investment. NETWORK draws from Catholic social teachings to influence the U.S. government to make just decisions.

NETWORK

801 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Suite 460
Washington, DC 20003-2167
Phone: (202) 547-5556
Web site: www.networklobby.org

ONE Campaign: A diverse coalition of anti-poverty groups, including Bread for the World and World Vision, celebrity spokespeople and hundreds of thousands of individuals across the United States, the ONE Campaign has come together to fight global AIDS, extreme poverty and hunger. This is a new effort to rally people in the United States—one by one. Sign the ONE Campaign Declaration at www.theonecampaign.org.

Oxfam's "Make Trade Fair" Campaign: Oxfam International has long been a leader in seeking justice for poor and oppressed people around the world. Through grassroots efforts and activities in more than 100 countries, Oxfam seeks to work with poor people and influence powerful people in order to bring about a better world.

Oxfam has launched a Make Trade Fair campaign, which aims to give a "voice to the farmers, laborers and factory workers who are being cheated by the blatantly unfair rules of world trade." The campaign also provides you, the consumer, a voice in calling for fairer trade.

Oxfam America
26 West St.
Boston, MA 02111
Phone: (617) 728-2594
Web site: www.oxfamamerica.org or
www.maketradefair.com

UNICEF: Begun in the aftermath of World War II, UNICEF is committed to helping children in developing and impoverished regions. Through working with governments and nongovernmental organizations, UNICEF strives to reduce hunger and malnutrition, promote education of girls and boys, decrease illness and child mortality, and protect children from the hardships of war and natural disaster.

The U.S. fund for UNICEF is one of 37 regional offices set up to support UNICEF through financial contributions, advocating for the world's children and raising awareness among the U.S. public.

U.S. Fund for UNICEF
333 East 38th St.
New York, NY 10016
Phone: (800) FOR-KIDS (367-5437)
Web site: www.unicefusa.org

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops: The Department of Social Development and World Peace is the national public policy agency of the U.S. Catholic Bishops. The department of Social Development and World Peace works on behalf of the Catholic bishops to advocate effectively for poor and vulnerable people, genuine justice and peace in the public policy arena, and to build the capacity of the Church to act effectively in defense of human life, human dignity, human rights and the pursuit of justice and peace.

Office of Social Development &
World Peace

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 4th Street N.E.
Washington, DC 200017-1194
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Web site: www.usccb.org/sdwp

