

# Our Common Interest

## Ending Hunger and Malnutrition

2011 Hunger Report Executive Summary



**breadfortheworld**  
INSTITUTE



## Executive Summary

The report includes an array of data tables on hunger, poverty, malnutrition, and the Millennium Development Goals, updated regularly at [www.hungerreport.org](http://www.hungerreport.org).

# Our Common Interest:

## Ending Hunger and Malnutrition

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**2011 IS A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE LASTING PROGRESS AGAINST GLOBAL HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION.**

For the United States, it is a time of renewing our commitment to this objective and strengthening partnerships with countries that are eager to work together in this common interest.

The dramatic surge in global hunger as a result of a spike in food prices in 2007-2008 galvanized support in both rich and poor countries for raising agricultural investments to the top of their development priorities. It also brought into focus the long-term consequences of hunger, especially for the youngest children. During the 1,000 days from conception to the second birthday, the consequences of malnutrition are irreversible.

Malnutrition and hunger are one and the same in the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Progress toward MDG 1, eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, is measured by reductions in the number of underweight children. In 2008, the distinguished medical journal *The Lancet* attracted international attention with a series of articles on maternal and child malnutrition—in particular finding that a third of all early childhood deaths are the result of malnutrition. Nutrition is important in meeting all of the MDGs.



The foods consumed by poor people are predominantly staple grains like rice, sorghum, and maize. These are cheap and fill the stomach to quell hunger pains. But people, especially children, need more than cereals to live a healthy life. Good health depends on dietary diversity: protein from animal products, groundnuts and legumes, and the vitamins and minerals in fruits and vegetables.

Increases in international funding for agriculture present an opportunity to develop stronger linkages between food security and nutrition. Historically, agricultural programs have rarely focused on improving nutritional outcomes. One exception is a U.S.-funded program implemented by Helen Keller International (HKI) in Bangladesh from 1993-2003. The program provided seeds and technical assistance to families to plant homestead gardens with nutrient-rich vegetables.

Child malnutrition rates in Bangladesh are among the highest in the world. A poor family's diet consists of rice and little else. When the program started, Vitamin A deficiency was causing 30,000 Bangladeshi children to go blind every year. HKI reported that children in households participating in the homestead garden program consumed significantly more nutrient-rich foods. Moreover, the households earned on average an additional \$8 per month by selling their surplus, and studies showed that families used this extra income to purchase additional healthy foods not grown in the gardens, such as legumes and animal products.



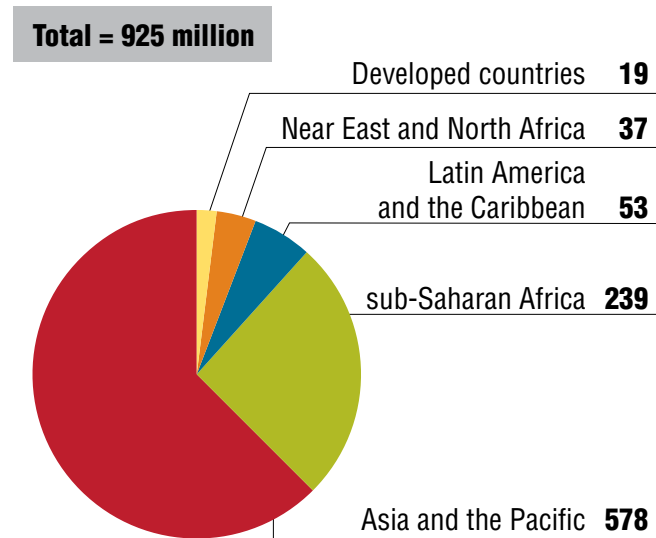
The Bangladesh Homestead Gardening program, support by USAID and Helen Keller International, combined agriculture and nutrition programming in one. The program targeted women, the primary caregivers of the malnourished children.

## The U.S. Government Responds to Hunger and Malnutrition

Feed the Future, a bold new U.S. government initiative, will significantly increase investments in improving the productivity and livelihoods of smallholder farmers, a neglected area of U.S. development assistance that pays direct dividends in lower rates of hunger and poverty. Feed the Future also focuses on improving dietary quality, paying special attention to the nutritional status of mothers and children.

The initiative started with 20 countries, most of them in sub-Saharan Africa with the remainder in Asia, Central America, and the Caribbean. Feed the Future has adopted a country-led approach, meaning that

Figure s.1 **Hunger in 2010, by region (millions)**



Source: U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).  
Note: All figures are rounded.

partner countries set priorities for how they want the aid to be invested—whether school nutrition programming; agricultural research; improving access to inputs, extension services, and rural credit; or another area related to food security. National governments consult with nongovernmental stakeholders to set the investment priorities together. Next, the governments coordinate with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and its implementing partners on a strategy that ensures effective monitoring and evaluation. An integral part of a country-led approach is building the institutional capacity of national governments to sustain the progress begun using foreign assistance.

The establishment of Feed the Future does not correct the structural weaknesses that limit the effectiveness of other U.S. development assistance programs. In fact, one such weakness cuts across all programs, including

Feed the Future: the erosion of technical expertise at USAID, the lead development agency in the U.S. government. The main cause of this loss of technical capacity for agricultural programming is staff attrition. For nearly 20 years before the launch of Feed the Future, agricultural programming was not a priority for USAID.

Other structural weaknesses in U.S. development assistance run deeper—they can only be overcome if they are addressed by policy-makers. Rewriting the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) is the most effective way to achieve comprehensive reform of U.S. development assistance. The FAA was enacted in 1961. Legislation written 50 years ago cannot reflect the changed circumstances and emerging priorities the country faces in the 21st century. The U.S. government is committed to helping poor countries develop. Congress should pass foreign assistance legislation that clearly establishes the importance of poverty reduction and development in U.S. foreign policy. Rewriting the FAA will improve the quality of development assistance and strengthen the case for funding it to ensure success.

## **U.S. Leadership Drives International Action**

At a time when policymakers are called on to defend every line in the national budget, the United States and other developed countries have pledged to invest resources and political will in fighting global hunger and malnutrition. The timing speaks volumes for how seriously

world leaders take hunger and malnutrition as threats to global stability and the common good.

But without international cooperation on other global problems, these investments are at risk. Everything Feed the Future and other international efforts are hoping to achieve in the near term could be wiped out by climate change in a few decades or less. People in sub-Saharan Africa will suffer some of the worst effects because so many rely on agriculture for their livelihood. By 2020—in less than 10 years—farmers in some African countries could see their crop yields reduced by as much as 50 percent as the result of persistent drought.

The collapse of negotiations on a climate change treaty, the breakdown in the Doha Round of multilateral trade talks, and the fact that many of the issues contributing to the 2007-08 rise in food prices have not been adequately addressed mean that poor people remain vulnerable despite the new plans and investments in agriculture and nutrition. In 2011 and beyond, the international community must find ways to extend the political will we now see dedicated to reducing hunger and malnutrition to complementary issues where there is as yet little or no meaningful coordination and effort.

With Feed the Future, the United States is not only in step with the rest of the international community on fighting hunger and malnutrition, but leading. To develop the initiative, the U.S. government went through a rigorous consultation process with U.S. civil society groups, including Bread for the World—in the process, it demonstrated that the

United States will adhere to the same standards it expects of partner governments in developing countries. Feed the Future's embrace of country-led development shows other donors that with this initiative, the United States is committed to best practices in international development. The

Figure s.2 **Impact of Malnutrition Interventions on MDGs**

<b>MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>	Reducing 'prevalence of underweight children under five years of age' is an agreed target for MDG 1. Reducing malnutrition increases economic growth.
<b>MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education</b>	Reducing malnutrition increases cognitive development and contributes to learning and school completion rates.
<b>MDG 3: Promote gender equality</b>	Promoting better nutrition practices contributes to empowering women and to reducing discrimination against girls in family feeding practices.
<b>MDG 4: Reduce child mortality</b>	Enormous impact of lower malnutrition on child mortality.
<b>MDG 5: Improve maternal health</b>	Improved maternal nutrition and reduced maternal mortality through programs of behavior change and iron and folic acid supplementation.
<b>MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b>	Reduces maternal and child mortality caused by the interaction of malnutrition with HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases.
<b>MDG 7: Ensure environmental stability</b>	Better nutritional practices mean more effective use of available food and so better adaptation to environmental stress (Target 7a), increased health impact from improved access to water and sanitation (Target 7c), and improvement in lives of slum dwellers (Target 7d).
<b>MDG 8: Global partnership for development</b>	Addressing hunger and malnutrition around the world is a key element of, and argument for, the global partnership for development. This applies particularly for the least developed countries (Target 8b), where levels of malnutrition are highest.

Source: U.N. High-Level Task Force on Global Food Security and Nutrition.



emphasis on bottom-up approaches using local community expertise tells poor and hungry people that the United States stands with them in this initiative.

U.S. leadership may not decide the fate of every hungry child, but we should not understate how much it means either. When the United States leads, other countries know that overall resource commitments will be higher. The influence of the United States as the largest donor makes it possible to leverage commitments from others. We've seen this before many times, from debt relief, to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, to the more recent establishment of the World Bank's multi-donor trust fund, the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP). In each case, the United States stepped up its commitments and so did other donors, all of which made it possible to do things that weren't possible before.

The challenges of the 21st century are increasingly global in nature. To effectively manage these challenges, the United States has an important role to play in working together with other nations. With international cooperation needed now more than ever, building and strengthening international institutions to address global problems is essential.



Richard Lord

## The 2011 Hunger Report recommends:

**Feed the Future**, a bold new U.S. initiative, may be the best opportunity to come along in decades for the United States to contribute to lasting progress against global hunger and malnutrition. It should have the strong support of the U.S. public.

### Fighting hunger and malnutrition effectively requires a comprehensive approach that:

- Focuses on smallholder farmers and rural development
- Emphasizes nutrition, especially for pregnant women and young children
- Empowers women
- Strengthens safety nets
- Quickly deals with hunger emergencies

### When providing development assistance, the U.S. government should:

- Adopt a clear definition and operational standards for country-led development.
- Allow funding to flow, with transparency and accountability, through national governments.
- Build national governments' capacity to sustain the progress begun with development assistance.
- Build civil society's capacity to hold national governments accountable for development outcomes.

**Congress should rewrite the 1961 Foreign Assistance Act** to make it clear that poverty reduction and development are key elements of U.S. foreign policy. The new legislation should improve the effectiveness and flexibility of U.S. development assistance to be responsive to needs in partner countries by untying aid, reducing earmarks, making longer-term commitments, and strengthening the technical capacity of USAID.

**The United States should take the lead** in strengthening international institutions that are complementary to U.S. bilateral assistance in fighting hunger and malnutrition.

# 2011 HUNGER REPORT CONTRIBUTORS AND SPECIAL FEATURES

## **The Honorable Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of the Republic of Liberia**

“By making aid more coherent, more targeted and dedicated to support priorities selected by the recipient countries, donors will be able to increase the quality of aid.”

## **Dr. Kanayo F. Nwanze, President, International Fund for Agricultural Development**

“To support and empower small-scale rural producers to meet these global challenges, we need to recognize the size and scope of this stakeholder group and recast our image of them. We should no longer think of them as struggling subsistence producers, but as small business entrepreneurs.”

## **Ambassador Tony Hall, Executive Director, Alliance to End Hunger**

“In order for the country-led process to be effective, input from and engagement with civil society organizations (CSOs) is critical. CSOs, like farmers’ organizations, are often in the best position to know what kind of agricultural investments are most important and appropriate. CSOs are also well positioned to monitor these investments and ensure that the money is being well spent.”

## **Roger Thurow, Senior Fellow on Global Agriculture and Food Policy, Chicago Council on Global Affairs**

“Rwanda has emerged as the model country for the global food security initiative because it was the first to challenge the international community to make good on its pledges. The donors had said they were interested in country-led agriculture investment strategies, and Rwanda had a plan ready to go, with priorities such as irrigation, soil conservation, local seed research and extension services to advise farmers.”

## **Kathleen Kurz, Senior Nutrition and Food Security Specialist, Academy for Educational Development**

“Much more should be done to promote nutrition in health systems and in emergency responses, but also opportunities should not be missed to promote nutrition more widely in agricultural programming, including how nutritional foods can be a source of income generation, market development and part of trade systems, all means by which households could improve their food security.”

## **Joe Guinan and Katrin Kuhlmann, Resident Fellows at the German Marshall Fund**

“African leaders have coalesced around an innovative approach to market development. It consists of using existing roads and railroads linking mines and other investments with regional markets and ports to bring farmers into a system that can move food, goods, services and information. This is the African “Development Corridors” movement, and it could do for Africa what projects like the Erie Canal did for development in the United States.”

## **The 2011 Hunger Report also includes:**

- A Foreword by 2010 World Food Prize laureate and President of Bread for the World, Rev. David Beckmann
- The most current data on global hunger, malnutrition, and other indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals. (See [www.hungerreport.org](http://www.hungerreport.org) for regular updates).
- A study guide for Christian worship groups

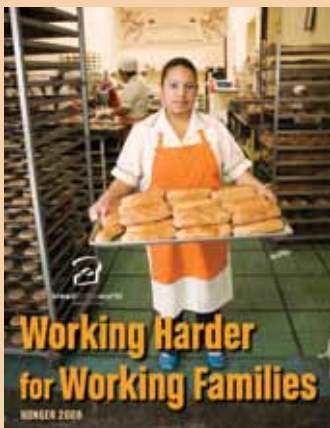
# Earlier Hunger Reports by Bread for the World Institute



*Hunger 2010: A Just and Sustainable Recovery* focuses on recovery from the worst economic crisis in 75 years and the looming crisis of climate change. The recovery has the potential to create green jobs that offer people a path out of poverty and build a more sustainable economy. It offers an opportunity to put in place policies that reduce inequality, help low-income families to save and build assets for the future, and revitalize neglected communities throughout the country. The report also makes the case for U.S. leadership in reducing hunger and poverty around the world and in addressing climate change.



*Hunger 2009: Global Development: Charting a New Course* focuses on the partnership between developed and developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs include reducing poverty and hunger, increasing school enrollment, empowering women and girls, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, halting and then reversing the spread of deadly diseases, and ensuring environmental sustainability. *Hunger 2009* also analyzes the inefficiencies in the current structure of U.S. foreign assistance and maps out a series of reforms to elevate development as a foreign policy priority.



*Hunger 2008: Working Harder for Working Families* focuses on families struggling to get by on low-wage jobs, living in poverty or on the edge of it. Two-thirds of all children growing up in poverty in the United States have one or more parents who works, and one-third have a parent working full-time, year round. The report recommends policies to support low-wage workers and help them and their families build assets.



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Cover photo: Todd Post

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Since 1990, Bread for the World Institute has produced an annual report on the state of world hunger.

Visit [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org) and download a copy of an earlier edition.