

1,000 DAYS

The Issue & the Tools



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Welcome to Women of Faith for the 1,000 Days Movement

Welcome to Women of Faith for 1,000 Days! We are an ecumenical group of women dedicated to promoting improved nutrition for women and children in the 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday.

Parents around the world marvel at the amazing progress that their children make from the moment the mother discovers she is pregnant to that special second birthday, 1,000 days later. But for many families, lack of adequate nutrition means their child's first months of life are defined by missed benchmarks and illness rather than physical and developmental growth.

Women of Faith for 1,000 Days is part of an international movement to give every child a better start in life. We educate communities about the importance of nutrition the 1,000-day window, and urge the U.S government to continue its work to help children thrive through improved nutrition.

We need your help to ensure that all children have access to nutritious food. We invite you to join us by becoming a champion for nutrition and using this toolkit in your advocacy.

This 1,000 Days kit is divided into two parts. The first part of the kit will introduce you to issues related to the 1,000 day-window, and explain why nutrition for women and children is so critical during this time. The second part of the kit provides the resources you'll need to take action.

Read the information in this toolkit, and use it to spread the word about the 1,000 days. Talk to members of your church and your community about the importance of nutrition during the first 1,000 days. Engage your members of Congress through in-person visits and personal letters.

Together, we can work to make sure that children everywhere have the nutritious food they need in order to reach their full potential.



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

1. Learn

- New to this issue? Read the "Maternal and Child Nutrition Overview" (see pages 3-4)
- Pray. Feel free to use the enclosed scriptural reflection "Jesus Talks With the Samaritan Woman" (page 2)
- Read "40 Facts about Nutrition and the 1,000 Days Window" (pages 8-9)
- Spend some time on the web page www.bread.org/go/1000days

2. Act

- Share what moves you in conversations with friends, family, and church members. Use "Crafting a 1,000 Days Message" for guidance (pages 5-6)
- Learn unique ways to bring attention to the issue of maternal and child nutrition, and invite others to join the movement, using the "Creative Actions for 1,000 Days Champions" resource (page 7)
- Once you're ready to meet with your legislators, use "Setting Up a Meeting with Your Member of Congress" (page 10) and "Visiting Your Member of Congress" (pages 11-12) to get started
- After your meeting with one of your members of Congress, leave behind the "Maternal and Child Nutrition is Critical" congressional fact sheets (pages 13-14)
- See "Writing a Letter to the Editor of Your Local Paper" for guidance on writing 1,000 days-themed letters to the editor of your local paper (page 15)
- Tell us about your actions! Report them on our Facebook page: facebook.com/womenoffaith1000days
- Share blogs, sermons, and/or prayers on our Facebook page, in tweets, or via email. Contact Rev. Nancy Neal (nneal@bread.org), associate for denominational women's organization relations at Bread for the World, for support.
- Become a "Champion for Nutrition" by pledging online at www.bread.org/go/1000days.
- Continue to pray. Have faith that the movement will be contagious. Pray for women and children who are hungry. Pray for 1,000 Days advocates. Pray that governments and organizations will work to improve nutrition for women and children.

Jesus Talks with the Samaritan Woman

Reading: John 4:3-15 (NRSV)



It is high noon, the day hot and dusty. Jesus is traveling through Samaria and stops in the town of Sychar. Tired and thirsty, he sits down by a well.

A Samaritan woman appears to draw water from the well. There is a long-standing history of hostility between Jews and Samaritans. Jews considered Samaritans unclean. It is also uncommon for men to speak to women outside their families. But Jesus ignores these societal boundaries and asks the woman to get him a drink. The woman is shocked that a Jew would ask this of her, especially a man with no bucket to draw water. When the woman expresses her surprise, Jesus replies that if the woman knew who he was, she would have asked for—and received—his living water.

The woman is confused. Where will this living water come from? The well is deep, and Jesus has no bucket. Jesus tells her that he has water that will give her a spring of eternal life within. She will never thirst again. She puts aside her doubt and confusion and exclaims, “Sir, give me this water!”

The woman begins to realize that Jesus is a man of God and brings a message of new life. The water at the well will satisfy her physical needs temporarily, but she will always have to return for more water. Jesus promises living water—understood to be the Holy Spirit—that will give this woman—and any follower—faith, hope, and love that endures.

Prayer

Gracious God, we pray for the gift of water, both the water of the well and Jesus’ living water. May this living water strengthen us to raise awareness for the nutritional needs of women and children.

We pray for courage—the courage to reach across societal boundaries to engage in important conversations about maternal and child nutrition. Just as Jesus told the woman about his living water, may we share in conversation about the resources needed to give life to hungry and poor people.

We pray for transformation. When the woman at the well encountered Jesus, it changed her life. May we be open to the transforming power of God’s living water, that our hearts will follow God’s call to work for justice and act in love.

We pray in thanksgiving that Jesus talked to the Samaritan woman and gave her the choice to accept his living water. We pray that women throughout the world are given the opportunity to make positive nutritional choices for their children and families.

Amen.

Maternal and Child Nutrition Overview

Persistent high food prices and the continuing global economic crisis have led to an increase in hunger and malnutrition. Children, particularly those younger than 2, are at special risk of hunger. The consequences of malnutrition during these early years of life are long-term and irreversible.

The 1,000-day period between pregnancy and a child's second birthday is a unique opportunity to shape a healthier, more prosperous future for children. Proper nutrition during this time has a profound and lasting impact on a child's growth, learning, and eventual economic productivity. Mitigating or overcoming malnutrition in young girls can break the cycle so that they enjoy better health and grow into women who have healthier babies.

Malnutrition is such a critical issue that three of the eight U.N. Millennium Development Goals depend upon improving nutrition—eradicating hunger, improving maternal health, and reducing child mortality.

In January 2008, the British medical journal *The Lancet* published a five-part series on nutrition, calling it “a desperately neglected aspect of maternal, newborn and child health ... [that] has slipped through the gap.” Large and growing evidence shows that solutions to improve nutrition in the 1,000-day window are readily available, affordable, and cost-effective.

Nutrition, the Critical Role of Women, and the 1,000-Day Window

In nearly all cultures, women bear the major responsibility for their families' nutrition. However, they are often undernourished due to social, economic, and biological stressors. When a woman's position in society is improved, her overall nutrition also improves.

It is important to link programs that aim to prevent malnutrition with those that empower women and improve their lives. Women in developing countries have responsibility not only for food production and preparation but also for raising families. Improving women's nutrition during pregnancy can help safeguard their health and ensure that their children get the best possible start in life.

Where there is hunger and poverty, there is almost always poor access to maternal and child health care. A growing body of scientific evidence shows that improving nutrition during this period is one of the best investments we can make to achieve lasting progress against global poverty and hunger.



Bread for the World/Laura Elizabeth Pohl

What is Undernutrition?

Undernutrition is a serious condition in which the body does not get the nutrients it needs to sustain healthy growth and development. It arises when there is inadequate consumption, poor absorption, or an excessive loss of nutrients. Undernutrition is a form of malnutrition; sometimes the two terms are used interchangeably.

Many factors cause undernutrition:

- Not enough food and not enough diverse, nutritious food.

Maternal and Child Nutrition Overview

- Poor maternal care and childcare practices due to a lack of knowledge about healthy diets and infant care on the part of mothers and other caregivers in the family.
- Lack of health services, clean water, and sanitation.

In countries where gender inequality is high, there can be high rates of undernutrition as female members of a household will “eat least and last.” Fundamentally, poverty is at the root of undernutrition. Very poor people are generally unable to afford the foods, education, or health care they need to nourish themselves or their children.

Child Malnutrition and Stunting

According to *The Lancet*, undernutrition in its many forms causes 45 percent of child deaths each year, amounting to 3.1 million children. Malnutrition also causes stunting in at least 165 million children under age 5, a life-long condition that affects a child’s ability to grow, learn, and rise out of poverty. For children under age 2, malnutrition can weaken the immune system, making them more susceptible to dying from common illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria.

Other findings:

- Maternal iron deficiency is associated with low birth weight babies.
- Stunting prevalence is slowly decreasing globally, but not in some areas of Latin America, Africa, and South Asia.
- Addressing the underlying causes of malnutrition in agriculture, health, education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programs has enormous potential to enhance the scale of direct nutrition interventions.

Sources: www.thousanddays.org and <http://download.thelancet.com/flatcontentassets/pdfs/nutrition-eng.pdf>

What Can Be Done?

Direct nutrition interventions can be simple solutions delivered to children at risk and their families. These are well-known and supported by nutrition experts. They include supplementation with micronutrients such as zinc and vitamin A; iodizing salt; promoting healthy behaviors such as exclusive breast-feeding for six months; hand washing and improved sanitation; and better complementary feeding practices. Fortification, or the process of adding vitamins and minerals to food, is another inexpensive intervention.

Governments are Scaling Up Nutrition

The United States has shown considerable leadership in its efforts to reduce global hunger. Other bilateral donors, multilateral development banks, and international organizations are stepping up as well. In this country, we have formed the 1,000 Days Partnership to support the global Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement. 1,000 Days promotes targeted action and investments in nutrition to break the cycle of poverty. SUN brings together more than 100 governments and organizations committed to working together to fight hunger and malnutrition.

For more information, see “Linking Nutrition and Health: Progress and Opportunities” (www.bread.org/institute/papers/briefing-paper-14.pdf) and “Improving Food Aid to Improve Nutrition” (www.bread.org/institute/papers/briefing-paper-15.pdf).

Evidence-Based Direct Interventions to Prevent and Treat Undernutrition

Promoting good nutritional practices:

- exclusive breastfeeding for a six-month period
- complementary feeding for infants being weaned
- improved hygiene and sanitation practices

Provision of micronutrients for young children and their mothers:

- periodic vitamin A supplements
- therapeutic zinc supplements for diarrhea management
- multiple micronutrient powders
- de-worming drugs for children (to reduce losses of nutrients)
- iron-folic acid supplements for pregnant women to prevent and treat anemia
- iodized oil capsules where iodized salt is unavailable

Provision of micronutrients through food fortification for all:

- salt iodization
- iron fortification of staple foods

Therapeutic feeding for malnourished children with special foods:

- prevention or treatment for moderate undernutrition
- treatment of severe undernutrition (severe acute malnutrition) with ready-to-use therapeutic foods (RUTF)

Source: *Scaling Up Nutrition: What Will it Cost?* by Susan Horton, Meera Shekar, Ajay S. Mahal, Jana Krystene Brooks, Christine McDonald (2009).

Crafting a 1,000 Days Message

As women of faith, we join the 1,000 Days movement in the United States and around the world to scale up nutrition for women and young children during the 1,000 days from pregnancy to a child's second birthday.

Our goals are to spread the word about the importance of proper nutrition and to impress on our government leaders the importance of supporting and protecting programs that prioritize nutrition for women and children during this critical 1,000-day window.

To that end, we pledge to be champions for maternal and child nutrition in the critical 1,000 days. We will initiate conversations to educate others about the 1,000 days window.

How to Start a Conversation about the 1,000 Days Movement

The key is to share what moves you. Of the information you've read, what makes you want to do something about nutrition? Once you've figured this out, these tips will help you frame your message.

The Opportunity

Offer people an opportunity to make a difference—they are more likely to engage with the issue. Explain to your friend or group that you're trying to raise awareness about the important opportunity we have to give children a better start in life. By improving nutrition for mothers and young children during the 1,000 days between pregnancy and age 2, children grow taller, have better vision, and have stronger immune systems that improve their ability to survive disease throughout their lives. Their intellectual



UN Photo/Logan Abassi

Crafting a 1,000 Days Message



Margaret W. Nea

capacity is greater, which leads to better success in school and work. They also earn 10 percent more income throughout their lives, which contributes to the economies of their communities and countries.

The Problem

Share the problem: Without proper nutrition during this critical 1,000 days, children can suffer permanent cognitive and physical delays. They can be shorter, and have poor eyesight and weaker immune systems. With diminished intellectual capacity, they achieve less in school and work, and earn less income.

The Solution

Share the solutions: Internationally, simple, cost-effective measures such as supporting breast-feeding mothers, improving farming techniques, and sharing basic information about sanitation and nutrition can have a lasting impact on nutrition and health. Research shows that every \$1 invested in nutrition can yield as much as \$138 in returns on investment.

- Promoting good nutritional practices, including exclusive breastfeeding for six months, complementary feeding after that, and improved hygiene practices.
- Providing micronutrients for young children and their mothers, including vitamin A supplements, therapeutic zinc supplements for managing diarrhea, de-worming drugs to reduce the loss of nutrients, iron-folic acid supplements for pregnant women to prevent and treat anemia, and iodized oil or salt. Food fortification in staple foods is an effective method of improving access to micronutrients.
- Therapeutic feeding for malnourished children with special foods, including ready-to-use therapeutic foods.
- Improving sanitation to prevent the spread of disease.

In the United States, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) provide crucial support to households in need and to those making the transition from welfare to work. The program supplements the food budgets of the neediest people through a card that can be used at grocery stores or other authorized locations.

The Call to Action

Invite people to get involved. Ask them to:

- Pledge to become a champion for nutrition at www.bread.org/go/1000days. Click on “Join the movement.”
- “Like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/womenoffaith1000days.
- Educate members of Congress.
- Pray for women and children who struggle for access to nutritious food, and for the 1,000 Days Movement.

Creative Actions for 1,000 Days Champions

There are many great ways to educate your community and your members of Congress about maternal and child nutrition in the 1,000-day window.

In Your Church

- Give a minute-for-mission in Sunday morning services.
- Lead a program at your Wednesday night supper, or in your small group or adult-education session.
- Write an article for your church newsletter.

In Your Community

- Hold a “global baby shower,” with or without a baby.
- Keep a jar of conversation-starting facts on your desk at work. Photocopy pages 8 and 9 and cut apart the facts for the jar.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local paper.

On Social Media

- Follow Women of Faith for 1,000 Days on Facebook and repost your favorite photos or articles.
- Write an entry in your blog about 1,000 Days. Write for the Bread blog about your work as a champion for nutrition.
- Tweet using the #1000days and #BreadActs hashtags to share stories about 1,000 Days. Follow those hashtags and retweet your favorite tweets.
- Tweet (or Facebook message) your members of Congress with your favorite stories and pictures. Let them know why nutrition is important to you as a constituent.



Bread for the World/Joe Molieri

With Your Members of Congress

- Engage your members in social media campaigns.
- Send jars filled with facts to your members of Congress.
- Letters to the editor that are published in your local newspaper also reach your members of Congress.
- Develop a scrapbook about nutrition. Include pictures and facts about the importance of nutrition and cost-effective ways to improve it.

40 Facts about Nutrition and the 1,000 Days Window



1. Every hour of every day, 300 children die due to malnutrition.

6. Climate change could lead to as many as 24 million more malnourished children in 2050.

7. Malnourished women give birth to malnourished children and are at risk of death during childbirth.

8. Malnutrition increases the risk that a pregnant woman who is HIV-positive will pass the virus on to her baby.



14. The right nutrition during the 1,000-day window can significantly reduce the human and economic burden of diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, and HIV/AIDS.

19. Micronutrient malnutrition, also known as hidden hunger, is a growing public health problem in developing countries. It is caused by a lack of essential vitamins and minerals, such as vitamin A, zinc, iron, and iodine, in the diet.

20. The body needs vitamins and minerals in small quantities to conduct and regulate various functions and processes, but micronutrient deficiencies are not usually obvious. Many times, people who have them may not experience any discomfort or hunger.

2. In 2008, eight of the world's leading economists, including five Nobel Laureates, agreed that combating malnutrition is the best development investment.

3. Children who are poorly nourished in the womb or before the age of 2 can suffer serious, often irreversible, physical and cognitive damage.

4. Eighty percent of the developing world's undernourished children live in just 24 countries.



9. Women suffer twice the rate of malnutrition as men. Girls are twice as likely to die from malnutrition as boys

15. The right nutrition during the 1,000-day window can reduce the risk for developing various noncommunicable diseases such as diabetes and other chronic conditions later in life.

16. The right nutrition during the 1,000-day window can improve an individual's educational achievement and earning potential.

17. The right nutrition during the 1,000-day window can increase a country's GDP by at least 2 to 3 percent annually.



21. Vitamin A is necessary for good immune function and for better recovery from diseases such as malaria and measles. Vitamin A deficiency is a major contributor to the mortality of children under five.



5. Ninety percent of the developing world's chronically undernourished children live in Asia or Africa.

10. Half of the babies born in the United States are enrolled in WIC.

11. More than 1 in 5 children is at risk of hunger. Among African-Americans and Latinos, nearly 1 in 3 children is at risk of hunger.

12. Nearly 17 million children lived in food-insecure households in 2011.

13. The right nutrition during the thousand-day window can save more than 1 million lives each year.



18. Pregnant women need an additional 500 to 700 calories per day, as well as extra protein and vitamins. Women who are underweight before pregnancy and who gain little weight during pregnancy are particularly likely to give birth to babies with low birth weight and are more likely to die as newborns than babies at a healthy weight

22. UNICEF and the World Health Organization recommend high-dose vitamin A supplements, coupled with exclusive breastfeeding, for women in the immediate postpartum period—so that all infants receive the necessary immune-boosting protection of vitamin A in the first six months of life.

23. Zinc supplementation is a highly cost-effective nutrition intervention. It improves children's ability to recover from conditions such as diarrhea, pneumonia, malaria, and respiratory infections and boosts their general immunity and growth.

40 Facts about Nutrition and the 1,000 Days Window



24. Iron deficiency is the most common form of malnutrition. It affects cognition and a person's ability to maintain attention. Anemia also disrupts children's intellectual development; children with iron deficiency score lower on intelligence tests and have fewer red blood cells.

28. Only 37 percent of the world's babies are exclusively breastfed for the recommended first six months. Yet exclusive breastfeeding is critically important—partial or no breastfeeding is associated with a more than doubled risk of death in the first few months of life.

29. The period from 6 to 12 months, when breast milk provides only about half the nutrients that a baby needs, is often when babies stop growing adequately.

33. Wasting occurs when children suffer acute food shortages (as during a famine) and, therefore, weigh less than they should for their height.

34. Micronutrient food fortification infuses staple foods with vitamins and minerals. This includes community interventions such as salt iodization at the point of production as well as mass food-fortification programs aimed at producing fortified maize flour, wheat flour, and cooking oil.



37. Improved nutrition is linked to women's empowerment: When a woman's social position improves, her nutrition improves as well.

25. Prevention of iron deficiency is possible through consumption of iron-rich and iron-fortified foods and avoiding foods, such as coffee and tea, that inhibit iron absorption.

26. Inadequate levels of iodine during pregnancy causes irreversible brain damage. Communities with chronic iodine deficiency show a significant population-wide loss of intelligence-quotient points. Iodine deficiency can be prevented through mass fortification and distribution of iodized salt or iodine supplements to pregnant and lactating women as part of routine maternal and child health services in targeted regions.



30. In some parts of the world, there is a misconception that breast milk alone is not enough in the first few months. And in many developing countries, children are fed porridges with little nutritional value.



35. Women often lack access to sufficient healthy food and eat smaller portion sizes due to cultural practices within the household. Women's heavy work-loads and domestic responsibilities also make them vulnerable to malnutrition.

38. In communities in which women have weaker health and nutritional status than men, babies are often born at low birth weights to mothers less able to care for them.

39. Gender inequality is associated with high rates of stunting and wasting, high child and maternal mortality, and worse overall health in a population.



27. Although breast milk is inexpensive, is the gold-standard in infant nutrition, and is available to nearly all newborns, many mothers do not breastfeed exclusively (giving no other food or drink).

31. Severe acute malnutrition (SAM) is defined by either a very low weight for height, visible severe wasting, or nutritional edema (an observable swelling in certain parts of the body).

32. Children suffering from chronic protein-energy malnutrition become "stunted"—shorter than they should be for their age. In developing countries, 32 percent of children under five years old are stunted.



36. Women who have been to school and have a way to earn income are far less likely to be malnourished or have malnourished children.



40. Because of poor nutrition, one-third of the world's children do not grow to reach their full potential. Good nutrition, especially in early childhood, is an essential requirement for each world citizen to earn, learn, stay healthy, and achieve his or her lifetime potential.

Setting Up a Meeting with Your Member of Congress

Scheduling an appointment is easy!

- Look at the website of your member of Congress to find the number for his/her closest district office, or phone the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to speak with your representative's office. Ask about the process for scheduling an in-district meeting; some offices may have their scheduler in Washington, D.C., while others may not.
- Identify yourself as a constituent, and explain that you wish to meet with your member of Congress. Be sure to mention any previous relationship you may have with the member or the office.
- They will likely ask you what you wish to discuss with the representative. Explain that you want to discuss protecting programs in the federal budget that support nutrition in the 1,000-day window of opportunity in the United States and abroad. Tell them that you wish to meet with your representative when he or she is next in the district.
- Ask to meet with your representative, but if your representative is not available, request a meeting with the aide who works on appropriations. You could also meet with an aide who works on foreign policy. Meeting with a key congressional aide also makes for an effective visit.
- Some offices may require you to submit a written request for a visit via email or fax. You can use the sample letter at www.bread.org/1000days to request a visit with your member of Congress.
- Please be aware that even after emailing or faxing a written request, you will likely need to call the office to check its status. Don't be discouraged! It can sometimes take several follow-up phone calls before you are able to successfully schedule a meeting.

Since this process may take some time, call to make your appointment as soon as possible. In fact, do it today!



Bread for the World/Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Visiting Your Member of Congress

Be a Voice for Hungry and Poor People

Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy (Proverbs 31:8-9).

Members of Congress are currently debating budget bills and deficit-reduction proposals that will have major consequences for hungry and poor people. To protect domestic and international programs in the budget that support nutrition for women and children, we have to make our voices heard in Congress. Here are some suggestions of ways to make your visit more effective.

Before the Visit

- If you are going as a group, choose one person to serve as the leader. This person will make introductory remarks in the visit and ask the others in the group to introduce themselves.
- Using “Maternal and Child Nutrition is Critical” (handouts on pages 13-14), decide on the main points you want to make. Unless your group is very large, make sure that everyone has something to say. Make copies of each side of the document to leave behind.
- Determine if there are actions for which you can thank your member of Congress.
- Role-play the visit so that everyone can feel comfortable talking about the issues, especially if it is the first congressional visit for many in the delegation.



Bread for the World/Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Arriving at Your Member's Office

- Be on time and patient—it is not uncommon for members of Congress (or their staff) to be late because of unexpected floor action in Congress. Aides play an important role in advising members of Congress and making policy recommendations, so don't be discouraged if your member of Congress is unavailable.
- Tell the receptionist who you are and with whom you're meeting. If you would like to meet with your member of Congress and you don't have an appointment, tell the receptionist you are a constituent and would like to meet with the aide who handles appropriations.
- The group leader should ask people to introduce themselves.
- In case your member of Congress or his/her aide is called away early, make your point succinctly at the start. Remember, you may have only a few minutes with the member of Congress.
- Thank the member for a positive action he or she has taken that relates to reducing hunger or poverty. There may not be something to thank these members for, as there are more new members since the last election. If there is no clear vote for which you can say “thank you,” state why you think it is important that domestic and international programs that support nutrition for women and children are protected from budget cuts.

Photocopy pages 13 and 14 to bring with you to your meeting with your member of Congress. Leave them behind with the person you meet with.

Visiting Your Member of Congress



Bread for the World/Laura Elizabeth Pohl

- If possible, share personal stories about your personal conviction concerning the topic of your visit.
- Aim for a balanced conversation. Ask questions that will encourage discussion of the issue. This should be a conversation and dialogue on both sides. Be sure your legislator hears your point of view.
 - Remember that you're not expected to be an expert. If you don't know the answer to a question, offer to get back to your member of Congress. Contact Bread for the World with the unanswered question/concern, and Bread staff will follow up.
 - Close the deal! Ask the member of Congress for a specific commitment: Please protect programs in the budget that support the 1,000-day window of opportunity.
- The group leader should close by reiterating the main points, stating any commitments you made. Thank the member of Congress or aide for their time. Share a copy of the international side of "Maternal and Child Nutrition is Critical" with the person you meet, and ask him or her to share a copy of the domestic side with the domestic nutrition policy staff.

Follow Up

- Select at least one person to write a follow-up letter thanking the member of Congress and/or aide for the meeting. Remember to include any additional information and materials that were requested. Ask a Bread for the World staff member to help you compile any information you don't have.
- Keep the pressure on your members of Congress by using the media. Write a letter to the editor of your local paper, explicitly mentioning your visit and calling on our members of Congress to protect programs in the budget that support the 1,000-day window of opportunity. Stay in touch with your Bread for the World regional organizers for updates and important actions focused on your member of Congress.

Helpful Dos and Don'ts

Do:

- Be courteous, affirming, and appreciative.
- Be clear and concise, and focus on the decision you want your member of Congress to make.
- Be a good listener.
- State your point of view and back it up with sound reasons.
- Ask questions.
- Close the deal.

Don't:

- Be argumentative or combative. Be assertive, not aggressive.
- Dominate the conversation. Make sure you have the member of Congress or his/her staff's thoughts, too.
- Have a discussion among the delegation; address your concerns to the congressperson.
- Bring up other issues that are off the topic. They are likely covered by a different aide, and you do not want to dilute your message by trying to discuss too many issues.
- Become disillusioned if your member is not responsive to your concerns. Remember, we are people of hope!

Maternal and Child Nutrition is Critical

Create a Circle of Protection around Domestic Nutrition Programs

What are solutions to addressing malnutrition for women and children during the 1,000 days in the United States?

- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides quality nutrition education and services, breast-feeding promotion and education, monthly food prescriptions, and access to maternal, prenatal, and pediatric healthcare services.
- Infants receiving WIC are less likely to be underweight, but are not at greater risk of being overweight.
- Proper nutrition for women during pregnancy can lead to lower infant mortality rates and better school performance. In the United States, for example, 4- and 5-year-olds whose mothers received proper nutrition during pregnancy through their participation in WIC have better vocabulary test scores than children whose mothers had not received WIC benefits.
- Participation in WIC dramatically improves Healthy Eating index scores for households.
- WIC serves nearly 9 million women and young children. More than 44 million Americans participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps).
- Nutrition programs in the United States provide targeted assistance to the neediest people in our country. For example, 70 percent of WIC benefits and 85 percent of SNAP benefits go to families with incomes below the poverty line (\$22,113 for a family of four in 2010).
- Every dollar spent on pregnant women in WIC produces \$1.92 to \$4.21 in Medicaid savings for newborns and their mothers.
- Nutrition programs are working. While poverty and unemployment rates have gone up the last three consecutive years, programs such as SNAP and WIC have effectively kept the household food-insecurity rates from going any higher.
- Hunger costs the United States an estimated \$167 billion annually in lost productivity, reduced educational outcomes, and increased healthcare costs.

Sources: “WIC For a Healthier, Stronger America!” National WIC Association. <http://nwica.org/sites/default/files/2012%20WIC%20for%20a%20Healthier%20America.pdf>. https://s3.amazonaws.com/aws.upl/nwica.org/WIC_for_Healthier_America_2013.pdf



Message to Congress: Create a circle of protection around funding for domestic programs that improve nutrition for women and children in the critical 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday.

Maternal and Child Nutrition is Critical

Create a Circle of Protection around International Nutrition Programs



Rising food prices and the global financial crisis have led to increases in hunger and malnutrition. Right now, 870 million people suffer from chronic malnutrition worldwide, and 7,000 children die every day from malnutrition. That's one child every 24 seconds.

Improving nutrition for women and children in the 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday is the most cost-effective way to address hunger and malnutrition.

Why is the 1,000-day window so important?

- By improving nutrition for women and children during this period, we can give children a better start in life.
- Malnutrition during this period can cause irreversible damage to children, resulting in:
 - Diminished intellectual capacity;
 - Impaired immune function;
 - Impaired vision; and,
 - Shorter height.
- This damage reduces a child's ability to achieve in school and be productive throughout his or her life. Studies show that compared to a well-nourished child, a malnourished child's earning potential is reduced by 10 percent over the course of his or her lifetime. But this damage is preventable.
- Malnutrition costs a country as much as an 8 percent loss in GDP.

What are solutions to addressing malnutrition for women and children during the 1,000-day window in developing countries?

- Simple interventions such as exclusive breast-feeding for six months, improved sanitation and hygiene, and better supplemental feeding practices for children who are weaned can save millions of lives.
- The United States is the world's leading provider of food aid. Feed the Future and the Global Health Initiative are major U.S. government development assistance programs aimed at fighting maternal and child nutrition. Nutrition investments in these programs are critical. They are also smart investments that can show a return of up to \$138 for every dollar spent.
- Poverty-focused development assistance accounts for just 0.6 percent of the entire U.S. budget. Cutting funding for these programs won't significantly reduce the deficit and would undermine the progress already made in reducing maternal and child deaths and severe malnutrition.
- By protecting programs that prevent hunger and malnutrition in the 1,000 days, children are given a fighting chance, a population becomes healthier, and communities can lift themselves out of poverty.

Source: www.thousanddays.org and www.usaid.gov.

Message to Congress: Create a circle of protection around funding for international programs that improve nutrition for women and children in the critical 1,000 days between pregnancy and a child's second birthday.

Writing a Letter to the Editor of Your Local Paper

Be sure to consult the news outlet's guidelines before writing a letter. Most will post guidelines on their websites, on the same page as the "opinion" or "contact us" section. Newspapers print them on their editorial page. If you're not able to find the guidelines, simply call the news outlet to request them.

How to Get Your Letter Published

Keep it short. Letters should be concise, typically 150-200 words, or about three short paragraphs. For a news magazine or a radio news show, they should be about 100 words.

Respond to a recent article or editorial. When you connect your opinion to a current topic of discussion, you increase your chances of being published.

Write an original letter. Don't simply copy from a Bread alert. Your own voice is much more compelling than a canned message. Editors welcome opinions that contain personal insight and expression. Also, don't send the same letter to different news outlets. Each letter you submit should be unique.

Express your opinion with conviction and passion, using strong but not strident language. Vitriolic opinions are easily dismissed.

Name your representative and/or senators so that your letter, if published, reaches your members of Congress quickly. Congressional staff monitor media "hits" for their offices daily. If your member of Congress is on a relevant committee related to your issue, be sure to include that detail in your letter.

If you email your letter, **send your message as text only.** Do not use attachments. Also, do not cc: your letter to Bread for the World or any other organization or individual. If you want someone else to see your letter, copy the letter into a separate email.

Always include a daytime telephone number and your mailing address in case the newspaper wants to verify you as the author. If you submit a letter by regular mail or fax, don't forget to sign it. Many newspapers won't publish a letter without a signature.

Remember that it may take a week or more from the time a newspaper receives a letter before it gets published. Weekly papers and news magazines take even longer.

Small-circulation newspapers usually print most of the letters they receive. It's more challenging to get a letter printed in major metropolitan newspapers, as they receive a larger number of letters. But the more feedback a news outlet receives on hunger, the more likely they are to print news stories and opinions related to hunger. So even if your letter doesn't get printed, remember that your voice still influences the editorial process and creates awareness about hunger.

With a little practice, writing good letters to the editor is neither time-consuming nor difficult. No other form of communication can match the impact of a thoughtful letter written directly from the heart by a concerned community citizen.



Bread for the World/Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Template for Letter to the Editor

A good letter to the editor should be no more than three paragraphs, and should not exceed 250 words. Follow this general structure:

- 1. Introduce the issue and why you are writing the letter.** If you are responding to what someone else has written, directly address that article or letter.

Example: *I totally disagree with John Doe's assessment of hunger in our community ("Ignore the Hungry," Feb. 1, 2013).*

Example: *Hunger is pervasive around the world as 870 million suffer from malnutrition and depend on the U.S. government to be a leader in the movement to improve this situation. We have an opportunity to improve the lives of women and children around the world, to help communities lift themselves out of poverty.*

- 2. State the facts using statistics, preferably local.** If you do not have the statistics, cite a local story. But use statistics sparingly.

Example: *There are important, cost-effective solutions to improving nutrition. Women can breastfeed, supplements can be added to meals, and sanitation can improve the nutritional status of women and children in the critical 1,000-day window between the beginning of a woman's pregnancy and her child's second birthday.*

- 3. Close with a call to action or offer a solution to the problem.** Then thank the editor.

Example: *As a concerned reader and an active member of Bread for the World and the Women of Faith for the 1,000 Days Movement, I hope that Rep. Jane Doe will support efforts for a whole-of-government nutrition strategy. Thank you.*





Join the Women of Faith for 1,000 Days Movement

- Pledge to become a champion for nutrition at www.bread.org/go/1000days.
- “Like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/womenoffaith1000days.
- Educate members of Congress
- Pray for women and children who struggle for access to nutritious food, and for the 1,000 Days Movement.



breadfortheworld
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