



The Issue of World Hunger

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals, more commonly known as the 17 Global Goals, were agreed by world leaders. With the overall objective of creating a better world by 2030, the goals guided the change that was required to meet this target. The 2nd of the 17 goals is 'Zero Hunger'; to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.

Whilst the world produces enough food to feed everyone on the planet approximately 10% of the world's population is undernourished. Regarding children, malnutrition contributes to over 3 million under-five deaths annually – accounting for over 40% of all deaths for that age group. In particular, a child's healthcare is most vital during the first 1000 days from a woman's pregnancy. However, mothers who are undernourished during their pregnancy, experience great complications and lead to their children being born undernourished, decreasing their life expectancy.

Another major impact of world hunger is the various diseases that proliferate, most notably micronutrient malnutrition – referring to the inadequate intake of vitamins and minerals. This is extremely dangerous as these substances enable the body to produce enzymes, hormones, and other substances essential for proper growth and development. Therefore, the absence of nutritious foods and supplements available across the world, holds the goal of zero hunger at great importance.

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) highlighted the worrying hunger situation arising from the effect of wars, the climate crisis and now the Covid-19 pandemic. Whilst the goal of zero hunger is a global target, the GHI shows that 47 countries are unlikely to achieve even low levels of hunger by 2030 based on recent trends within each country. Geographically, Somalia suffers from an extremely alarming levels of hunger whilst Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, and Yemen also have alarming levels of hunger. Calculated using many indicators including population who are undernourished and mortality rate of children under the age of five, their severe levels of hunger need urgent attention.

One of the biggest contributors to hunger is conflict and violence, with access to food and healthcare becoming increasingly scarce. In areas of extreme conflict, refugee camps are located as temporary settlement built to accommodate those who had been displaced. Naturally, they are extremely overcrowded and thus place access to food in jeopardy. The greatest hardship is the ability to deliver and distribute the food evenly.

By 2050 an additional 2 billion people will populate the Earth and sustainable food production will be key to alleviating the levels immense levels of hunger. However, with hunger being the leading cause of death in the world at the moment, the need to improve sustainable agriculture using modern technologies and calculate fair distribution systems, puts great pressure on achieving a world free of hunger.



Points to consider

- How can food access and distribution be improved in war torn countries?
- Should countries with alarming levels of hunger be offered support from other countries?
- What improvements to health education and supplier investments can be produced to decrease food waste?
- Can improvements in agriculture using modern technologies lead to food security?

Useful links

- <https://www.who.int/news/item/26-09-2019-malnutrition-is-a-world-health-crisis>
- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger/>
- <https://www.actionagainsthunger.org/world-hunger-facts-statistics>