

Ten Things You Should Know About Global Hunger



by [ELIZAH LEIGH](#), Contributing Writer

1. An even greater health threat to humanity than malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis combined, chronic hunger affects [1.02 billion](#) of the total 6.7 billion human beings around our world. This number has increased from the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization's [2006 estimate of 854 million people](#). All told, one out of every six individuals lacks access to adequate daily nutrition.
2. A joint report by Concern Worldwide, the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and German NGO Welthungerhilfe also determined that there is a very strong correlation between [chronic hunger and gender inequality](#), finding that the lower the level of literacy and educational access among women in developing nations, the more likely they are to experience persistent hunger. They believe that by equalizing the status of men and women, 13.4 million fewer malnourished children would exist in South Asia and 1.7 million fewer in Sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Thirty-three countries have [extremely alarming levels of hunger](#), with Africa earning the unfortunate distinction of having the [highest level of undernourished people in the world](#). The crises comes into greater perspective when you consider that 76 percent of the people in the Democratic Republic Of Congo face chronic hunger on a daily basis, with Eritrea not far behind at 68 percent. Of the ten total countries with the highest levels of hunger, [nine of them](#) are in Sub-Saharan Africa.
4. The [Global Hunger Index](#) (GHI), which has assessed the malnutrition and hunger rates for 120 developing countries around the globe, found that the number of undernourished people in the developing world increased from 848 million in 2003-05 to 1,020 million in 2009. The biggest loser in terms of percentage increase in their GHI is the Democratic Republic of Congo with a troubling 53.3 percent jump. The explanation? The country continues to be in

the throes of widespread poverty and deep food insecurity caused by a war so deadly that it has been likened to World War III.

5. Deeper analysis conducted by the Global Hunger Index found that South Asia has the greatest level of neonatal deaths stemming from child malnutrition. Sub-Saharan Africa shares an almost identical score on the index for very different reasons ranging from political unrest, lack of access to safe drinking water, high rates of HIV/AIDS and other ailments like diarrhea and pneumonia to exceedingly [high child mortality rates](#) of 4.8 million each year. In broader terms, [45 percent of all childhood deaths](#) in the world occur in India, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo, a figure that continues to escalate each year.

6. In places such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, [poverty coupled with the negative impact of climate change on food production](#) are anticipated to continue plaguing farmers, resulting in shorter growing seasons and dry cycles. Experts believe that as with the food crisis of the 1970s, dramatically reduced crop yields will place further burden on our global hunger statistics.

7) The [World Hunger Program claims](#) that since 1970, we have produced 100 percent of the food necessary to support the entire global population on an exclusively vegetarian diet. However with the [escalating demand for meat](#) – which increased from 71 million tons in 1961 to 284 million tons in 2007 – we can only sustain 74 percent of the world's people when 1/4 of the calories they consume are derived from animal-based protein. Although we produce ample amounts of grain worldwide, [40 percent of our harvested crops](#) are earmarked for cattle feed and in the U.S. alone, [70 percent of the grain produced](#) such as corn and soybeans fulfills the dietary needs of the animals destined for our food chain.

8. The [annual Household Food Security report](#) released by the USDA states that in 2008, 14.6 percent or 17 million American households were [food insecure](#). This number has increased from 2007's 11.9 million figure. Poverty is cited as the predominant reason why in one of the richest countries in the world, there are still far too many people who struggle to meet simple sustenance and nutritional requirements. Well over [50 percent of the Americans](#) who fall into this category are minority groups. One sixth of the entire population regularly use food stamps to ensure that their families eat regularly.

9. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United States has set the [minimum requirement for caloric intake per person per day](#) at 1900 but the startling reality is that [800 million people](#) around the world are undernourished. Many of the world's poverty-stricken people generally consume 300 calories less than the baseline, and those in chronically affected regions such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Belize take in a full 430 calories less than what is considered acceptable. By comparison, the average American [wastes food worth about 1400 calories each day](#).

10. Of the over [200 million malnourished children](#) around the world, 10.9 million die before they reach the age of five due to lack of food and diseases directly related to not having proper nourishment.

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