

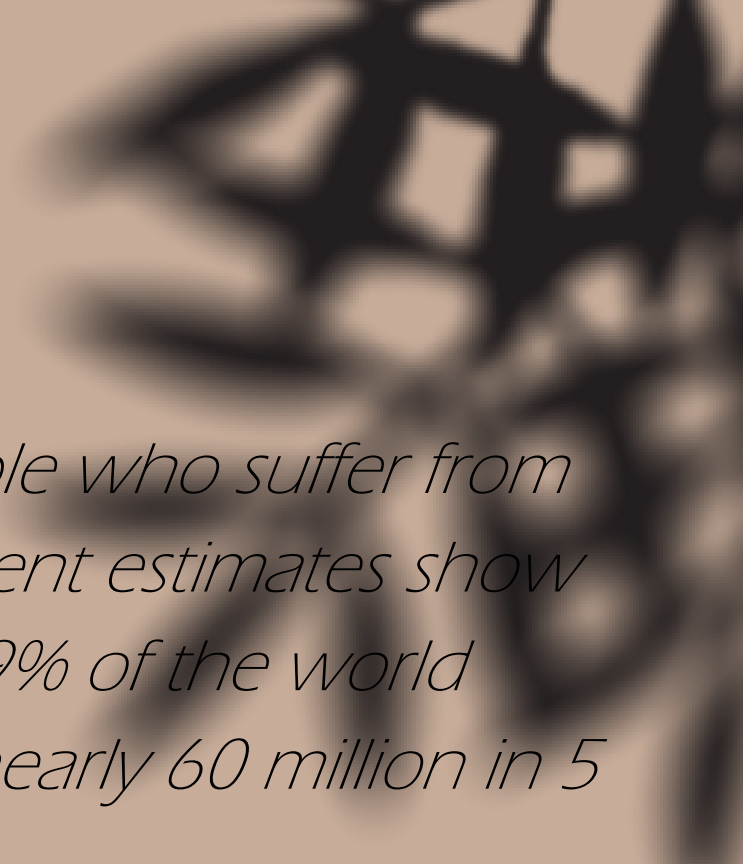
Zero Hunger

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'After decades of steady decline, the number of people who suffer from hunger began to slowly increase again in 2015. Current estimates show that nearly 690,000,000 people are hungry, or 8.9% of the world population- up by 10million people in 1 year and by nearly 60 million in 5 years.'

www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger

What is the problem?

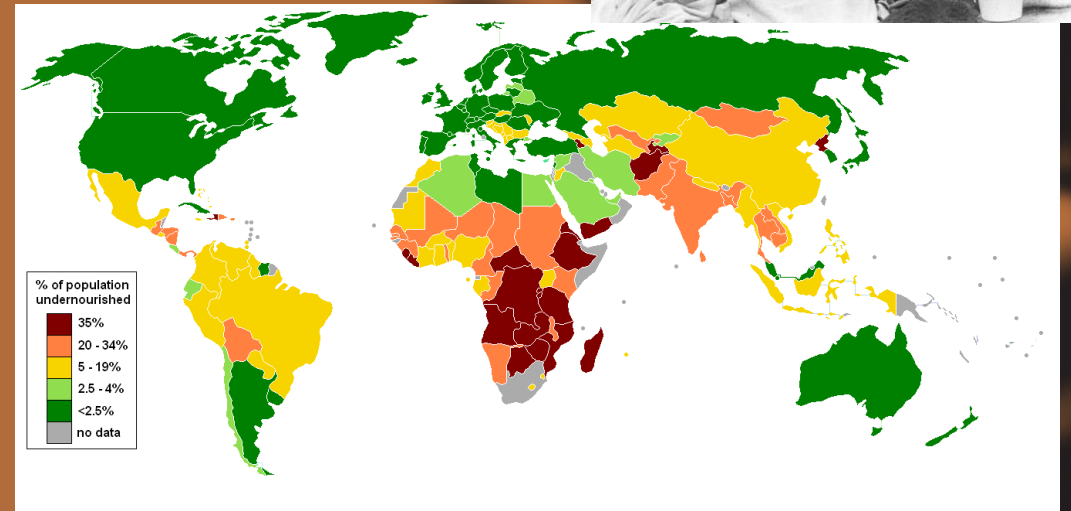
As the research conducted by UNICEF shows, the under nutrition of people worldwide is growing rapidly. Some countries have nowhere near enough food to feed its population, whereas other countries have significant amounts of food waste being produced yet still have families going to bed hungry.



Impacts

Generally speaking, it is developing countries in the southern hemisphere that are most affected by food poverty and hunger. As you can see from the map, the worst affected areas are Sub-Saharan Africa, Yemen and Afghanistan. All people living in these countries are affected to a greater or lesser extent, but it is children who suffer the most with malnutrition, where the food available does not contain the correct vitamins and minerals for them to thrive.

Teenager suffering from malnutrition in Ethiopia.



Where and Why?

I showed the countries people most commonly associate with food poverty and hunger. However, people in the UK press, such as Marcus Rashford (OBE) have been speaking up about the problem in the UK. The latest statistics show us that one in three (4.1 million) children live in poverty in the UK, with an estimated 2.5 million living in food insecure households, and City Hall tells us that over 600,000 of them live in London.



Not just in developing countries

‘Food poverty is worse diet, worse access, worse health, higher percentage of income on food and less choice from a restricted range of foods. Above all food poverty is about less or almost no consumption of fruit & vegetables’

Tim Lang, Professor of Food Policy at City University.

Food poverty can be defined as the inability to obtain healthy affordable food. This may be because people lack shops in their area or have trouble reaching them. Other factors influencing food access are the availability of a range of healthy goods in local shops, income, transport, fear of crime, knowledge about what constitutes a healthy diet, and the skills to create healthy meals.

Due to these issues, people on low incomes have the lowest intakes of fruit and vegetables and are far more likely to suffer from diet-related diseases such as cancer, diabetes, obesity and coronary heart disease. Food poverty can also be about eating too much “junk” food as well as a lack of healthy food.



How Malnutrition and Obesity links to Covid

Many developed countries are now having to deal with the fact that having obese citizens makes the Covid death toll even higher too.



Where and Why? –

The reasons for hunger are many and various and include the following:

Political instability – e.g. Syria

War- e.g. Israel v Palestine conflict

Civil war- Yemen

Trade issues

Environmental disasters - e.g. Extreme weather in South America

Population growth - e.g. South Sudan

Gender inequality

Poor education

Many of these problems are not controllable so therefore solutions need to be able to work in spite of the problems.



Families beg for food in war torn Yemen

Problems

Lets imagine that you live in a country where the government is fighting the people in a civil war. Is their first priority going to be making sure everyone has enough to eat?

Lets imagine you live in an area prone to flooding. Will your government prioritise the growing of new crops in this area when the infostructure might get washed away in a few years?

The answer to both of these issues is probably no. So either you need to solve the problem of the war or the environmental issue or you need to find a solution to this problem that works inspire of the situation.



Flooding in Bangalore

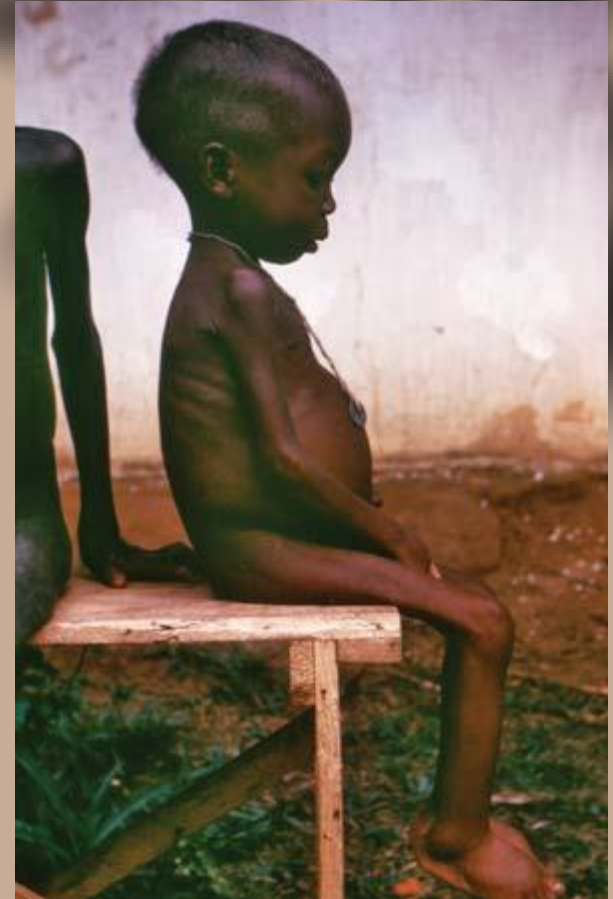
‘Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day;
teach him how to fish and you feed him for a
lifetime’ Confucius



Some charities such as the World Food Programme (WFP) are already attempting to make sure that emergency packages of nutritious food are sent to areas struck by disaster. As this video shows, trying to upskill people in the aftermath of a disaster is not always the best option to start with.

Malnutrition

Beyond slowing physical growth, malnutrition keeps the brain from developing to its full potential, which makes it harder for children to learn. The lasting effects of malnutrition on a child can be lifelong, weakening the immune system and making them more at risk of catching diseases. Struggles with illness keeps children out of school, leading to further challenges and the same will keep reappearing.

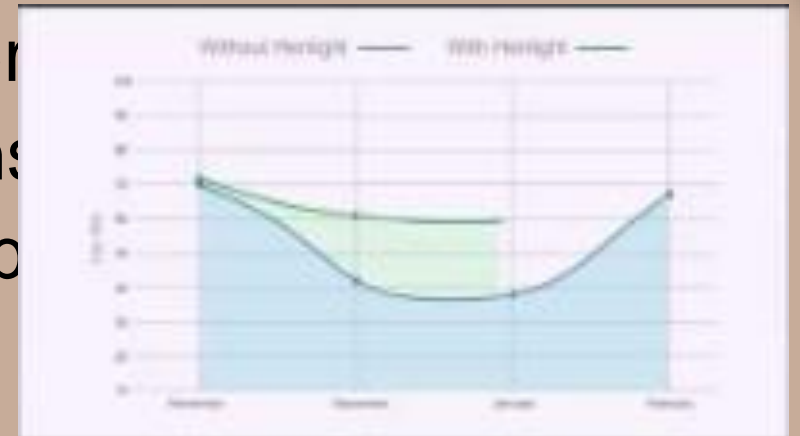


Solutions

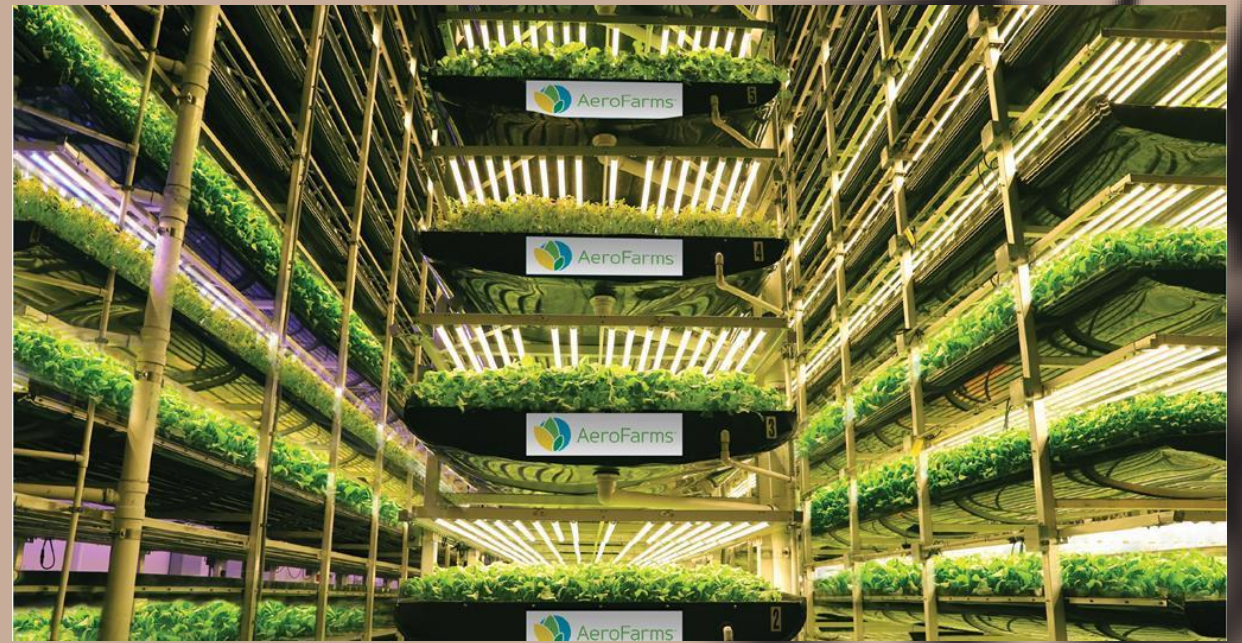
While charities may always be required to react to one off disasters, longer term solutions are needed to allow people in 20-30 years to thrive independently. This problem was posed to university students around the world and four of their solutions are below.

1. Hen Light

Hens naturally produce fewer eggs in the winter months due to the shorter sunlight hours per day. Hen light has been invented to simulate day light and therefor make the hens make think the day is longer than it is. The hen light is solar powered, cheap to produce and does not turn on until there is not enough sunlight to simulate day conditions. This can increase production of nutritious food by 25% without harming the animals.



2. Vertical Farming



‘Setting up vertical farms in areas where people do not have easy access to healthy food will help in addressing the issue of ‘food deserts’.’ Soumalya Chakraborty

This system requires less pesticides and will significantly increase the quality and quantity of food produced in a small area. However, it does require more energy as both heating and lighting need to be controlled. But this could be generated through solar power. Also these vertical farms are almost like ‘pop up farms’ so can be installed and run with very little training or skill required by the farmer.

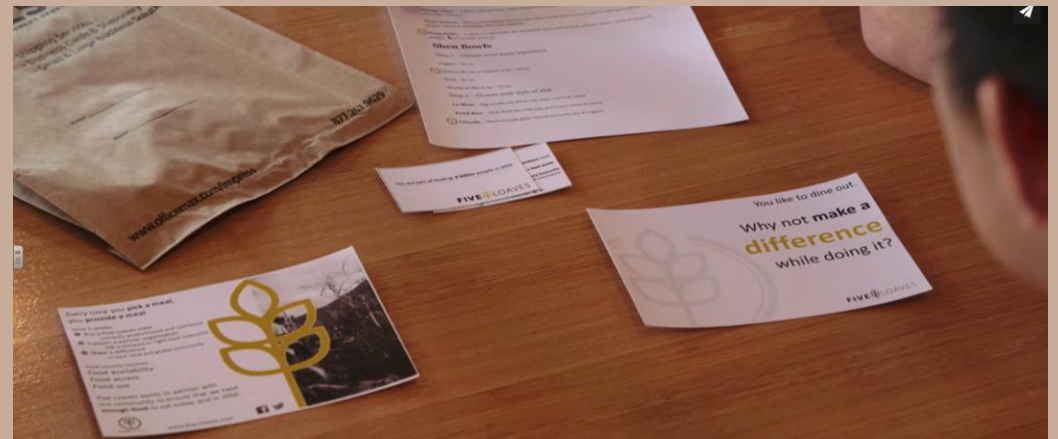
3. Water

Create houses that act as desalination plants on a small scale. Sea water is pumped to the village and the houses have use the heat of the sun on their rooves to evaporate the desalinated water and collect it ready for use in drinking or farming.



4. Meals which give money back

- Slim down people in overweight nations – calorie transfer.
- Select a healthy or more nutritious meal from a menu and the restaurant will donate 25p to help buy a meal for someone in the developing world.
- Restaurants participating get more marketing and drive customers to the restaurant

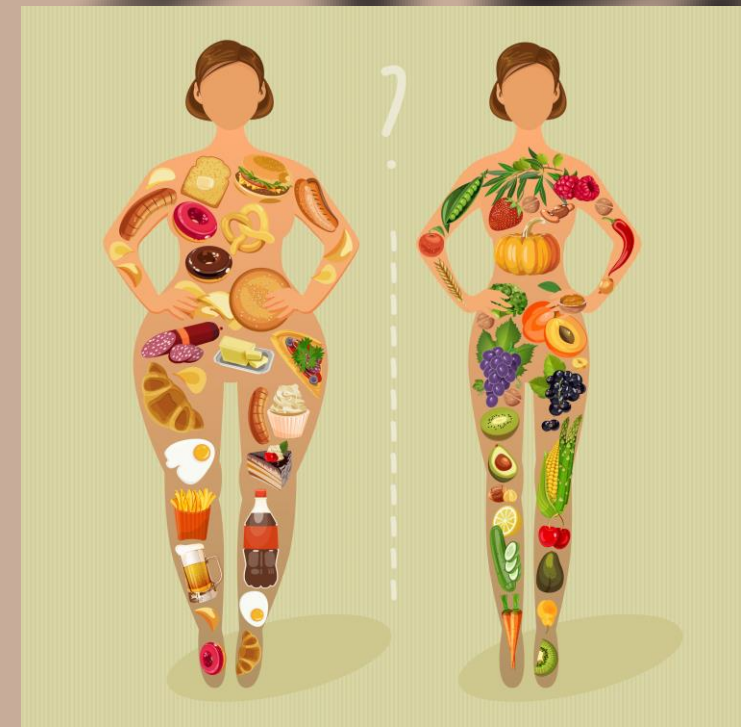


BUT WHAT CAN I DO?

All these solutions have the potential to make a difference, but they don't affect the majority of the population.

Becoming a more conscious consumer

- Eating meat is a very energy hungry way of eating. Animals for consumption have to be fed, and they are often eating resources which could be used to feed humans. By making more
- 3kg grain to make 1k of poultry
- 7kg grain to make 1k of beef
- By choosing a cereal based meal over a meat based meal saving a 6th of the farming land and a 12th of the water.
- Maybe it's time to consider becoming a vegetarian.....





How is the UK tackling the problem?

- Marcus Rashford has taken on the issue of child food poverty since the start of the pandemic and has achieved two of his original demands – the provision of meals and activities to low-income families during school holidays and the expansion of the healthy start voucher scheme. He has also called for a full-scale review of the free school meals system.
- *'It seems like we have taken steps forward but in my mind we've got a million miles still to go,'*



Bibliography

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- <https://www.wfp.org/>
- How to Feed the World Documentary directed by Denis van Waerebeke
- Just Eat It – Documentary by Jen Rustemeyer and Grant Baldwin