

Food Insecurity



According to the United Nations estimates there are approximately 795 million people, or one in nine, experiencing chronic hunger/undernourishment in the years 2014 to 2016. Seven hundred-eighty million people are living in developing countries, or approximately one in eight. Eleven million people are undernourished in developed countries.

The world as a whole produces enough food to feed everyone on the planet. The main problem of world hunger is that many people do not have sufficient income to buy food or enough land to grow food. Besides poverty other conditions that influence hunger include economic systems that place resources into the hands of those in military, political, and economic power; the world in conflict; world population; unfavorable food and agricultural policies towards poor farmers; changing climatic patterns that cause severe weather destroying land and displacing people; infectious diseases such as malaria, diphtheria, HIV, and parasite infestation that drastically decreases the absorption of nutrients from the intestines; and the fact that hunger actually causes more poverty.

When talking about world hunger the United Nations and the World Health Organization have absolutely no problem using the word hunger. It's only when we get to statistics of the United States that things get a little blurred. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) uses the term "food insecurity" and tries to tie how many times a household does without the proper amount of food in a specified amount of time. Is this an attempt to anesthetize the American public into thinking that "yes, there are hungry people in America, but it's not a major problem."? Here are the 2014 statistics. You decide. I'll be using the word hunger in place of "food Insecurity.

If you recall when citing the world statistics on hunger one in nine people are hungry. In America, one in six people and one in five children (one in three children amongst African-Americans and Latinos) go hungry! 17 ½ million households go hungry

with an estimated 49 million Americans suffering from hunger. Seniors 65 and older account for 4.6 million (about 10% of all seniors) hungry people.

According to the USDA, United States hunger is still ON THE RISE!

What can we do to help? Think close to home.

- Walk in the other person's shoes for a day. Americans on SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, receive the equivalent of \$4.50 per day. That's a \$1.50 per meal. Can you plan a day's menu, go to the grocery store, purchase \$4.50 worth of food and make three nutritious meals with what you purchased? Eat these meals for the next 24 hours. How do you feel?
- Make wise decisions and buy only what you need. This is your personal campaign against wasting food. If you occasionally eat out ask your favorite restaurants to join in a Food Recovery Program so as little food as possible is wasted. You can also ask the stores where you purchase your groceries if they belong to such a program.
- Use the power of your wallet to support businesses that support organizations that feed the hungry.
- Volunteer your time and resources. Visit missions, soup kitchens and food banks in your area and ask them what they need most before you bring donations of food. They may be overstocked in the items you bring and in dire need of other items. If you can't afford spending your own financial resources, volunteer your time.
- Enlighten people you know about the severity of hunger in your community, the United States as a whole, and the world. Teach your children and grandchildren that there are people that feel very hungry everywhere in the world. This is better done through example. When they are old enough to understand, take them with you when you donate items. If you are a volunteer, bring them with you and have them help out however they are capable. If your volunteer work doesn't include the serving of food, plan a visit to a location that does during a meal time. As they say pictures are worth 1000 words.
- Try to get organizations to which you belong to host food drives.

- As a voter, write your Congressman and Senators expressing your concern over the crisis of hunger in America and urge them to do more. Add your signature to petitions addressing the hunger crisis.

Do you have an innovative idea to feed the hungry? Maybe you've already done something not mentioned above that you can also share with others.

With Gratitude,

Kai