

Hunger & Nutrition

Fact Sheet 2024



HUNGER

- As many as 783 million people in the world faced hunger.¹
- 2.4 billion people (nearly one-third – 29.6% – of the world) did not have enough to eat in 2022.
- The number of people facing extreme hunger has nearly doubled since 2019 to 281.6 million in 59 countries in 2023.³
- 36 million people in 39 countries were on the brink of famine in 2023.⁴
- 600 million people will be chronically undernourished by 2030.⁵
- 3.1 billion people (42% of the world) couldn't afford a nutritious meal.⁶
- Nearly 30% of women globally are suffering from moderate to severe food insecurity.⁷
- Humanitarian needs have doubled in just the last four years with 1 in every 23 people in need of humanitarian assistance just to survive; half of whom – 170 million – are children.⁸
- Two-thirds of refugees and asylum seekers originate from countries with food crises.⁹
- WFP is spending 44% more to buy the same amount of food every month as compared to before the pandemic.¹⁰ That's two less people who can eat for the same amount WFP used to be able to provide food for five.

MALNUTRITION

- In 2022, an estimated 45 million children¹¹ suffered from wasting, which increases the risk of death by 11 times.¹²
- Over 148 million children under age 5 were affected by stunting in 2022.¹³
- Globally, 37 million children under age 5 were overweight in 2022.¹⁴
- 2 out of 3 children under age 2 aren't eating a minimum diverse diet.¹⁵
- Nearly half of all deaths in children under age 5 are a result of undernutrition.¹⁶
- More than half (56%) of children under age 5 globally (372 million) suffer from micronutrient deficiencies.¹⁷
- Two out of three girls and women (69%) suffer from micronutrient deficiencies.¹⁸
- Children in conflict zones are 'more than twice as likely to suffer from malnutrition' than those who don't.¹⁹

INTERVENTIONS

- Lifesaving treatment for children with severe wasting only reaches one in three who need it.²⁰
- Over 820,000 lives of children under age 5 could be saved every year,²¹ if all children 0 to 23 months were breastfed.²²
- Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life is shown to significantly benefit the health of millions of children, and is critical for child survival, health and cognitive development.²³
- A child's height at age 2 is the best predictor of their future human capital.²⁴
- The global economy pays US\$3 trillion a year in productivity losses (lost national productivity and economic growth) due to undernutrition.²⁵
- Children who are adequately nourished in the first 1,000 days do better in school, earn 20% more in the labour market, and are 33% less likely to live in poverty as adults.²⁶
- 30 million more children benefit from school meals today compared to before the pandemic²⁷ – that's two out of every five children (41%) with access to school meals globally.
- The distribution of school meals is disproportionate compared to the need with just 18% of school children receiving them in low-income countries compared to 61% in high-income countries.²⁸

WHY IT IS HAPPENING

- Malnutrition is caused by poor diets and poor health care.²⁹
 - The underlying causes of child malnutrition include household food insecurity, poor feeding and caring practices, and lack of adequate health care/nutrition, and/or water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) and social services.
 - The root causes for poor nutrition in children and women are due to political, financial, social, cultural, and
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environmental conditions, such as, poor governance, inadequate resources, and harmful norms that do not protect children's and women's right to nutrition.

- One in four children under age 5 have never been registered after their birth – meaning they lack a proof of identity and the ability to exercise all of their basic rights, including proper nutrition and health services.³⁰
- The hunger crisis is a result of interconnected, mutually reinforcing drivers – in 2023 this was primarily due to: conflict and insecurity, economic shocks, and the impacts of climate change.³¹

CONFLICT AND INSECURITY

- “Conflict is still the biggest driver of hunger, with 70% of the world's hungry people living in areas afflicted by war and violence.”³²
- 45% of younger adults and those with no children in their household see conflict or war as the leading cause of global hunger.³³
- “Recent conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine, unrest in Sudan, the coup in Niger, and the escalation of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, alongside protracted crises, are disrupting global and regional food markets.”³⁴
- Children in conflict zones are ‘more than twice as likely to suffer from malnutrition’ than those who do not.³⁵
- One out of five people surveyed who have had to put a child to bed hungry (19%) said that conflict was to blame.³⁶

ECONOMIC SHOCKS

- “Uneven food prices coupled with improved livelihoods and economic gains in some parts of the world depict a deceptive outlook of the global hunger crisis improving, yet situations are far worsening for hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable children, particularly those living in the poorest countries.”³⁷
- Average food prices still remain significantly higher than before the pandemic.³⁸
- Nearly half (46%) of people surveyed who have had to put a child to bed hungry said that inflation and increased cost of living were the reason.³⁹
- Most children consulted agreed that COVID-19 has changed their lives as they felt they had become poorer and had less access to good and nutritional food.⁴⁰

CLIMATE CHANGE

- With El Niño conditions developing in tropical Pacific for the first time in seven years, there is an increase in the likelihood of a surge in global temperatures and disruptive weather and climate patterns in many parts of the world.⁴¹
- “Drought is the greatest single culprit of agricultural production loss, accounting for one-third of crop and livestock production loss in least developed countries and low- and middle- income countries.”⁴²
- ½ of the world's children – around 1 billion children – are estimated to be living in countries that are at an ‘extremely high-risk’ from the impacts of climate change.⁴³
- Four-fifths (82%) of people surveyed said climate change was worsening their economic situation.⁴⁴
- Three-fifths (57%) of people surveyed completely agreed that climate change increased the risk of hunger/food insecurity.⁴⁵
- People who said their children had gone to bed hungry in the past 30 days, 16% attributed it to climate change effects.⁴⁶
- The world produces around 8 billion tonnes of food per year,⁴⁷ enough food to nourish every girl, boy, woman, and man on the planet. But each year, the world loses or squanders massive amounts of food.
- If food loss and waste were a country, it would be the third biggest source of greenhouse gas emissions behind China and the United States.⁴⁸
- Between 14% to 15% of food, worth US\$370–400 billion, is lost between harvest and retail before it can be consumed.⁴⁹
- The average household – anywhere in the world – wastes 74 kilogrammes (kg) per capita of food each year.⁵⁰

- ¹ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO (2023) [The state of food security and nutrition in the world \(SOFI\) 2023](#), pvii.
- ² [FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO \(2023\)](#), pxvi.
- ³ International Food Security Network (FSIN) and Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC) (2024). [Global Report of Food Crises: Joint Analysis for Better Decisions](#), p6
- ⁴ [Ibid](#) 8.
- ⁵ This devastating estimate is a result of the pandemic and war in Ukraine – it is ‘about 119 million more than in a scenario in which neither . . . occurred’. See: [FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO \(2023\)](#) pxvi.
- ⁶ [FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO \(2023\)](#) pxvi.
- ⁷ [FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO \(2023\)](#) p24.
- ⁸ OCHA (2022) [Global humanitarian overview 2023](#).
- ⁹ [OCHA \(2022\)](#).
- ¹⁰ [OCHA \(2022\)](#).
- ¹¹ Joint child malnutrition estimates (JME) (2023) [Levels and trends in child malnutrition](#) p1.
- ¹² UNICEF (May 2022) [Severe wasting: An overlooked child survival emergency](#), p5.
- ¹³ [JME \(2023\)](#) p1.
- ¹⁴ [JME \(2023\)](#) p1.
- ¹⁵ UNICEF (n.d.) ‘[Early childhood nutrition](#)’, [As of 16 Aug 2023].
- ¹⁶ Black, R.E. et al. (2013) ‘[Maternal and child undernutrition and overweight in low-income and middle-income countries](#)’, *The Lancet* 382:427–51, p427.
- ¹⁷ Stevens, G.A. et al. (2022) ‘[Micronutrient deficiencies among preschool-aged children and women of reproductive age worldwide: A pooled analysis of individual-level data from population-representative surveys](#)’, *The Lancet* 10:11.
- ¹⁸ Specifically, 69% of adolescent girls and non-pregnant women have at least one micronutrient deficiency. UNICEF (2023) [A global nutrition crisis in adolescent girls and women](#), p5.
- ¹⁹ WFP USA (September 2020) [Early childhood malnutrition and humanitarian emergencies](#), p6.
- ²⁰ UNICEF (n.d.) ‘[Nutrition and care for children with wasting](#)’, [As of 1 August 2023].
- ²¹ Victoria, C. G. et al. (2016) ‘[Breastfeeding in the 21st century: Epidemiology, mechanisms, and lifelong effect](#)’, *The Lancet*, 387(10017):475-90.
- ²² Emery, C. (2023) ‘[Making breastfeeding work in a hunger crisis](#)’, *World Vision*. For more information on WHO recommendations, see: https://www.who.int/health-topics/breastfeeding#tab=tab_2
- ²³ [FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO \(2023\)](#) pp6,41,247. and WHO (n.d.) ‘[Breastfeeding](#)’ [Accessed as of 10 November 2023].
- ²⁴ Victoria, C.G. et al. (2008) ‘[Maternal and child undernutrition: Consequences for adult health and human capital](#)’, *The Lancet*, 371(9609):340-357.
- ²⁵ World Bank (n.d.) ‘[Nutrition overview](#)’, [As of 1 Aug 2023].
- ²⁶ Leary, M. (2020) [A gender-transformative framework for nutrition](#), *World Vision Canada and Gender Nutrition Framework*, p1.
- ²⁷ WFP (2023) [The state of the school feeding worldwide 2022](#), p4.
- ²⁸ [WFP \(2023\)](#) p11.
- ²⁹ Based on UNICEF’s conceptual framework on maternal and child nutrition. See: UNICEF (November 2021) [UNICEF conceptual framework on maternal and child nutrition](#).
- ³⁰ UNICEF (June 2023) ‘[Birth registration](#)’, [As of 1 August 2023].
- ³¹ FSIN and GNAFC (September 2023) [GRFC 2023 Mid-year update](#), p12.
- ³² WFP (n.d.) ‘[A global food crisis: The causes of hunger and famine](#)’, [As of 19 December 2023].
- ³³ In a survey commissioned by World Vision, Ipsos interviewed an international sample of 14,131 adults from 16 countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chad, the DRC, Germany, Iraq, Japan, Malawi, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, South Korea, UK, US) between 16 August and 4 September 2023 about global hunger and malnutrition perceptions, causes, and impacts. Ipsos (2023) [Not enough: Global perceptions on child hunger and malnutrition](#), p43.
- ³⁴ WVI (2024) [Price shocks: Economic gains masking a growing hunger and malnutrition crisis for the world’s most vulnerable children](#).
- ³⁵ WFP USA (September 2020) [Early childhood malnutrition and humanitarian emergencies](#), p6.
- ³⁶ [Ipsos \(2023\)](#) p3.
- ³⁷ WVI (2024) [Price shocks: Economic gains masking a growing hunger and malnutrition crisis for the world’s most vulnerable children](#), pp7–8.
- ³⁸ FAO (2023) [Monthly food price index worldwide from 2000 to 2023](#), Statista.
- ³⁹ In a survey commissioned by World Vision, Ipsos interviewed an international sample of 14,131 adults from 16 countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chad, the DRC, Germany, Iraq, Japan, Malawi, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, South Korea, UK, US) between 16 August and 4 September 2023 about global hunger and malnutrition perceptions, causes, and impacts. [Ipsos \(2023\)](#) p11.
- ⁴⁰ In 2022, 84 young people between 10 and 18 years old from 15 countries were consulted about their thoughts around issues that most affect them in an unpublished consultation on the new WVI campaign. WVI (2022) [Consultation on the new World Vision campaign: Children and young people make their voices heard for a change](#).
- ⁴¹ WHO (July 2023) ‘[World Meteorological Organization declares onset of El Niño conditions](#)’, [As of 19 December 2023].
- ⁴² FAO (2021) [Agriculture on the proving grounds: Damage and loss](#), [As of 13 November 2023].
- ⁴³ UNICEF (November 2021) [Making climate and environment policies for & with children and young people](#), p2.
- ⁴⁴ WVI (28 November 2023) [Rising storms: Climate impacts on conflict, community tensions, and hunger](#), p23.
- ⁴⁵ 77% total – 57% completely agreed and 20% somewhat agreed. See: [WVI \(28 November 2023\)](#) p22.
- ⁴⁶ [Ipsos \(2023\)](#) p35.
- ⁴⁷ Based on the calculated 15.3% of global food production losses at ‘agricultural production including field losses and harvested weight’ equalling 1.2 billion (B) tonnes, we can extrapolate that around 8.2B tonnes is produced in total. This includes (in tonnes): 1.726B fruits and vegetables + 1.74B roots, tubers, and oil crops + 1.275B meat and animal products + 1.4B cereals and pulses + 0.56B fish and seafood + 1.5B other. See: World Wildlife Fund (WWF) (2021) [Driven to waste: The global impact of food loss and waste on farms](#), pp6,22.
- ⁴⁸ Based on updated data from World Resources Institute in June 2022, ‘[4 charts explain greenhouse gas emissions by countries and sectors](#)’, [Available as of 2 Aug 2023] that shows that livestock and crop cultivation are the second-most producer of greenhouse gases at 11.6%, which puts them behind China (26.4%), the United States (12.5%), but ahead of India (7.06%).
- ⁴⁹ For estimate range, see: OECD and FAO (2023) [OECD-FAO Agricultural outlook 2023-2032](#), p34. and [WWF \(2021\)](#) p6.
- ⁵⁰ UNEP (2021) [Food waste index report 2021](#), p4.