



*The world does produce enough food for everyone, but 1 in 8 people across the world will go to bed hungry tonight. Let's explore the issue.*

## Facts

- Hunger is the world's number one health risk. It kills more people each year than Malaria, AIDS and Tuberculosis combined ([WHO 2011](#)).
- With 870 million people dealing with hunger across the globe, 1 in 8 people face the stark reality of going to bed hungry tonight ([FAO 2012](#)).
- Almost 98% of people living with hunger are in developing countries ([FAO 2012](#)).
- Almost half (45%) of all deaths in children under five across developing countries can be linked to poor nutrition ([The Lancet 2013](#)).
- If women farmers had the same access to resources and technology as men, the number of hungry people across the globe could be reduced by as much as 150 million ([FAO 2012](#)).

## What is hunger?

We often think of hunger as being part of large scale emergencies, following natural disasters or the outbreak of war in developing countries. TV cameras show us people struggling to get access to food as emergencies take their grip. However, less than 8% of the world's hunger is generated by situations like these.

Unfortunately, living with hunger every day is characterised by more than an empty stomach. As people struggle with hunger, their bodies and minds slow down. Adults lack concentration and children lose their natural instinct to play.

The immune system is weakened by hunger. This is particularly dangerous for children. They lack the strength to fight off common diseases like measles or diarrhoea.

Hunger is a devastating health risk that nobody should have to live with.

## What causes hunger?

### Natural disasters

The world is experiencing an increase in natural disasters, leading to greater numbers of people struggling to get enough food.

Drought is now the most common cause of food shortages across the world. You might recall the drought in the Horn and East of Africa during 2011, people are still recovering now. Successive years of drought cause major issues for some of the world's poorest communities, exhausting their already limited resources.

### Conflict

The outbreak of war can have a devastating impact. Communities are often forced to uproot themselves, leaving behind their land and with it the ability to feed their families.

Food becomes a weapon of war during conflicts. Soldiers will seize crops, destroy farmland and contaminate wells to ensure that growing crops is impossible.

### Climate change and the environment

Climate change is having an even greater impact on already adverse weather conditions in developing countries. For example, farmers in Malawi have had to fight off unusual frosts to grow their crops.

Poor communities don't have a back-up plan if their crops fail due to climate extremes.

### Poverty

Poverty and hunger work in tandem to trap people. In many of the world's poorest communities, employment opportunities are low and therefore unemployment is high.

People living in rural areas have no option but to farm the land to grow food for their families. However, they often can't afford tools and seeds. This means that they can't produce enough food to provide for their families.

Farming practices are often very basic and urban infrastructure (including roads, buildings and railways) is frequently prioritised over the development of agricultural infrastructure (including water supplies, land and roads). This is despite developing countries' dependence on farming to be able to feed their communities.

## How can I help?

- Buy Fairtrade – every time you do, some of the poorest farmers in the world get a better deal and you help the UK Fairtrade market grow. If your local shop doesn't stock Fairtrade products, ask them to!
- Talk about the issues – discuss the issue of hunger with your friends and family.

- Use social media – share this factsheet or other resources with your social media networks. The more people talk about hunger, the greater impact campaigns like the Enough Food for Everyone IF campaign can have.

### Useful links

- [World Health Organisation](#)
- [Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations](#)