

Poster by

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Essay Competition Runner Up

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16 years old

Mettu, Ethiopia

My Vision for Ending Hunger

I am a female student at Mettu high school in Ilubabor administrative zone. The zone is one of the 12 zones of the Oromia regional states, which is located in southwestern Ethiopia.

It consists of largely undulating highlands and receives rainfall for most of the months of the year. Therefore it is the wettest part of the country.

Its total population is almost one million, and its area is 1.6 million hectares. From this, 26.1 percent is forest land and 28.8 percent is cultivated land. The major crops are maize, sorghum, and teff. There is also vast area of coffee and one private tea plantation. The

climate is good for livestock development. In my zone, most of the farm is ploughed by ox or hoed by using family labor. In this and other farm activities women have the lion's share of labor.

From the total population of the zone, 90.7 percent live in rural areas. From this population 47.1 percent are female.

The food situation of the zone and its constraints

Most of the population in my area and country lives in rural areas. They are almost all farmers, except a small number of handicraftsmen.

These farmers are very poor. Forty percent of the households in the zone don't have oxen to plough their farm. On top of this, they use old and backward traditional farm tools and implements to plough their field.

Their method of farming is cultural (traditional). All of the family members participate in farming. But most of the farming activities are done by female members of the family. Their harvested crops are stored in backward stores. Most of their crops are lost by different kinds of pests, like rats, weevils, etc... Monkeys and apes are other major problems of poor farmers that snatch their crops from the field. Most of the family members, including children waste most of their time in protecting the field crops from these wild pests.

Children and young girls like me are also the ones that look after the cattle. They help their families in collecting firewood and fetching water. They help their mother. Because of this they could not go to school. They remain uneducated like their families. Due to this the same backward process of production continues.

In general, it is this poor farmer and his family that produce the food that we eat. But the food produced is not enough for the whole year for his family. Three to four months of the year, especially during rainy seasons, they face shortage of food or are hungry. Then the government starts to deliver food. It gives them seed also. Due to this condition some of my friends, especially girls, quit their class or totally stop from going to school because they have nothing to eat, to wear or to buy pen and pencils. Every year more people are born

who eat. After some years they become landless. The land is limited. Every year the forest is cleared for slash-and-burn agriculture. The culture of cutting trees is higher than planting trees. Due to this, soil erosion is very severe. Fertile farm land soil is eroded. Rocks are seen in some farm fields. Soil conservation is almost unknown.

Therefore, how could we expect enough food from such farming systems and conditions? Due to this poor and backward farming system, there is food deficit every year.

Solution to change this condition

On my part, in order to free the poor people of my country and Africa as a whole from hunger, malnutrition, and poverty, I will give priority to the development of poor farmers' agriculture, with equal emphasis on natural resource development, conservation, and environmental protection.

This is why my government adapted a strategy of agricultural development-led-industrialization, so as to become food self-sufficient as much as possible. This road improves the welfare of the rural population, which finally leads to overall socioeconomic development of the country.

Above all, to do this PEACE is necessary. In war conditions and in ethnic fighting you cannot dream about ending hunger and fighting poverty from the face of this continent (planet).

In addition we need true democracy. People must have the full right in choosing their leaders. They have to govern themselves. We need responsible and good leaders.



Give the farmer the requisite resources and support, and hunger will be abolished and banished.

Sedina Nukunu Glover-Tay

*16 years old
Cape Coast, Ghana*

On the other hand, the government must allocate enough of its budget to change the backward economy of the rural area. The living standard of farmers should be changed. We have to guarantee to increase their income. They have to be competent in the market to sell their product.

At the same time, new improved technologies like improved farming tools should reach the poor farmer. Agricultural research and extension must be strengthened. Gradually, new information, communication, and technology should reach the rural area where our food is produced. These all increase the productivity of the farmer.

On the other hand, we have to learn from traditional agriculture, because it has long years and vast experience. We have to give our ears to what the poor farmer says about farming. We have to respect his indigenous practical knowledge. We have to gradually teach him about the new technologies. The farmer has to participate in changing his farming system and his living condition.

In line with these measures, sustainable literacy campaigns should be carried out in rural areas. Schools should be opened for children and adults. We have to dig wells and develop streams for clean and safe drinking water. And we have to expand and develop other social services like clinics for man and his livestock. Infrastructure should be built to resolve the problem of access to market. Poor people should get credit to buy farming animals, improved seeds, and tools. Therefore, rural credit institutions should be established and strengthened. The farmer should be advised to use compost and green manure

rather than chemical fertilizers because their cost is increasing every year and it is also good for health and doesn't bring environmental pollution (problems).

Farmers' products should get appropriate markets. Quantity and quality of products should increase to get into markets.

Another major point that should get attention is that women farmers should be trained. They should get credit. They should get land, ox, and other farm tools. Because they are the ones that produce the food we eat.

Unless we give due attention to WOMEN we can't end hunger and finally win over poverty in my country or in Africa as a whole. At all levels, women must be leaders like men. Now most leaders are men in my area. Women should be given the chance to lead this society at all levels of leadership. Therefore, we have to educate young girls in academics, leadership, production, management, etc. Special emphasis or assistance should be given to young rural girls to continue their education.

Above all, to produce more food, to end hunger, and to alleviate poverty, the poor farmer, the sole producer of our food, must be healthy. HIV/AIDS is killing my friends, the energetic and productive generation of my country and planet. Ethiopia is third in Africa in the spread of HIV/AIDS. We have to stop this catastrophe.

All rich countries, international organizations, financial institutions, NGOs, individuals, etc., should unite to form partnerships and work together to fight hunger and poverty from the face of this planet. Poor developing countries

should be assisted in getting additional development aid and in canceling their debt. Finally, we have to push on sustainable rural and agricultural development endeavors that do not forget the development of industry. As a whole, socioeconomic development and growth should be our main objective in this new millennium.

If we take the above-mentioned measures, and others which I didn't mention here, I am confident enough that hunger will perish forever and poverty will be reduced in considerable amount or will be eradicated in a few years time. ■

This is a shortened and edited version of the submitted essay. The editing was minor, preserving tone and meaning.

*A hungry face who has cried for food
Will always remember people who have
Touched their lives, and if you don't,
Not to worry, nothing bad will happen
To you; you would just miss out on the
Opportunity to brighten someone's day*

Simarsha Moodley

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