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Essay Competition Runner Up

Nana Yaa Gyau Dodi

17 years old

Tema, Ghana

How Can We End Hunger in the World?

*There comes a time when we
need a certain call*

*When the world must come
together as one*

*There are people dying
Oh, and it's time to lend a hand
to life*

The greatest gift of all.

—We Are the World

Do these words sound familiar? Let me remind you. When Sahelian countries ran into times of drought in the early 1970s and when Ethiopia broke beneath the weight of a severe drought and famine, it was said that artists, politicians, sportsmen and journalists came together and did what

was described as one of the greatest moments of human solidarity ever. CNN sent the situation around the globe. It was at this time that the unforgettable songs “Feed the World” by Bob Geldof and others, as well as ‘We are the World’ by Michael Jackson, Diana Ross, Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick, and others, were released. If there ever was a time when the power of music was manifest, this would be an example. These musicians spoke to the spirits of many and aid was freely sent to the Ethiopians.

Today, situations like these or the thought

of hunger on the other side of the globe moves no chord in us. It has become common-place and ironic though it is, the constant news reports of areas experiencing hunger have become something we hear everyday, a part of our normal lives. But how can the lack of a basic need of life such as food by some 800 million come to take a comfortable seat in our lives? Somehow we seem to have forgotten that we have not finished fighting the battle and have left our fellow human beings to fight alone the battle of hunger. In places like Sudan and North Korea, the battle is a daily one.

Naturally, all eyes are on the agricultural sector when it comes to such matters. Several reasons explain the situation but in the same vein these reasons have possible solutions.

Political will is lacking especially in developing countries when it comes to the issue of hunger or the development of the agricultural sector. What do the people and the leaders of the affected nations want to do? What are their priorities? What are their philosophies? And what is their ethic? If the nations themselves cannot give agriculture the necessary recognition then they will wallow in this problem till God knows when. Developed nations would rarely talk about hunger when they meet – they would probably discuss terrorism, information technology, world economic development. . . These are the issues that catch their eye. The hunger of eight hundred million is not the first to be satisfied on their scale of preference. So even when it is discussed among developing nations, the plans are never turned into actions. If the political leaders of the concerned nations will be ready to move into the arena where actions are performed synonymously with words then headway will definitely be made towards the fight against hunger.

Financing agriculture is a big problem for developing countries. If developing countries who take a larger share of primary occupational people in the world refuse to give agriculture the needed attention then how can they convince donors to assist them in this area? If again, more than seventy percent of the gross domestic product of a country comes from the agricultural sector then it is a problem when less than ten percent of the national loan portfolio is allocated to it. This clearly shows that some governments are indifferent. If countries show donors that they are serious then it would be easy to gain their confidence. Governments should establish fiscal policies that ensure that agriculture get its share of the available national resources. There must be checks, proper supervision, and accountability by officials concerned to ensure that monies are not channeled to other areas. It is important that banks are restructured and aid offered to farmers, and bank interest rates should be more favorable to the farmer. Once this is done, farmers would be able to purchase the farm inputs, fertilizers, quality seeds, and storage facilities, and cover transportation costs.

The adoption of new and suitable technologies and ideas will boost food production in the world and will also help to solve hunger. Currently, there is the lack of adequate implementation of modern technologies. In most developing countries, the rate of production depends on how human beings themselves are able to nurture and work the land with obsolete tools and rudimentary methods to obtain food for consumption. But it is technology that has the answer. The Green Revolution has helped to increase food production in Asia and Latin America. The practice which FAO boss,

... the problem with hunger in the world is that the youth have classified farming as the old man's job or as the poor man's job... We must all try to convince and influence the youth to join the agriculture sector otherwise there will be a time when the old farmers will start resting (dying) and there will be more severe hunger than what is going!

Quainoo Moses
Osu-Accra, Ghana

Jacques Diouf, describes as “agricultural lottery” must stop. When it rains there is a bumper harvest but when it does not, there is hunger. Of course there will be nothing to harvest if the water supply to farms is not efficiently controlled. Statistics show that Africa for example has only seven percent of its arable land under water control. At this point, one is tempted to ask what is happening to the other ninety three percent? Your guess is right – it is under no control. No effort would be too small. Farmers should begin to manage their water resources on their farms.

Farmers should be open to new plant varieties, integrated systems of plant nutrition, including both organic and inorganic fertilizer, and pest control methods that use less pesticides. The invention of some genetically modified crops still await approval and investigations into their effects on human health and their ability to thrive in an environment other than the confines of the laboratories in which they were planted. While it will not be tangible to totally dismiss this new technology as an answer to the hunger conundrum, considering how little is known about it, it would also be blind on our part to embrace it. But if they are ever fully proved to be safe, then they could also serve the purpose of eliminating hunger in the world.

Unrestrained population increase is seen as a major crisis facing mankind today. In effect, population growth is regarded as a principal cause of hunger in the world especially in areas such as Africa and Asia. In countries or regions where the population size is seen as an existing or potential problem, the primary objective of any strategy to limit its further growth must deal not only with the population variable per se but also with the underlying social and economic conditions.

Problems such as absolute poverty, gross inequality, widespread unemployment (especially among females), and limited female access to education need to be given high priority.

Transport infrastructure is a chief obstacle in developing countries stifling the free flow of goods from farms to the market. Roads are not well developed and because of this entire harvests have been known to go to waste for lack of adequate storage and transport facilities. Transport systems must be improved with funding from both internal and external sources.

Another invisible yet highly contributive factor to hunger is conflicts. Although it is not experienced in every part of the world, it also bears a hand in the battle for food. Where there are conflicts, farmers will not stay on their farms. They will either fight or run away from the fight. Consequently, wars rob nations of the little resources they have. They are used to purchase arms to accelerate the death of the human race already dying of hunger instead of investing them in socioeconomic development.

There must be an outcry for peace by all. The root causes of these wars must be examined – is it just an inordinate thirst for power, a simple trivial matter which could have been resolved amicably?

The peacekeeping activities of the United Nations should continue and intensify and member countries continue to give their support.

People should be “conscientized” about the importance of peace and the effects of conflicts before they occur. An effective tool for this would be the print and electronic media. Showing quotes and movies preaching peace during short breaks on television and in newspapers would be a small but positive step in the right direction. We should



Poster by
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10 years old
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remember that we are dealing with human beings and human beings are a product of what they see and hear. So by feeding positive images and messages into the subconscious minds of people we would indirectly be promoting peace.

True, there are many other problems in the world that need attention such as AIDS, the conservation of our environment, and ensuring peace but to quote FAO President Jacques Diouf, “... but who can deny for instance that peace is in jeopardy in a context when people have nothing to lose?” People can go to great lengths just to get food. It is good that

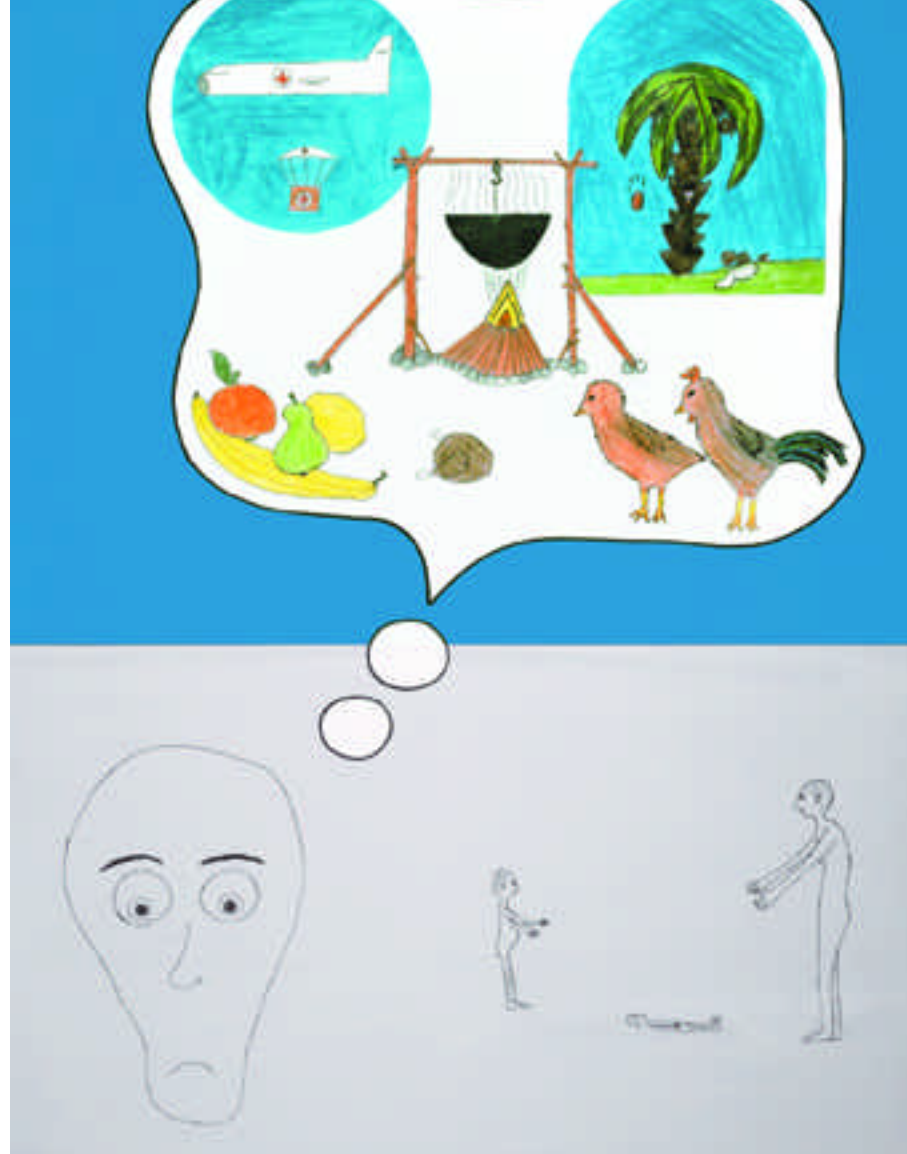
developing countries seek advancement and want to reach higher dimensions, get integrated into this global village, and into the information technology system but how is this possible when the first item on the hierarchy of needs has not been satisfied? In my opinion this battle is a battle for all, developed or undeveloped, rich or poor, we must be able to invest our time, our contribution, and our prayers because no matter how we look at it, we are one world. ■

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

Poster by

Class 5a

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Like the most commonly known slogan for water, "Make every drop count," there has to be a "Make every slice count" campaign for hunger as well. The campaign will teach communities the importance of not wasting food.

We may never know when the rocket of hunger will land; maybe it will land in our area someday and we will expect charity from fellow citizens so we have to start now and apply the "charity begins at home" campaign in our daily lives.

Radebe N. Xoliswa

Class 11B

Verulam, South Africa



Poster by

Caitlin Schaefer

10 years old

Natalie Kofoed

10 years old

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Conventional ways of thinking about hunger is that hungry people are treated as the problem. The cliché that "the world has one billion mouths to feed" is absolutely inaccurate. The world does not have 1 billion mouths to feed. It has one billion hardworking, courageous human beings whose creativity and productivity must be unleashed. Hunger persists because hungry people lack the opportunity they need to bring their own hunger to an end. Only by mobilizing the energy, responsibility, creativity and resources of the poor themselves, can a society be created that is truly free from hunger.

Deepthi Raj

15 years old

Mombasa, Kenya

Poster by

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I believe that if you care about someone or something you give it what it takes to help it, you don't wait to see if somebody else cares too. Some people won't help because they say, "What will the government do? It's not our job to help these people." This is what most people say. They don't see that they have an important role too. It's not just for the government, it's everybody's matter. But people seem not to understand. It really does hurt my heart to actually see someone begging in the street, and I see this every day. The people just walk past him, saying they don't have money to waste. People need to wake up to be reminded that in issues like this, you don't have to be told. It's a matter of thinking for yourself and doing, because whatever help they could give, even if it's a little bit, it really does make a difference.

What I think should be done is for the people to stop asking, WHAT ARE WE TO DO? But to ask themselves, WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO HELP? and not worry about what other people are doing, but to actually worry about their own contribution to this.

Zanele Ngubane

16 years old

Verulam, South Africa