

# A Better World in 2020

*Wake-Up Calls from the Next Generation*



**International Food Policy Research Institute**  
2033 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006-1006 USA  
Telephone: 1-202-862-5600  
Fax: 1-202-467-4439  
Email: [ifpri@cgiar.org](mailto:ifpri@cgiar.org)  
Web: [www.ifpri.org](http://www.ifpri.org)

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*"2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture, and the Environment" is an initiative of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) to develop a shared vision and consensus for action on how to meet future world food needs while reducing poverty and protecting the environment.*

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*IFPRI's mission is to identify and analyze alternative national and international strategies and policies for meeting food needs of the developing world on a sustainable basis, with particular emphasis on low-income countries, poor people, and sound management of the natural resource base that supports agriculture. IFPRI is one of 16 Future Harvest centers and receives its principal funding from 58 governments, private foundations, and international and regional organizations known as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.*

## **A Better World in 2020**

### ***Wake-Up Calls from the Next Generation***

A 2020 Vision for Food, Agriculture,  
and the Environment Initiative

International Food Policy  
Research Institute



*Hunger will not take a day to end.  
It is not going to end tomorrow or the day after.  
And it is certainly not going to end  
suddenly by itself,  
for nothing good comes easy.*

**Baba A. Isabella**

*16 years old*

*Nalerigu, Ghana*

The views expressed in this booklet by the contestants do not necessarily reflect those of IFPRI or the cosponsoring or supporting organizations.

*A Better World in 2020: Wake-Up Calls from the Next Generation*  
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## **Foreword**

What will it take to end hunger? This question has its formal, and sometimes even formulaic, answers in the development community's paradigms and models. But given that many of the priorities we are setting, decisions we are making, and ways in which we are behaving have long-lasting and wide-reaching implications, what answers could members of the next generation be contemplating? In preparation for its international conference on "Sustainable Food Security For All By 2020," taking place in Bonn, Germany, in September 2001, IFPRI's 2020 Vision Initiative invited young people from around the world to show us in pictures and words how they saw our world in 2020. We asked them what we should do to assure a better world for all.

We thank the more than 600 youngsters from about two dozen countries who participated in the poster and essay competitions and shared their creativity, insights, and aspirations. They demonstrated a very personal commitment to making a better world for all in 2020 and are an inspiration to us all.

The competitions and this booklet would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and commitment of Ebbe Schiøler, working on this assignment with the Danish Association for International Co-operation (MS). Ebbe and dedicated staff at MS—Bettina Gram, Annette Villumsen, and Niels Elbæk—kindly helped with the logistics and implementation of the competitions and made the initial selection from which two panels of judges chose the winners. Within IFPRI, we greatly appreciate Uday Mohan's generous and unstinting support in coordinating all aspects of the two competitions from their inception. We are also grateful to Jenna Kryszczun for helping in many different ways at many different times to keep this activity running smoothly.

This booklet contains the winning posters and essays as well as other compelling results from the competitions. We have included excerpts from other submissions in order to share a wide range of perspectives. We invite you to view and read the anxieties, aspirations, visions, and expectations of the next generation.

**Per Pinstруп-Andersen**

Director General, IFPRI

**Rajul Pandya-Lorch**

Head, 2020 Vision Initiative

## Sharing their worries, Sharing their hopes

Read the inspiring texts over the next many pages, take a look at the vivid pictures accompanying them. They all tell stories from a concerned young generation. None of them are advocating a continuation of the current state of affairs – which appears so often to be the attitude of a weary and complacent world.

There are many indignant voices here, pointing to unfair distribution of wealth, welfare, opportunities, and our daily bread. But they are also asking for change, from within deprived communities and from a world rich enough in resources to give everyone a fair share.

Uppermost in the minds of virtually everyone speaking out here – and in the many more contributions not finding their way into this booklet – is fear and anxiety about when war may erupt. Riots, uprisings, and civil unrest are a scary reality in the regions of these youngsters. This does not, of course, reflect the global situation, but it occupies everyone's mind: "Work for peace, you who are in charge," these voices are saying. In more cases than you might like to know, leaders are labeled rulers, and far too often—for their or our comfort—they are regarded as an elite not preoccupied with the welfare of their people, but rather bent on accumulating personal wealth. We need honest folks (often understood as women) at the helm for things to improve, according to the voices here.

So they also trust leaders to work for change: To be bold and shift priorities toward improvement of the welfare of the poor, so that the poor can do more with their own plentiful human resources. Had they been in on the development jargon, they would have talked of empowerment.

Most of the young people speaking their heart here are urban dwellers. And they understand perfectly well that only if the quality of rural life is lifted, if facilities are brought there, will people want to continue a productive life on the land. So such a lift is necessary, because the farmers are the genuine

breadwinners of their nations. We should honor these hardworking women and men and put pride and prestige back in agriculture, say our young writers and artists.

Whether they are from developing or developed countries, the voices here agree that development aid and food programs are vital ingredients in present and future efforts to end hunger. So "keep it up," is the message from all sides. But the real important steps to take are centered round better agricultural policies, credit, access to markets, infrastructure, and population programs – and, not least, education and extension. In short: Shift the priority towards agriculture.

One embarrassing message to affluent people everywhere: Give up your disgusting habit of loading your plate with more than you can eat. Not necessarily the solution to world hunger, but it might remind you of your obligations to contribute what you can!

One hopeful message to the world community: It is uplifting to see the trust placed in international cooperation, and not least the United Nations system. All you who have not lost hope in global undertakings should know how much they are admired out there by the next generation and how high are their expectations.

Let us hope – and work – for a better world, so that they do not lose faith.

### **Ebbe Schiøler**

Chair of the poster and essay juries for the 2020 Vision Initiative competition

*We must not perceive hunger as a hopeless, unsolvable dilemma. Underneath all the statistics, charts, and data sheets are people. They are people with talents and abilities, waiting for an opportunity to really live; people just like you and me.*

### **Micah Ballinger**

*16 years old  
Midland, Virginia, USA*

### **Callie Constable**

*16 years old  
Midland, Virginia, USA*



**Poster Competition  
Grand Prize Winner**

**“My Vision of How to  
Make a Better 2020”**

**Kayla Horn**

*10 years old*

**Becky Bruning**

*9 1/2 years old*

*Ellisville, Missouri, USA*

*I thought to myself that here we have nearly 800 million people going to bed hungry every night, around 170 million kids starving or ending up malnourished, because they do not have proper food to eat, but what do powerful institutions do about it? Hardly anything, just encourage people to enter contests like these, and then what? Tell me how would this contest help in giving the boy who begs before my house even one meal, how would it benefit any starving person in this world? But then the more I thought about it the more I started appreciating the idea. I think maybe now I DO understand why contests like this are held, probably to sensitize us, probably to make us aware or maybe to get new ideas. Whatever the reason, I think it worked – at least for me it did. I hope that my contribution will help.*

**Tarini Nair**

*16 years old*

*Chaziabad, India*

**Poster Competition  
Runner Up**

**Class 6c/sk**

Tilstskole

Tilst, Denmark



**My Vision of How to Make a Better 2020**

Portia hugged little Ezra to her limp withered breast. He lolled listless in her arms as she leant over him to protect him from the harsh African sun. There was worry etched in her every movement. When she rose unsteadily to her feet, her hipbones protruded – bumps against the top of her grimy brown skirt. She could barely stand for the pangs of hunger that opened up like cracks inside her, rising from the pit of her stomach, making her throat and her chest ache. She ignored them. She'd grown accustomed. All her concern was focused on the emaciated child that she held in her arms. He was eight years old but his short skinny limbs and his swollen belly gave him the appearance of a four-year-old. The tight black knots of hair on his head had long turned to a rusty brown. Portia had never heard of the word "kwashiorkor" before, but she'd seen many other infants around the squalid Nigerian refugee camp with the same grotesque cartoon appearance and she'd witnessed enough to know that every smile she bestowed on her flickering infant may well be a final salute. Yet the tenderness in the steadfast gaze she trained on him spoke volumes. It was clear. When Chinua Achebe had written the poem "Refugee Mother and Child" it had been a tribute to this woman.

*From its lair, more than a million dimensions away yet as close as a whisper, the creature admired the starvation and suffering in the eyes of the mother and child in much the same way as an artist surveys a masterpiece. It smiled. Two impeccably even rows of pointy teeth blinked in the pale light. The ends gleamed. They glistened. The only word you could use to describe a smile like that was radiant. However it was only radiant in the sense that it put you in mind of radiation. Nuclear radiation for instance. You felt a need to shield yourself from it for fear that its malice and its sadistic delight would sink beneath your own skin and corrupt your cells. That something that emanated such evil could even exist was bad enough, that it could smile was unthinkable...*

About a thousand miles northwest of the pathetic African scene a shrill bell sounds. Jade Rosenberg steps wearily into the long cafeteria line which snakes from the huge swinging doors all the way to the shiny silver counter where the cafeteria food is piled in its notoriously unappealing style. She doesn't even register the splat of gravy covered meatloaf hitting her tray. Her mind is on other matters. University applications, the impending doom of the Biology test after lunch, the dread of having to make the most out of the six short months that lay ahead. Months that would determine her future. Doom laden cliches swam before her mind's eye. Sink or swim. Make it or break it. Maybe that's why she didn't remember the step at the end of the counter line. Perhaps this accounted for her losing her footing and launching her tray – food and all – over the heads of her startled peers. Whatever the reason the shiny Frisbee full of gravy and meatloaf was away. The laws of the universe are clear on the outcome of a situation such as this. When food takes flight in a crowded room it will without exception land on the head of the most aggressive person in the room. This will be followed by a dead silence before years of American movies and sitcoms (all written by people who've never paid attention during "Feed the children" commercials) immediately took over. Someone yelled "Food fight!"

It wasn't long before the air was thick with mashed potatoes and you could barely see through the haze of ketchup and orange juice.

*The creature was beside himself with glee as he admired his handiwork. The image of emaciated Ezra superimposed itself on that of the flying food. Food on the ceiling, food underfoot, food matted in hair... food, food everywhere while a child dies of starvation. You just had to love the tragic irony of the situation. It delighted him no end. He'd created a reality so off-balance that it had no right to exist.*

But there is always a balance. Hold that thought, let it sink into your mind, immerse your gray matter in it.

**Essay Competition  
Grand Prize Winner**

**Thrishni Subramoney**

17 years old

Durban, South Africa

Everything in the world has balance. The darkest night is followed by the brightest of days. The coldest winter arrives on the heels of the most scorching of summers. The food chain, the circle of life... it's essential for survival. But the wonderful thing about scales is that if they can be tipped one way they can also be tipped the other. Even in a world gone wrong, when it seems as if all of creation has gone and lost its senses and life stretches ahead resembling a minefield more than a box of chocolates, there is no such thing as complete darkness. It is said that the Creator sees every sparrow that falls. This is true. Being a firm advocate of free will, She doesn't always intervene obviously. But like every competent parent, even Mother Nature knows when a little intervention is needed to push things back onto the right track.

*Picture the flattest, plainest stretch of grassy landscape you can imagine. Expansive and ruffled by only the slightest of breezes. Let it stretch unobstructed to the very horizon of your mind's eye. This scenery is so unremarkable that the words "No comment" would automatically spring into your mind if you were asked to describe it.*

*Under this place, at the very heart of the earth is where the controls exist. The sensitive controls that maintain the balance. Mother Nature's automatic workshop, if you will. When the creature smiled something here awoke.*

*From the core of the earth a point of light traveled up towards the surface. It rose out of the earth, growing in brightness. It throbbed with growing intensity. If you were able to look at it you'd be able to see that it wasn't just white light, but a mixture of colors that danced on its surface and radiated from its core. Just when it seemed that it couldn't get any brighter it burst. The light streamed out, cutting through the air around it, reaching over the dull landscape, encompassing the world in a protective net of light. Of course, you'd only see the full effect of it if you were sitting on the moon. From your lunar seat you'd see a network of light stretch over the earth like*

*a web until it seemed like the entire blue and green planet was caged under a radiating fish net. It seemed to lance through the stratosphere, beautiful beams cutting into the cold darkness of space. And then, just when it seemed as if it could get no brighter, it gently fell around the planet like a cocoon, so close and warm that eventually it seemed to become absorbed into the seas and continents until the earth itself seemed to glow with an inner light. Sometimes it takes no more than a mother's hug to heal all wounds.*

Sometimes history is made in a single moment. Destinies are forged in a fateful second. Just as the web had reached its brightest point a UN journalist covering some African war walked past a Nigerian refugee camp on his way to his hotel. He was looking to finish off his roll of film, one picture to go. As he passed the rows of the grubby makeshift tents he spied a mother cradling a child. It seemed to him that the child was reaching the final fatal stages of kwashiorkor and the mother was almost dead with exhaustion, but for some reason the ghost of a smile on her lips as she spoke softly to her child held a unique beauty. Without really thinking about it he snapped the picture, capturing the rusty haired child and the tender gaunt mother on the end of the roll of film. The next day he put the developed photographs into an envelope barely looking at the final picture and sent them off to an American newspaper. The pictures were for a political story, all of them featuring smiling politicians and historical handshakes, all except the last one...

*As the web covered the earth, the creature's smile froze. He sensed the change in the air in the same way that an antelope can sense a leopard hiding in the long grass. For a moment his scaly brow furrowed in confusion. Then he looked again at the image of starving people and wasted food and he relaxed. The die was cast, it was irreversible... wasn't it?*

The first sign of change came in the newspapers. It wasn't exactly a phenomenon, it had happened before. For

the death of Mahatma Gandhi, J.F.K, Princess Diana, and this story that occupied the front page of every newspaper in every country was to a great extent about death...

Yet, even though no one could pinpoint the exact point of contention, it definitely was strange that every newspaper, whether with perfect picture clarity, a grainy blur of black and white, featured on its front page a picture of a starving Nigerian mother and child. But no one noticed the world was abuzz with indignant voices. "Something must be done!" shouted one headline. "There are No Winners," yelled another. For once the burning issue that had captured the world's attention was truly scorching and for once the snowball effect that followed was a good thing.

When the issue reached its peak everyone from your average joe-on-the-street to the to major world leaders had been touched by it. It's amazing how much power the media wields. A cause championed by the media is a cause that can spark world interest, world comment, and world support.

It started at the lowest level. Schools around the world started holding monthly drives. They kept it simple so those parents wouldn't feel burdened. Each child just brought in one can of tinned food every month. It was simple and effective. This food went to the starving people in their districts and neighborhoods. Charity begins at home. Then big companies started taking an interest. Their ideas were both simple and innovative. They offered to send a fixed amount of food to one starving village or camp overseas in return for a fixed amount of empty tins and food wrappers returned to them. It was a two-fold solution that encouraged both recycling and charity. Even movie stars and popstars began jumping onto this worthy bandwagon. Each chose charities that championed the war against starvation. They auctioned off autographed clothes and CD's donating all the proceeds to their chosen organizations. It was a lengthy process but it paid off. Food was flying again,

but this time it was reaching worthy lips.

*The creature had long ceased his smiling by now. The knot of apprehension in his reptilian gut was growing with time. In desperation it surveyed this wave of change and then it blinked. It couldn't last, it realized. With a sense of growing hope, it revised the situation. So far this scheme was relying on human compassion for steam. It was working now but this was temporary. It had to be. People are inherently selfish. This was the monster's view. When they realized that they were giving so much in return for so little they'd come to their senses. They'd get back to the ol' rat-race track. They had to...*

*He should've given them more credit than that; humans for all their natural flaws have the ability to learn from their mistakes. Not all their mistakes. History is testament to that fun fact. But history is also littered with great people who've been able to turn around a bad play and maintain the momentum. There is always a balance and when the Creator reasserts it, it tends to have staying power.*

And so it was that world leaders met and they lent their major powers to the cause that their people were championing so fervently. It seemed that for once the politicians were more concerned about human issues than military ones. The conference buildings echoed with calls for economic assistance for third world countries, for developing the world markets towards supporting these countries through importing, while at the same time helping them by allowing them to pay less tax. Most importantly it was decided that greater attention would be paid to dealing with wars through mediation because refugees of war torn countries made up the greatest part of the world's hungry. These suggestions had all been made before but this time people were actually listening and taking them seriously. The reality of the situation had sunk in. World hunger affected every single country. It upset the balance. ■

*The main problem that developing nations are facing is that they are not using their money to the benefit of the poor people of their nation.*

**Rifat Jabbar**  
Grade 10  
Addis Ababa,  
Ethiopia

**Poster Competition  
Runner Up**

**Class 2a**

*Hørup Centralskole  
Sydals, Denmark*

*It is most surprising  
how much money is wasted  
on weapons—instruments of  
destruction—even when over  
30 percent of the world's  
population live in abject  
poverty (hunger). Why can't  
we invest the money  
for weapons in food  
production? Must we  
live in the world thinking of  
how to destroy one another?*

**Gadagbui Marshal**  
*Nkwatia-Kwahu, Ghana*







### Poster by

**Julie Lund Zatiri**

*Class 3*

*Hoptrupskole*

*Haderslev, Denmark*

### Essay Competition Runner Up

**Achinette Joy B. Villamor**

*18 years old*

*Cebu City, Philippines*

### Time and Space Have Collapsed

In the blink of an eye, the world has become so much smaller with advanced technology. Communication is only a fingertip away. In a matter of minutes, international transactions can be completed through electronic mail and cell phones. Computer networks are democratizing access to information. Airplanes and jetplanes are making next door neighbors of Asia and Africa. Indeed, with so many sophisticated technologies, worldwide linkage has become a byword. Time and space have collapsed. But the world still starves.

I speak as a Filipino youth with my historic burden of poverty and want. I live

life everyday in candid black and white. While I eat three square meals a day, many families lie huddled together on torn-woven mats, sleeping away their pangs of hunger. On my way to school everyday, I see barefoot, filthy street kids rummaging inside the garbage can for morsels of food – bits and pieces of scraps that even the dogs won't eat. On the papers, on radios, and even on their national TV, I hear of and see farmers who, having paid for their land in sweat and watered it with blood, now bemoan of lands made barren by systematic exploitation and improper cultivation. Poverty is stamped on every toiling man's

paycheck. Reality lies in seeing faces twisted in hunger-stricken grimace.

This is the bitter truth that I live with everyday. This is the bitter truth that I keep hoping to change.

There are things that we can negotiate. Or even compromise. Food is not among them. It never was, it never will be. It is the nation's lifeblood. And as such, food should be a driving priority for every country that prides itself on a humane, just, and equitable economic policy. And there lies the catch. For countries like the Philippines totally bereft of funding, technical know-how, agro-ecological technology, and manpower, asking for genuine food security is like chasing phantoms in the mist. We cannot achieve this on our own. We cannot ensure, or even realize, a sustainable food security program without the help of the rest of the world. The disparity in the food supply between rich and poor countries is but another testimony to the driving need for international cooperation. Food security must be the collective effort that would bring the rest of humanity together.

This is not asking for a transient piece of the moon. Every country in the world, every person in the planet, every man and woman – young or old, rich and poor alike – can do so much to protect, ensure, and uphold the continuity of human existence through sustainable food security. How? For one, economically advanced and powerful countries like the United States, Japan, Canada, the UK, and many others could help facilitate and maximize information exchange among all agricultural countries. This information exchange would verify, test, and disseminate crop and crop-based technologies that will solve location-specific problems in crop production. Then, after the initial information exchange program, an International Council for Food Security could be organized. This council would allocate funds coming from an international aid for countries who need financial help in shifting their comprehensive agricultural reforms

program into high gear. This council would also be in-charge of providing timely information for policy formulation that will stimulate food production, marketing and distribution as well as consumer consumption. Coordination of the international network of food stations in the different parts of the globe, formulation and implementation of a comprehensive and extensive human resource training and development program that will enhance the performance of the crop industry, and the development and testing of alternative food technology would also be under the direct jurisdiction of the council. For their part also, the countries under the council's program should make food security a paramount national priority. In this manner, the problem of sustainable food supply would be addressed critically.

This is a vision we should all take heart with. This is a ray of hope we should all cling to. In spite of the hunger and deprivation amidst the widespread misery and suffering around us, let us continue our fight for collective survival. We hold in our mortal hands the power to put an end to all forms of human starvation, poverty, and want. We have it in our power to redeem ourselves. . . or destroy our future forever. Let us not forget that we all help shape the fate of humanity. The challenge has been handed. Let us go forth from this time and place, break through the barriers of atavism and festering individualism and work together towards a common, unifying goal. Together we can end world hunger. Together, we can protect, ensure, and uphold global food security.

This is the only lasting legacy that we could leave to those who would come after us. Years from now, my kids are going to ask me what part I played in ensuring sustainable food security. Years from now, my kids are going to ask me what part I played in changing the world.

I will tell them I was one of those who tried to make a difference. ■

## Poster by

### Class 5b

GHS August-Macke-Schule  
Bonn, Germany

## Unflinching Eyes

*I see the dusty ground  
Soil not fertile, people not fed  
I pass them by without a sound  
Wondering what right might be said*

*What right might be done  
For the hunger, the poverty  
which is their life*

*If only I could help out at least one  
Fill their mouth and ease their strife*

*And then I am lost in the unflinching  
eyes of a starving boy  
And realize he is my age and he  
could have been me*

*I could have been him, a  
malnourished boy  
His suffering: even more than  
I could bear to see*

*And eight-hundred million just  
like him*

*Around the globe, they're starved to  
the bone*

*All the while their visions grow dim  
What hope do they have when little  
effort is shown*

### Jordana Reim

17 years old  
Skillman, New Jersey, USA

# Meine Vision von einer besseren Welt im Jahre 2020



## La Nina

Over the horizon  
The sun rises with  
Light creeping  
Over the desolate bare land  
Revealing nothing  
But the horrors of the land  
The sky is  
Still as naked as ever

The wind howls  
Through the dry baobab trees  
The once green land  
Now bare and cracked  
Slowly the village wakes  
To face the new day

A hunter sits  
In the shadow of a rock  
A farmer leans  
On the thatched house  
With his jembe in hand  
A mother slowly rocks  
Her dying baby

They cast their eyes to the sky  
Why are the gods punishing us?  
A far distance off  
The cries are heard  
Yes, yes, this must be done  
The gods must be pleased  
Bony as it may be  
The goat must be sacrificed

The village gathers  
Around the alter  
Surely this will do it

They will hear  
And answer us  
Hope shows in their faces  
As the smoke slowly  
Rises to the sky

## El Nino–The Abyss of Despair

The people wanted rain  
It came down in torrents  
The angry winds blew  
And thunder roared

The rice paddles turned to lakes  
The sandy beaches washed away  
As the fountains of the sky burst forth  
And the floodgates of heaven opened

Helter skelter the parents run  
Pressed with a thousand cares  
And home skips the little children  
With no care in the world  
In the abyss of despair  
The people look at the once blue skies  
As drops or rain fiercely splash  
Destroying a man's labor and toil

The sun forever lost in the sky  
With her clouds clinging close together  
As everyone packs their housewares  
But no one was prepared for this  
sudden storm

## Essay Competition Runner Up

### Priscillah Wanjeri

15 years old  
Nairobi, Kenya

## Poster by

**Astrid K. Henningsen**

Class 3

Hoptrupskole

Haderslev, Denmark



## Essay Competition Runner Up

**Medhanit Adamu Abebe**

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**

*Class 11A  
Durban, South Africa*

**Poster by**

**Lauren Messer**

*9 years old*

**Elizabeth Poe**

*10 years old*

*Center for Creative Learning*

*Ellisville, Missouri, USA*



## Poster by

**Phineas Munedzimwe**

**Lenticus Jambawo**

**Nigel Madzikatire**

**Esther Nduru**

**Muchineripi Nyabadza**

**Judith Masvina**

**Beauty Mubariri**

**Kudzai Tahwa**

**Kudakwashe Jena**

*Class 5 Gold*

*Tapfuma Primary School*

*Zambia*



## Essay Competition Runner Up

**Lungisa Fortune Mngadi**

*17 years old*

*Winklespruit, South Africa*

## A Story

Sipho clutched his stomach, he instinctively knew what it was... it was hunger. The six-year-old boy remembered the last time he had a meal. It was last night and things began to look bad, as it was slowly becoming noon. He immediately fixed his eyes towards an empty bowl inside the corner of the small shack; it just made him hungrier. Sipho had now been living alone for three years. His mother, Grace had died of starvation and every time Sipho asked someone about his father they would just ignore little Sipho. Because Sipho slept on the floor, things got very bad. It was better during summer but it was worse in the winter season. Cold, freezing draughts blew across the floor all night long. Sometimes his neighbor, aunt Thandi went

without her own share of food just so that Sipho could have enough to eat but it still wasn't nearly enough for a growing boy.

Little Sipho got out of the little wooden shack, and as he stood outside, the sharp, piercing sun's rays banged into his eyes. He gazed at the long queue of wooden and some mud houses in the squatter camp. Aunt Thandi was sitting outside her small shack when Sipho arrived. Aunt Thandi pointed to a space right beside her. Sipho greeted the old woman by shaking hands, then sat down cross-legged. "You know my son, in my days no one starved in this village. Your mother, Oh! She was a good woman. She worked for an old woman in the city and everyday she would return from work with a lot of plastic bags containing food, she would give me half of that food."

"Gogo Thandi, then who was my father?"

Tears began to run down Aunt Thandi's face, "Oh! He was no good, you don't want to know more about him!" The tone of her voice was extremely sharp and full of anger. "James, that was his name," Aunt Thandi took two deep breaths, "James left you and Grace when you were about a year old. He married a township woman in the city after he left; your mother died of starvation."

Sipho was so consumed by Aunt Thandi's story that he didn't notice that she was finished. Then suddenly Sipho burst into tears, Aunt Thandi tried to comfort him but Sipho cried all day long. He also ended up spending the night at Aunt Thandi's house. In the middle of the night, Sipho woke up and went to aunt Thandi. He gently shook her body. When she woke up Sipho whispered into her ears, "Gogo, I swear that by this time next year no one in this village will starve." With that Sipho went back to sleep, but Aunt Thandi was still amazed on how Sipho managed to wake up from his sleep, it was as if someone from a dream told him what to say.

That morning Auntie Thandi cooked some pumpkin, which Sipho and Auntie ate for breakfast. When Sipho finished breakfast he took a little journey up to a huge tree just at the edge of the village. At the tree he found an old man wearing blue dirty overalls sleeping facing upwards. Simpho simply sat there and waited. Eventually when the old man woke up, he jumped up and was so dumb stricken to see Sipho sitting next to him. The old man stood up and his tall thin body seemed to look like it was going to topple over. "When did you get here Sipho?" The old man asked. Sipho looked amazed, he didn't know this man knew he was Sipho. "I got here a long while ago, and how did you know my name?"

"That's a long story, my son," the old man replied grumpily but then he managed to sit down again. "You know, I was a popular man in your village. You see, I was a farmer, I farmed for the villagers for a long time,

the children loved to call me Malume (which meant uncle). You see those shacks over there?" Malume pointed to a large number of shacks in the village. "We used to plant old vegetables over there, the village people were never hungry. But people from the city came here, and told me that they were fired from their jobs. Then carelessly I gave each of them sites until there was no more land to farm on." Malume took two deep breaths and then continued. "The people of the village began to hate me, including my wife Thandi" – before Malume could finish his sentence Sipho interrupted him. "You mean Auntie Thandi, Malume?" "Yes," came a small reply from Malume.

Sipho's mouth went dry; he couldn't believe what he had just heard. But at that same moment, Sipho got the most brilliant idea. It all made sense. If Malume started to farm again, maybe the hunger was going to be beaten. "I'm too old for that now, it's impossible," Malume shook his head with dismay, "and besides, the farm needs old vegetables and seeds." "Malume," Sipho said, "tomorrow we can go to the city and ask people to donate old vegetables to our village." Malume made a nod of approval, he knew that it was a good idea, a really good idea.

Now it was dark and Aunt Thandi was beginning to get worried. She had been leading a group of women in search of Sipho. "Let's go home and sleep women." As the women turned to go they were called back by a small voice and saw two familiar figures approaching them, but when they saw Malume, they all protested. Little Sipho tried to calm them down but there was not much Sipho could do but watch as Malume was sent away. Sipho spent the night at his home, he was really angry at the women, but however he tried to sleep, he would twist and turn all night. This happened until he could no longer take it. He woke up and went straight to aunt Thandi's home. He knocked on the door and Aunt Thandi finally showed up. Sipho told Auntie how he met Malume and

how they came up with the plan to farm.

When Siphon was finished, Aunt Thandi's eyes lightened up at the idea and then through all the night they planned and came up with different strategies. They were the first people to wake up in the village the following morning. The old women and Siphon had spread the news swiftly throughout the village. Aunt Thandi had other ideas: she just wanted to meet Malume so they could discuss the plan. Malume was nowhere to be seen.

"Where could he be Gogo?" Siphon asked Aunt Thandi. "I think I've got a good idea where he went off to," answered Aunt Thandi. The village spent the rest of the day waiting for Malume. Aunt Thandi told the village people that Malume had gone to the city to collect some old vegetables and seeds. Now, because there was no electricity in the village, it was dark in the night. So the village people went to go to sleep but before anyone stood up to leave, Malume emerged from the street coming from the city pushing in front of him a three-wheeled trolley. Suddenly a man from the crowd raised up his shovel and shouted: "Bring back the old days, Malume!"

The whole village cheered along and thanked Malume for his work. When the village people were gone, Aunt Thandi approached Malume. "The children miss you in the village and I still miss you." With that she gently grabbed his hand and they all walked hand in hand laughing and joking all the way. The following day every member of the community got down to work, they formed a large piece of land and then started planting a variety of vegetables. When they finished planting the vegetables, they gave a loud cheer, which was going to be their symbol of ending poverty and hunger.

Four months passed by and things got really worse. There had been freezing gales that had blown for days. "He's a brave young man," said Malume to Aunt

Thandi, "he deserves better." The skin on Siphon's face became drawn over the cheeks so that you could see the shape of the bones.

One freezing morning Siphon's stomach began to ache so much he felt he could no longer go on. Very calmly he got up from his blankets and out of the house. He sneaked his way until he reached the farm. Then he started digging and digging until a large sweet potato emerged. Siphon could not believe his luck, the more he dug, the more sweet potatoes he found. And without hesitation Siphon filled a whole bag full of sweet potatoes.

That morning the whole village was woken up by Siphon's screaming and shouting "Sekumilile! Sekumilile!" which means, "It has grown, it has grown." The whole village was now over the moon with joy. Siphon ran until he was stopped by one of his neighbors. "You know something," said the lady, "your village is awfully proud and grateful to you." "Thank you," Siphon said, and off he went again. He flew past every shack, waved at everyone and sang out, "No more hunger, no more hunger." Finally he reached Aunt Thandi's home and burst into the house shouting "Gogo! Gogo!" Aunt Thandi was in the backyard with Malume. "Gogo, Malume! The vegetables have grown." There was a long silence; no one spoke for about 10 seconds. Then very calmly with wide grins spreading across their faces, they yelled "Hoooooray!" and Malume's tall body rose up and made one unbelievable jump of victory.

Life changed drastically for the village people. This idea was also spread all over the world. People started to plant old vegetable seeds, and then poverty and hunger began to fade and disappear until there was virtually nothing that reminded people of hunger. ■

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



## Poster by

**Christine Riolo**

10 years old

West Nyack Elementary School

West Nyack, New York, USA

## Poster by

Daniela Pape

Lilli Klos

Jessica Prosch

Helene Görzen

Class 7c

Gemeinschafts-

Hauptschule

Lohmar

Germany



## 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**

**Emmanuel Kaoma**

*10 years old*

*Mansa, Zambia*

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. ■

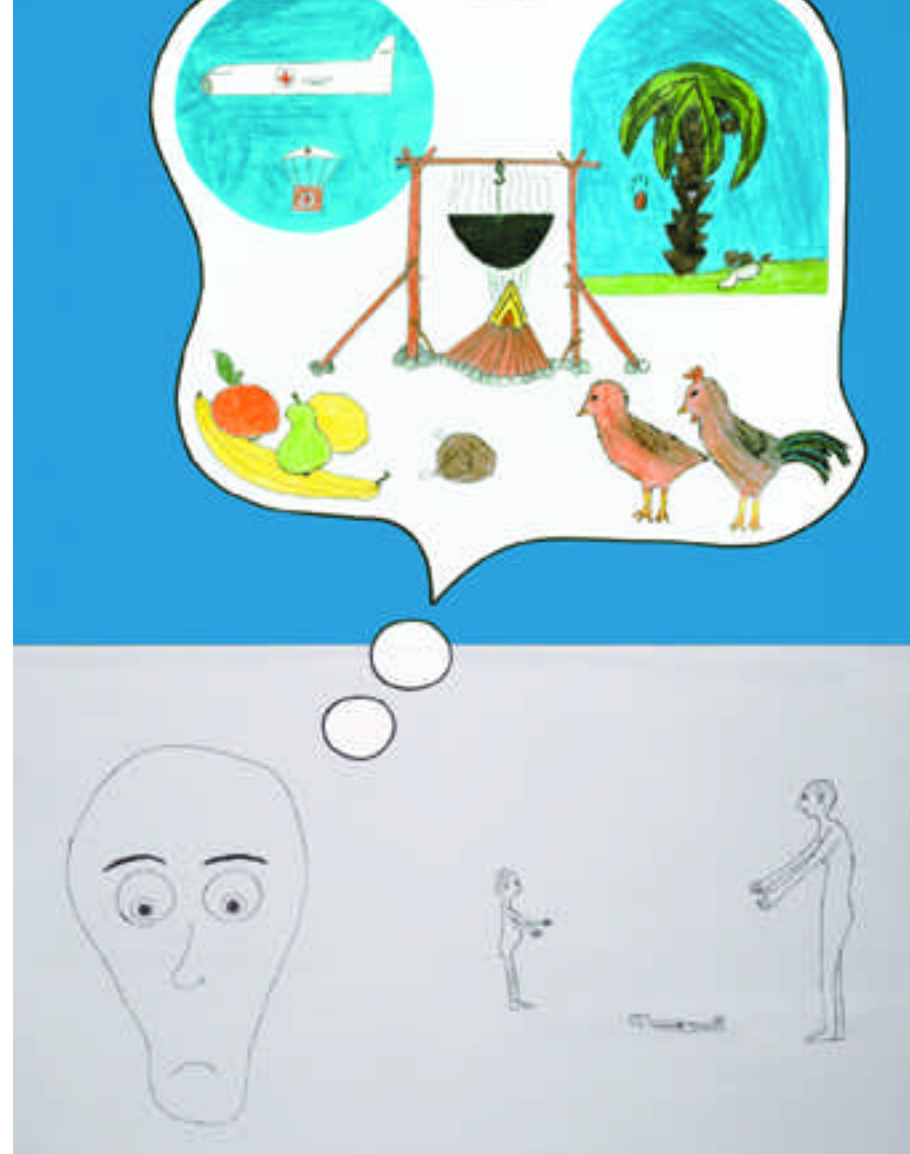
*This is a shortened and edited version of the submitted essay. The editing was minor, preserving tone and meaning.*



**Poster by**

**Class 5a**

Hørup Centralskole  
Sydals, Denmark



*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

Center for Creative Learning  
Ellisville, Missouri, USA

*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**

**Kyle Ng**

*Class 4f*

**Jonathan Hudson**

*Class 4e*

*West Nyack Elementary School*

*West Nyack, New York, USA*



*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*