

Food Security And Food Crisis Across The Globe

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Food security refers to the ability of a country to have a constant supply of food at affordable rates that meet the nutritional requirements for sustainability. So, it is safe to say that food security plays a pivotal role in ensuring a balance in an economic ecosystem. As a result, different countries have come up with legislation, committees, and organizations whose main aim is to enhance production and offer insight into food-related concerns. The following discussion gives a deep analysis of the role of food-related organizations and their approach to the ongoing food crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Ukraine invasion by Russia.

Background

The looming food crisis has led to a significant global concern due to the escalation of prices and shortages in some countries. The effects of food shortages are starvation, decreased productivity due to low energy levels, conflicts, escalation in food prices, low immunity, and death (WHO, n. d). The Covid-19 pandemic affected production and supply due to the restrictions to curb the spread of the virus to other countries. As a result, the supply of food products declined as the demand grew gradually, and after the governments lifted some restrictions, the effects spread to many areas. In addition, the Russian invasion of Ukraine led to sanctions and cut the supply of food, which caused a rapid spike in the prices of many commodities across the world.

According to the Global Report on the Food Crisis, food insecurity worsened in 2020 as many people across the Globe felt the shock caused by COVID-19. With this problem being faced in this century, a significant gap now exists, making it hard for the world to achieve its commitment to eradicating hunger by 2030 (IFAD, n. d). Countries like Yemen, Afghanistan, and Congo are examples of the countries adversely affected by the crisis in 2020. As a result, thousands of livelihoods were lost, and many countries reported cases of malnutrition. However, not all countries receive the same impact on food shortage, as some are greatly affected than others. Some countries have fragile governments and organizations that cannot affect and coordinate countermeasures to address food shortages. Countries experiencing political instability, constant drought, and natural calamities are often subjected to food-related problems. However, countries such as Canada have a developed political system that effectively monitors and identifies early signs of food shortages and comes up with solutions to impending crises. The following organizations play an essential role in ensuring food security is reached across the Globe.

United Nations

The sustainable development goals, also referred to as SDG, is a plan championed by the United Nations to develop most economies in the 21st century. The 17 developmental goals aim to end hunger, improve nutrition, promote agriculture, and achieve food security. With these goals being significant guidelines, the UN has put several steps into place to ensure that the goals are broken down and thus are easier to achieve (UN Environment Programme, 2017). Some of the steps included establishing sustainable and suitable food production systems, encouraging and guiding small-scale farmers, encouraging funding in the agriculture sector, and discouraging trade restrictions, thus improving the flow of produce in local and international markets.

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimates that the number of undernourished populations will increase by 8-13 million if the Russia-Ukraine war causes a prolonged reduction in the food exports from these countries. Countries in the East Africa region are already experiencing the effects of food shortage after a long drought in some of the member countries due to a change in the weather patterns (United Nations, n. d). The organization speculates that the longer the war takes, the more countries will be affected despite their economic status. Also, developed countries will experience inflation, a decline in economic growth, and higher unemployment rates, as in the case of the 1970 food crisis. Despite this being a concern, developed countries are required to provide aid in terms of food and medicine to help reduce the damages caused by the food crisis. Since the release of the FAO's Food Price Index, food prices have increased by 54% in February.

In December 2021, a group of non-governmental organizations joined arms in issuing an open letter to global leaders asking for consideration of increasing efforts to stop a worldwide hunger crisis that could lead to a 17% per cent increase in the dependence on humanitarian aid in the year 2022 (WHO, n. d). The United Nations Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) released a global humanitarian overview showing a possible alarming spike in aid dependence by 2023. The 274 million figure was a pre-2023 humanitarian projection. The 2025 Global Report on Food Crises found that 295.3 million people in 53 countries and territories faced acute food insecurity in 2024. Different representatives from non-governmental organizations have aired concerns and called on leaders to take action and stop being bystanders.

The World Food Program

The World Food Program is one of the largest organizations whose main task is to aid during emergencies and food shortages. Also, the organization promotes stability and peace in the affected regions. WFP has launched emergency operations in Ukraine to aid the affected population after the Ukrainian government asked for assistance to be administered to the people fleeing the country (WFP, n. d). A statement issued by Morgot van der Velden, the WFP's director of emergencies, aired the concern about the impact of the war on civilians and the need to offer constant aid and ensure

that the staff is safe during the operation. With the guidance of humanitarian principles, the WFP's operation is also set to help refugees in neighbouring countries. Most of the refugees in the neighbouring countries are women and children, as men were prohibited from leaving Ukraine. With most of the activities affected by the war, many food reserves have been depleted, and the WFP has experienced many setbacks in ensuring the demand is met.

David Beasley, WFP's executive director, has said that the war is also set to affect the future efficiency of the WFP in unprecedented aid due to an increase in costs of shipping, oil, fuel, and food as most of the WFP's grain is sourced from the Russia-Ukraine area. The effects of the war are set to be felt worldwide as Russia and Ukraine are considered some of the biggest producers of wheat, with about 30% of wheat production in the world. The aid from this organization is facing more distribution challenges inside Ukraine as the infrastructure used in transportation, such as lorries, trains, and warehouses, is being bombed, making it hard to provide aid effectively. The WFP has also slashed aid rations to other areas to meet the growing demand, which is increasing in different continents. The WFP has been forced to decrease the rations in Yemen, which is experiencing the world's most severe hunger crisis, with 16.2 million people struggling with food insecurity. In addition, reports from WFP have warned that delays or cancellations of WFP shipments from Odesa port will primarily affect West African countries where the shipment is set to be distributed at the beginning of May.

The United States Agency for International Development

USAID is an independent organization whose central role is to administer foreign aid to civilians and assist in development. The agency is part of the Feed the Future initiative, America's leading initiative that champions nutrition, agricultural-led growth, and resilience. The Feed the Future initiative is a partnership of various organizations, civil society, the private sector, research facilities, and government agencies. After the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, USAID was among the organizations, directly and indirectly, involved in helping the affected nations by providing water and food to stabilize the shocks caused by the pandemic (Hunger, n. d.). In addition, USAID ensured proper hygiene and sanitation to avoid disease outbreaks due to unhygienic conditions.

The USAID deployed a disaster assistance response team that played a crucial role in the humanitarian aid in Ukraine and the neighbouring countries as many people fled from the war zone. The response team is responsible for addressing critical issues, including medical care, food, water, physical security, and cybersecurity, to maintain the necessary framework that supports livelihoods. The USAID has also criticized the Russian government for its invasion. The invasion has caused needless suffering to the Ukrainian citizens and led to economic instability that will take a lot of time and resources to rebuild.

International Committee of the Red Cross

The International Committee of the Red Cross is an international organization dedicated to providing solutions to the food crisis in many countries. The ICRC argues that the food crisis is caused by factors not limited to disrupted food systems, damaged infrastructure, climate change, and environmental degradation. The committee further points out that most warning signals are seen through economic shocks, damaged health systems, and poor infrastructure. The ICRC has tabled its recommendations that could help address the shortage concerns, find the root cause, and create a dependable food supply. The committee recommends that:

- In case of conflict, the parties involved should adhere to the International Humanitarian Law that demands the protection of civilians, land, infrastructure, and civilian objects, ensuring a constant food supply and distribution of resources to the civilian population (Peace Corps, n. d). The law prohibits the warring parties from implementing starvation as a war tactic and attacking or removing objects that support human survival, such as crops, foodstuff, and water supply facilities.
- A multi-year investment is set up in areas affected by instability to provide the necessary support to tackle the escalating climate change and avoid dependence on aid.
- The third recommendation is early intervention to prevent food insecurity and famine. The intervention includes safeguarding maternal health and safeguarding children, embracing the spirit of teamwork among the organizations in coordinating aid, and acknowledging the fragility of the food systems during the conflicts.

The American Red Cross has reported that over 1 million US Dollars have been used in addressing food shortages in South Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria in recent months (USDA, n. d). The shortage comes after irregular rainfall, insect invasion, floods, and severe drought in some of these areas. Traditional farming methods are less effective as they cannot withstand adverse weather conditions. Therefore, it is vital to employ new structures in farming that can sustain farming in extreme weather conditions.

The system that the IFRC uses asserts that there are mechanisms that can work effectively if more effort is exerted in research and providing solutions despite climate change. The mechanisms ensure a reliable supply of nutrients to mothers and children for sustainable living (System, n.d d.). The Red Cross plays a crucial role in feeding and comforting victims of these disasters, providing shelter and supplies for approximately 40% of the nation's blood. Also, the organization equips people with skills in saving lives, increasing survival chances, and supporting military members.

Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere

This non-governmental organization mainly focuses on empowering women to increase food production in the community (UNICEF USA, n. d). The organization has its program in Tanzania, Mali,

Malawi, Bangladesh, India, and Ghana. The organization gets support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Its program is in line with the belief that women have the potential to stand in the gap and offer immense solutions to food security for the community. The organization implements innovative ways, including offering agribusiness education to equip women with necessary tools in the Agriculture field. The program has achieved a positive response in these countries as reports from Malawi and Ghana show a positive deviation, with every dollar giving a return of 31 dollars. The CARE program will pull many people out of poverty and save many livelihoods from hunger-related issues.

CARE has had an enormous impact in helping Cuba improve food security in the country, whose geographic location makes it vulnerable to calamities like hurricanes and earthquakes. Cuba has been hit with disasters that have caused a vast economic gap that requires the country to use many resources and depend on aid for survival. CARE has played a significant role in this country by helping farmers revive the agriculture sector through farming and modern farming techniques for sustainable production. Also, the techniques will improve returns and create a stable supply to meet the demands of the consumers.

World Vision International

World Vision International is committed to protecting, providing care, and supporting the less fortunate in society. The organization is mainly founded on Christian beliefs and teachings, and this is the leading guide of how they conduct and execute the mission. The organization ensures development in communities to help transform lives and eradicate poverty. In addition, the organization promotes justice across the Globe by addressing unjust systems and encouraging the formation of alliances that work to support human rights. Also, World Vision champions awareness in communities to enable the easy transformation of livelihoods. The organization instills hope among the less fortunate communities by following religious teachings.

World Vision International partners with other organizations to provide solutions and aid to areas that experience food shortages. In 2021, World Vision partnered with the World Food Program and provided aid in 36 countries, saving the lives of about 10.9 million people, including 6 million children. The organization is creating a structure that incorporates vouchers and cash assistance in countries like Kenya to create a more reliable food supply system. The organization has also stretched its hand to areas like Haiti and the Philippines through money transfers to help the affected individuals afford food supplies, legitimize their livelihoods, and rebuild their lives. The organization is also on the frontline in championing a hunger-free world by encouraging changes in policies that support food security.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is safe to say food security plays a vital role in supporting human livelihoods and the

stability of countries. So, it is essential to conduct more research on new systems and legislations that will offer viable solutions despite the unpredictability of climatic conditions around the Globe. There is a need to empower less privileged communities through education and the provision of technology, which will improve production. There will be a reliable food supply, and farmers will be able to use the products for nutritional purposes and sell the surplus for financial needs. The hands-on approach to food security will realize the world vision, whose main aim is to avoid the food shortage crisis.

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