



Child Hunger

GRAN believes that access to nourishing food is every child's human right. And yet, the world is failing in its duties to protect this right. Children at home and around the globe are hungry.

How is children's hunger different?

We know that malnutrition at any age is harmful, but it is most devastating for children, especially those under the age of five -- because they are new and growing little humans with unique nutritional needs for healthy development. Malnutrition in these crucial developmental years can irreparably harm a child's future, causing permanent damage to their cognitive development, physical growth and health, and endangering their very survival.

What happens when a child is hungry?

If a child does not get a sufficient and diverse diet, they will suffer from malnutrition which can manifest itself in wasting, micronutrient deficiencies, and stunting. Lack of essential nutrients weakens a child's immune system, leaving the child more susceptible to malaria, diarrhea, cholera, pneumonia, and death. If a child is malnourished for an extended period of time, they can suffer irreversible damage to their bodies and brains, impeding their chances of reaching their full potential in life.




Children lining up for food in Jinja, Uganda

How many of the world's youngest children are affected?

According to UNICEF, each year over 1 million children under 5 die of severe wasting, the most visible and lethal form of undernutrition. And over 146 million children suffer from stunting. Fully two-thirds of the world's children under 5 are living in moderate to severe child food poverty, amounting to 440 million young children who are not receiving the nutrition they need to grow and to thrive.

GROWING UP HUNGRY

Poor nutrition **causes 45%** of deaths in children under 5. That's 3.1 million children each year.



Beyond hunger...

Child hunger can lead to other harms. For older children being hungry means they cannot concentrate in class and will often miss school because of sickness, which adversely affects their education. Families may be forced to remove a child from school so they can work to contribute to the family income. Children may be driven into dangerous labour situations such as child slavery, prostitution, or

recruitment as child soldiers. Many girls are forced into early marriages so that their desperate families have one less mouth to feed.

Where is child hunger most severe?

Sub-Saharan Africa and south Asia are home to more than two-thirds of the world's children under 5 living in severe child food poverty.

What are the drivers of child hunger?

The world is currently experiencing an unprecedented hunger crisis driven by armed conflict, poverty, rising food costs, and extreme weather events due to climate change.

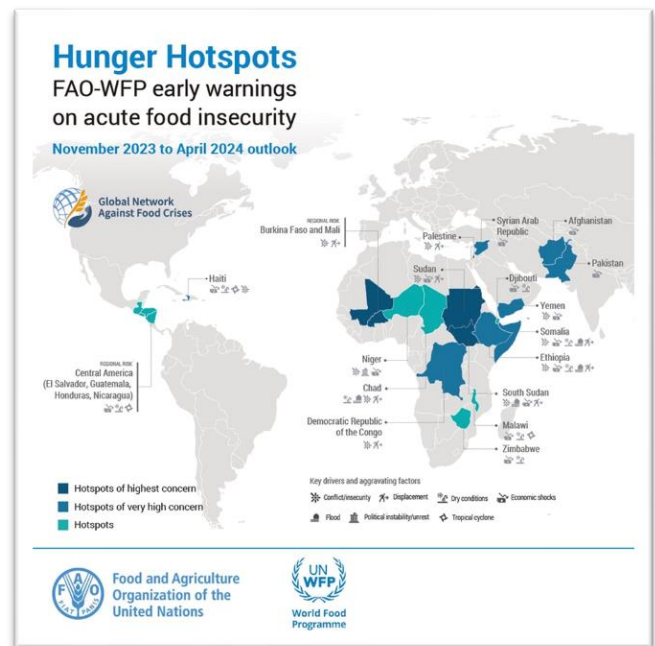
What can Canada do?

To address the crisis, save lives, and significantly reduce the number of children who become malnourished, Canada should increase international assistance dollars to:

- Scale up funding for emergency humanitarian response to ensure access to nourishing food for children living in emergencies and invest in sustainable local food systems.
- Invest in community-based health programs providing early detection and treatment of acute malnutrition.
- Support nutrition counselling programs that protect, promote, and support infant and young child feeding, particularly breastfeeding.
- Invest in community and primary healthcare to prevent, detect, and treat childhood illnesses, including support for programs to increase vaccination coverage and projects that improve access to healthy food, safe water, sanitation, and hygiene.

What can I do?

- Give -- volunteer hours, donations of food, or \$\$ -- to your local foodbank, soup kitchen, community cupboard, or school breakfast program, and support humanitarian organizations working on the frontlines of the global hunger crisis.
- Learn more about the issue. Help to build public awareness about child hunger and the urgent need for action here at home and internationally.
- Advocate with our government representatives for policies, programs, and investments to help end child hunger at home and abroad.



The Grandmothers Advocacy Network (GRAN) is a non-partisan network of volunteers working together across Canada to advocate at local, national and international levels. We take action in four key areas: health; education and life-long learning; ending gender-based violence; and economic security and social protection. Our vision is a world where the human rights of older women, children, youth, and gender-diverse persons are recognized and protected, so that they can achieve their full potential.

This year GRAN is focused on child hunger in our advocacy on the Right to Food. You can sign up at <https://grandmothersadvocacy.org/ways-get-involved> to receive email updates on upcoming learning events, advocacy actions, and news articles on child hunger. Let's do this work together.