

The Global Food Crisis



Research and Messaging Guide

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY.



Introduction

Many of our global neighbours are in the grips of a devastating food crisis—one that is unprecedented in scale and life-threatening in consequence. The United Nations (UN) has warned that the world is rapidly moving backwards in its fight against extreme poverty and hunger, and it is children living in poverty who are worst affected.

Because of the severity of the crisis, Compassion has launched a coordinated global response to offer short- and long-term solutions to fight hunger. As a ministry, we will be prioritising our response to this need as long as necessary, whether months or years. This guide has been developed to help Compassion Australia staff understand the situation more deeply and communicate the need with consistency and confidence to our supporters.

As you read and reflect on the magnitude of the problem at hand, remember that we serve a God who is infinitely able and unswerving in His love.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us.”

EPHESIANS 3:20 (NIV)

What is the global food crisis?

Conflict, extreme weather and COVID-19 have created a global food crisis that is having a devastating impact on children in poverty. Because of the crisis, the number of people around the world with insufficient food has more than doubled. 345 million people—more than thirteen times Australia's population—are now experiencing acute food insecurity.

Hunger upends the lives of children in poverty and undermines holistic development. The cost for Compassion's church partners to provide meals for participants as part of normal programming is increasing—and families are even more reliant on those meals. Children living in poverty are likely to be at an increasingly severe risk of malnourishment or undernourishment.

“With eight years remaining to end hunger (Sustainable Development Goals Targets 2.1 and 2.2), the world is moving in the wrong direction.”

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS



What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity occurs when a person doesn't have regular access to enough nutritious food. It's caused when food simply isn't available or when a person doesn't have enough resources to obtain it, as is often the case for families living in poverty. In 2021, 923.7 million people around the world experienced severe food insecurity, according to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). **Severe food insecurity means a person has had nothing to eat for a day or more.**



Which countries are affected?

Rising food costs are being felt worldwide, but the World Food Programme (WFP) reports that there are 48 countries categorised as 'hunger hotspots'. For Compassion, nine of our program countries have been identified as experiencing increased food insecurity, though this list continues to change and grow. To identify countries most heavily impacted, we use external data sources such as Trading Economics data, Famine Early Warning Systems data and World Food Program Hunger maps.

These countries are:

- Burkina Faso
- Colombia
- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- Haiti
- Kenya
- Sri Lanka
- Togo
- Uganda



What caused the global food crisis?

Food insecurity has been rising steeply since 2018 and the causes are complex and multifaceted:

CLIMATE

Weather extremes pushed over 23 million people into acute food insecurity in 2021 alone. Drought is disrupting vital agriculture production, especially in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia where they're approaching a fourth growing season without rain.

CONFLICT

The war in Ukraine is intensifying the food crisis because Russia and Ukraine are responsible for supplying almost 30 per cent of the world's wheat and a significant amount of global fertiliser. Conflict pushed 139 million people in 24 countries into acute food insecurity in 2021.

COSTS

There is not a shortage of food in the world but rather the issue is how much food costs and how it's being distributed. With households in emerging economies spending an average 25 per cent of their budgets on food—up to 40 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 60 per cent in Haiti—rising inflation will place families in desperate situations.

COVID-19

The pandemic has drastically increased the number of families living with severe food insecurity. Loss of work, isolation rules and other restrictions have all contributed to this new crisis. In many nations, the pandemic continues to have a devastating effect on livelihoods.

How is the global food crisis affecting children in poverty?

As food prices climb, so do hunger and malnutrition in young children. The impact of childhood malnutrition is catastrophic and has both short and long-term effects.

The increased risks caused by malnutrition include:

- Diabetes, cardiovascular problems and cancer later in life
- Growth stunting and wasting
- Poor academic performance and intellectual development
- Increased prevalence of attention deficit disorders
- Child marriage, as girls are offered in marriage arrangements for dowries that will feed their families
- Child labour, as children leave school early to support their families
- Premature death



Key statistics

- As many as **828 million people** around the world faced hunger in 2021.
- **345 million people** are facing acute food insecurity in 82 countries—up from 135 million in 53 countries in 2019.
- In 2021, **923.7 million people** around the world experienced severe food insecurity.
- **50 million people** in 45 countries are on the edge of famine.
- Households in emerging economies spending an average **25 per cent of their budgets on food**, with up to 40 per cent in sub-Saharan Africa and 60 per cent in Haiti.
- Conflict pushed **139 million people in 24 countries** into acute food insecurity in 2021 (up from 99 million in 2020).
- Weather extremes pushed over **23 million people** into acute food insecurity in 2021 (up from 15.7 million in 2020).
- Economic shocks pushed over **30 million people** into food insecurity in 2021.
- Since the start of 2022, the escalating global food crisis has forced an additional 260,000 children—or **one child every 60 seconds**—to suffer from severe wasting.
- A severely wasted child is up to **11 times more likely than a well-nourished child to die** of common childhood illnesses, such as pneumonia.
- In Ethiopia, child marriage has increased by an average of **119 per cent** across regions worst hit by the drought in 2022.
- The number of children at risk of dropping out of school in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia due to the impact of the drought has tripled from 1.1. million to an estimated **3.3 million children**.

Country	Approximate number of people facing severe food insecurity	Cost of a healthy diet per day in USD (2020)	% People unable to afford a healthy diet (2020)	% of stunted children under 5 (2020). <i>Stunting, based on a child's height and age, is a measure of chronic nutritional deficiency.</i>
Australia	900,000	\$2.561	0.7%	2%
Burkina Faso	3.3 million	\$3.345	80.1%	26%
Colombia	7.3 million	\$3.065	26.5%	11%
Ethiopia	7.4 million	\$3.366	86.8%	35%
Ghana	1.8 million	\$4.033	61.2%	14%
Haiti	4.4 million	\$4.490	85.9%	20%
Kenya	4.1 million	\$2.968	81.1%	19%
Sri Lanka	4.9 million	\$3.92	49%	16%
Togo	386,000	–	–	24%
Uganda	5.6 million	\$2.658	82.2%	28%



How is Compassion responding?

Compassion's 8,200 local church partners across over 25 countries are leading a **local-first response to the global food crisis**. Because we don't want to lose ground in holistic child development, our church partners intentionally step in the gap and provide disaster relief when needed so development can continue.

To meet the changing needs of children and families facing increased food insecurity, our local church partners will respond in two ways:

- 01** Provide immediate food packages and/or unconditional cash transfers to households deemed vulnerable to food insecurity. This includes children and families in Compassion's program, local church partner staff, pastors and community members.
- 02** Provide long-term food security through distributing seeds, fertiliser, livestock and training on how to build and maintain home gardens and small-scale farms.

The local church is best positioned to assist in this crisis because it has established decades of trust and relationships within the community—**it has been there before, will be there during and will remain long after the crisis**. In most cases, Compassion assisted children receive health support before wasting, stunting or severe malnutrition occur.

Despite the global food crisis, programming will continue as normally as possible at Compassion centres, aligned with local COVID-19 guidelines. If there is violence or political unrest, each country's national office will modify the delivery of the program to best serve the participants.

Global food crisis messaging guidelines

CAMPAIGN NAME

The Global Food Crisis *Note: unless used in a heading, you do not need to capitalise global food crisis.*

CAMPAIGN TAGLINE

Answer Hunger With Hope

CAMPAIGN VOICE

Clear – We use uncomplicated language

Factual – We lean on evidence-based information and don't over-sensationalise

Compelling – We move people to act through our communication

Human – We amplify the real voices of the neighbours we serve

Hopeful – We are hopeful amid hardship and suffering



Please do:

HIGHLIGHT THE NEED

Speak with urgency to convey the immediate seriousness of the crisis. Show how the crisis is affecting children and families in poverty using statistics and stories.

TALK ABOUT MALNUTRITION RATHER THAN STARVATION OR FAMINE

According to UNICEF, 45 per cent of all child deaths are linked to malnutrition. Starvation and famine have more technical definitions that may not be true in all countries.

PRESS INTO DIFFICULT TOPICS WHILE PRESERVING CHILDREN'S DIGNITY

Although challenging to talk about, this crisis matters—as do the lives of children.

EMPHASISE LOCAL EMPOWERMENT

Focus on the integral role of the local church in delivering Compassion's programs and reaching their communities. Present participants, caregivers and frontline church partners with an active role in responding to the global food crisis. Highlight where people are helping themselves and others.

EXPLAIN THE IMPACT OF CHILD SPONSORSHIP

Compassion's Child Sponsorship Program provides for a child's holistic needs, including education support, healthcare, tutoring and mentoring, skills training and Christ-centred guidance. But the cost of providing urgent support exceeds what sponsorship giving alone can provide.

HIGHLIGHT COMPASSION'S EXISTING COMMITMENT TO LONG-TERM HUNGER SOLUTIONS

Even before the global food crisis, Compassion's local church partners have been working with communities to develop long-term sustainable solutions to hunger.

TAKE SMALL OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS THE GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS

Every opportunity to bring awareness to the crisis and the local church's response is important.

Please don't:

POSITION COMPASSION AS A COMPETITOR TO OTHER ORGANISATIONS

We are so thankful to work alongside many other organisations helping to meet this extreme need.

CRITICISE GOVERNMENTS

We recognise that on the heels of the COVID-19 pandemic, many governments are stretched beyond their limits. Criticising certain governments could also impact Compassion's ability to operate effectively.

PRESENT SUPPORTERS AS THE CENTRE OF THE STORIES WE TELL

Instead, amplify the voices of children, caregivers and local church partners rather than speaking for them. Using direct quotes, for example, elevates local perspectives that are spoken in their own words.

USE LANGUAGE THAT GUILTS, SHAMES OR MANIPULATES

Supporters motivated by guilt are more likely to experience feelings of failure and burnout over the long-term.



References and further reading

- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United States (2022). *A Tale of Empty Plates*. fao.org/interactive/state-of-food-security-nutrition/en/
- Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United States (2022). *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022*. fao.org/documents/card/en/c/cc0639en
- Global Network Against Food Crises (2022). *The Global Report on Food Crises 2022*. fao.org/3/cb9997en/cb9997en.pdf
- International Monetary Fund (30 September 2022). *Global Food Crisis Demands Support for People, Open Trade, Bigger Local Harvests*. imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/09/30/global-food-crisis-demands-support-for-people-open-trade-bigger-local-harvests
- Relief Web (24 August 2022). *Kenya Food Security Outlook, June 2022 to January 2023*. reliefweb.int/report/kenya/kenya-food-security-outlook-june-2022-january-2023#:~:text=This%20estimate%20is%20around%2032,malnourished%20and%20likely%20require%20treatment
- UNICEF (2021). *The State of the World's Children 2021*. unicef.org/reports/state-worlds-children-2021
- UNICEF (May 2022). *Severe Wasting: An Overlooked Child Survival Emergency*. unicef.org/media/120346/file/Wasting%20child%20alert.pdf
- UNICEF (22 June 2022). *Global hunger crisis pushing one child into severe malnutrition every minute in 15 crisis-hit countries*. unicef.org/press-releases/global-hunger-crisis-pushing-one-child-severe-malnutrition-every-minute-15-crisis
- The World Bank (2020). *Prevalence of severe food insecurity in the population (%)*. data.worldbank.org/indicator/SN.ITK.SVFI.ZS
- World Food Programme (2022). *Emergency: Global Food Crisis*. wfp.org/emergencies/global-food-crisis