

Global Food Security

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Prepared by

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Youth Champion - 2022
Spur Change*



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THOUGHTS...

“Gender equality is at the center of food security. According to the UN “countries with the most severe gender inequalities face the highest level of hunger.” Women play an essential role in the four pillars of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability, identified by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). A transformative intervention in food security should include producing quality sex- desegregated data, changes in property rights and land ownership policies, ending gender-based violence and ensuring the equal participation of women in economic decision-making at all levels.”



Thanks to Youth Advocate, Utthara Jeewanthi Wanigasekara, for putting together this paper on Global Food Security as part of her activities with SPUR Change- Youth Champions Program.

**Dr. Vida Shehada,
Professor of International Development
Centennial College, Toronto, Ontario**

THOUGHTS...

“Food security is a basic human right and constitutes the second Sustainable Development Goal (Zero Hunger) to be reached by 2030.

However, we are worryingly far from reaching this goal. Despite some of our efforts to reach global food security, many challenges such as climate change, the covid-19 pandemic, and the war in Ukraine have provoked shortages of food, fuel, and fertilizer and drastically increased the prices of certain staples. In the wake of this intensifying global food crisis, vulnerable populations are increasingly at risk of suffering from starvation.”



To help tackle this issue, Utthara Jeewanthi Wanigasekara consulted experts with different perspectives on the problem, which she gathered in an academic magazine. I am pleased that the Youth Champions Program, in which she took part, allowed her to enhance her understanding of the SDGs and encouraged her to raise awareness of global food security.

Marie-Catherine Thouin
Global Citizenship Education National Program Coordinator
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Food Insecurity in the Canadian Marginalized Population

By Utthara Wanigasekara

The Sustainable Development Goals were developed by designing 17 interlinked problems faced by the world in order to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. Among the SDGs, goal one – NO POVERTY and goal ten – REDUCE INEQUALITIES are seen as more important in the current world context. According to UN research data, the COVID-19 pandemic has made a huge economic fallout resulting increase in global poverty by as much as half a billion people or 8% of the total population. The definition of food security given by the United Nations Committee on World Food Security, as meaning that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life. Regardless of being a developed country, Canada also faces poverty problems along with food insecurity, especially among marginalized populations. The study, Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2021, says the total number equates to 15.9 percent of households across all 10 provinces. The study looked at food insecurity rates in the provinces throughout the pandemic and up until the current period of record inflation and 1.4 million are children. (CBC,2021). According to the study, there are major differences in food insecurity among the provinces, ranging from 13.1 percent of households in Quebec to 20.3 percent of households in Alberta, and Ontario was in the middle when it came to both overall and severe food insecurity.

As an outcome of urban food insecurity, there is a tendency for food deserts to emerge in Toronto's "inner cities" (for example, Toronto's 13 recognized priority neighborhoods). Where food deserts occur, healthy and affordable foods are difficult to obtain, and there is a dependence on

convenience foods. As a result, hunger, poor health, and malnutrition are persistent and enable cycles of further socio-economic disparities. Problems related to food deserts are complex but include income: inequality, costs of other basic needs, availability and cost of transportation, zoning, the interests of food suppliers, food and nutritional knowledge, and so forth.

On the other hand, Food insecurity is defined as inadequate access to food due to a lack of income. The main marginalized population characterized in Canada is those with 'Black' skin or those who were the primary owners of the land known as 'Indians' or Indigenous population. For many Black Canadians, the intervening factor responsible for their status as food insecure is the simple fact they are racialized as being Black in Canada: individuals and families face a reality that is disproportionately compounded by racism and poverty — shaping their particular experience with food insecurity. A recent study conducted by PROOF and FoodShare found the best predictor of food insecurity among Black Canadians was their race. Black communities are 3.5 times more likely to experience food insecurity compared to white Canadians, even after adjusting for factors like immigration status, education level, and homeownership. Black children were also 34 percent more likely to be food insecure compared to 10 percent of white children. This disparity has been linked to the increased likelihood of developing chronic diseases, like diabetes, asthma, and depression, and to poor educational and health outcomes, like learning challenges, low graduation rates, and low self-esteem. (Roberts,2020) Indigenous Peoples refer to the original inhabitants of Canada and include Inuit, Métis, and First Nations living on- and off-reserve. The Inuit, the Indigenous people

of the Canadian Arctic, face severe food insecurity rooted in failed government systems and neglect. The presence and prevalence of food insecurity in Inuit households ranked seven times higher than in non-Indigenous Canadian households. A survey of households with at least one preschooler determined that 69.6% of households were food insecure. Already significantly more at risk of food insecurity than non-indigenous Canadians, the Inuit people face food insecurity at a severity three times greater than First Nation and Métis indigenous nations.

Current approaches to addressing food insecurity include food banks, community kitchens, and food buying clubs — all of which are positioned as solutions to alleviate immediate food insecurity needs, but they fail to address the scale or root causes of the problem. These approaches act as band-aid solutions that further depoliticize the issue, forcing us to question why a country like Canada is producing these sorts of inequities in the first place.

Canada has already taken steps to reduce the poverty through the government-led “Poverty Reduction Strategy 2030” and “Opportunity for All” such as Canada Child Care Benefit, Canada Pension Plan Benefit, Working Income Tax Benefit, and Canada Learning Bond which promote human rights and financial benefits while respecting human rights. But the biggest problem is that people's awareness and use of these programs is very low compared to the services granted. “How is a homeless person, especially in smaller communities, supposed to navigate a government website and services now that everything is online? It is frustrating for the average person, so imagine how it would be for someone on the street”. (Indigenous roundtable participant, Yellowknife) (Government of Canada,2021). The application process is

intimidating and confusing, sometimes the amount given is not sufficient to cover the costs. The main argument is the complexity of approaches available in the government agenda. So, the priority should be to increase the awareness of these programs and make them easier to understand and access the programs. Also, ensure to support each one suffering from disparities. Because the majority of Canadians believe they are in poverty because of global poverty.

According to my point, of view, Canada should have prompt action to solve poverty and inequality problems with proper food security methods. The government needs to have a social-economic structural improvement to advance the education system with a sufficient amount of findings, increase the supply of affordable housing schemes of the minimum wage same for every province of Canada, as well as deliver more effective outcomes by eradicating gender disparities and equal opportunities for every community.

A successful strategy of poverty reduction should have at its core measures to encourage fast and continuous economic growth. The challenge for policy is to combine growth-promoting policies with procedures that allow the poor to participate fully in the opportunities unleashed and so contribute to that growth. This includes policies to make labor markets work better, remove gender inequalities and increase financial inclusion. (OECD,n.d) . Finally, the road map for eradicating poverty and inequality will be a combination of physical capital, human capital, rules and laws, competitive markets, macroeconomic stability, and infrastructure. The policymakers should identify the impact and make rapid implementations that will be vital to the whole world. As long as we as humans make efforts to

solve this problem, we are unquestionably helping to eradicate poverty and inequality for the peace and fulfillment of humankind's potential.



Utthara Wanigasekara is a postgraduate student from Centennial College, she majored in International Development Studies. She was selected as the youth champion from Ontario Province for Spur Change Youth Championship Program in 2022. Her interest areas of study are human rights, gender equality, food security, and peace and reconciliation.

Global Food Security and the Role of Women

By Francina Contreras

In every culture, food is one way to bring the community and family together, in addition to being a human need and essential for a person to live. In the last few years, there have been several warnings regarding a global food security crisis. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), food security is when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for active and healthy life (World Vision, 2022). The Sustainable Development Goals have an important target, to achieve zero hunger by 2030, a goal that is far away and got even farther after the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Even though countries are producing enough food to feed the population, there are many people still undernourished, affected by climate, conflict, political instability, and many other factors.

The role that women play in ensuring food and nutrition security in their families and society is of paramount importance. Women produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food in developing countries and half of the world's food. However, it is only recently that their key role as producers and providers of food and their decisive contribution to household food security has begun to be recognized. In many households, while the men allocate the crops to the commercial to provide economic support, the women prepare the food to be consumed and take care of the cattle that will provide the proteins. According to the FAO, the majority of women dedicate their income to buying food and the needs of their children. It is not surprising that some studies show that the chances of survival of a boy or a girl are increased by 20% when the mother controls the household budget (OCHA, 2020).

Given the fundamental role of women in food production and supply, any strategy to achieve sustainable food security must necessarily address the problem of their limited access to productive resources. In most rural areas, the two activities that most consume women's time are collecting water and firewood. The vast deforestation and desertification turn these tasks into increasingly heavy burdens and prevent women from dedicating more time to productive and income-generating work. In some cases, women pass on part of this burden to their sons, and daughters in general. Reducing this work of collecting water and firewood and preparing food would allow women to have more time for productive work and would give their daughters and sons the possibility of going to school (OCHA, 2020).

Therefore, developing interventions to reduce this heavy burden can significantly enhance women's contribution to household food security. Securing water supply and introducing the use of equipment for crop processing are decisive means of freeing up women's time. Such technologies not only provide her with more opportunities to participate in income-generating activities but also help reduce her stress and improve the health and nutritional conditions of women and children. Unfortunately, women face many obstacles when it comes to food security.

Women's limited access to resources and their insufficient purchasing power derive from social, economic, and cultural factors, all interrelated, relegate them to a subordinate role, to the detriment of their own development and that of society as a whole. On USAID'S Fact Sheet on Food Security and Gender for 2022, it is highlighted that land is predominantly owned by

men, thus being transferred to men generation after generation; that women and girls do not receive adequate education and training in agricultural practices; that they also have less access to credit than their opposite sex; women have a time constraint, given their household responsibilities; and lastly, they are affected by HIV/AIDS as caretakers of their households, making their nutritional needs more critical (USAID, 2022).

Incorporating gender analysis into the global security crisis is not enough to optimize the contribution of women to food security. Governments need to take into account gender perspectives, and views of men and women. By giving women the opportunity to show their views and incorporate them into food security programs, the world would be giving a significant step forward regarding policymaking. Women food producers must be empowered and given the chance to speak, through rural organizations that promote food security (Karl, 2009).

Children grow faster in their first year than at any other time range in their lives. Infant means children anywhere from birth to one year. This stage is the most important to be cared for and takes a considerable amount of time and energy for parents to raise the infant with a healthy lifestyle. In the first year, cognitive and brain development means the learning process of memory, language, thinking and reasoning will be processed (CDC, 2021). Having said that, it is important to highlight that there will be an improvement in society, when girls and women have good nutrition, know the foods that are good for their health, and have access to them. Later on, when they become mothers, they will have everything they need in their bodies to provide for

their children, and they will feed well during the gestation process. In addition, through exclusive breastfeeding, they will be able to provide them with the best milk. It is a priority to guarantee that women have equal access to food in quantity and quality (OCHA, 2020).

There are several recommended interventions recommended in the USAID's Food Security and Gender Fact Sheet (2022) to improve women's participation in food security:

- Provide training for agriculture and nutrition specialists on gender methodologies.
- Provide women and girls access to primary education and training on agricultural production.
- Facilitate lending to women entrepreneurs working in agriculture.
- Include gender-specific monitoring and evaluation indicators in food security programs.
- Include women and men in the design of agriculture and nutrition programs.
- Provide rural women with greater mobility and market information.
- Encourage property, divorce, and inheritance laws that allow women to hold title to land.
- Ensure agricultural extension agents understand and consider the needs of women farmers.
- Build local relationships with government ministries to create responsible food security policies that prevent a crisis.



Francina Contreras Gómez is an Economist from the Dominican Republic, currently finishing her postgraduate studies in International Development at Centennial College. She is passionate about public policy as a way to tackle relevant issues in the world such as gender, poverty, food security, sustainability, and many more

Global Food Security and Aid Impact in Nepal

Dr. Mukti Suvedi

Nepal is one of the most food insecure countries in the world (Bhandari & Manandhar, 2014), ranking 157 among 187 countries (UNDP, 2011). In recent years, food security in Nepal has become an important issue due to the number of people living in poverty and Nepal experiencing unprecedented levels of seasonal migration and foreign employment. According to the World Bank 2022 report, Nepal ranks 75th out of 113 countries; the country has reduced poverty because of a high number of remittance inflows, which averaged 21.9 percent of GDP (World Bank, 2022). These conditions rapidly change agricultural practices and food security patterns (Central Bureau of Statistics 1999, 2009). Similarly, about 33.1 % of Nepal's GDP comes from agriculture, and more than 50% of its export is from agricultural products. As a result, GDP From Agriculture in Nepal increased to 644585.77 Million in 2020 from 628013.87 Million in 2019.

Despite huge gaps and changes in the agriculture pattern, it is nevertheless a sustainable approach for the people and country. There is still much work to be done before everyone can enjoy secure and healthy diets. Many aid agencies are constantly working on making daily progress, helping the government and civil society organization fight poverty and food insecurity. The government, in partnership with Aid agencies, is playing a key role in helping to address the food insecurities problem by providing support to farmers ancreating ae food distribution structure. According to the World Bank, approximately 17.4 % of the population lives in poverty, and inadequate food availability and nutrition are significant concerns not only in the poor population but also in rural and urban areas. Despite the effort of many aid agencies and the

government of Nepal, the earthquake and subsequent floods and landslides have left the country in a dire situation impacting food security (New Spotlight Magazine, 2021).

The current influx of aid poses a daunting challenge to agencies working in food security. Seasonal migration of youths from rural and urban areas, the impact of climate change on agriculture, and the lack of agriculture structures in rural areas have surged, and there has been an overall decline in food production.

In Nepal, in times of humanitarian crisis during an earthquake, aid agencies played a leading and very crucial role in the responses and food security. U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), FAO, WFP, and other national and international aid agencies played a significant role in the long-term stability and growth of the country. Aid agencies support numerous programs that help vulnerable households have quality, diverse and sufficient food. In addition, aid agencies provide food assistance, agricultural extension services, and market development projects. Aid agencies are also an essential part of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Nepal, and their work is essential for long-term stability and growth there.

According to the latest census data, around 65.7% of Nepal's population actively engages in agriculture. The data in 1990 showed that the most prioritized and prestigious sector for Nepali people in the plain lands of the Terai region was agriculture, which was around 80% of the population. This decreased gradually, and youths did not see any scope in agriculture. The youths and productive population started migrating out of

the country for many different purposes. Many of them now go to Arab countries for seasonal work. It was the only means of livelihood compared to making trade and government jobs.

During the 1960s, Nepal used to be the highest cereal yield among the other South Asian nations; the yield in Nepal was 198 percent higher than that in Bangladesh and 212 percent higher than in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless, currently, the situation changed upside down, average rice, wheat, and maize yields are comparatively lower, and export of these products has increased. Agriculture has never been an encouraging profession. The middleman who bridges the farmers and the market becomes richer, whereas the farmers remain poor. However, the COVID-19 impact showed some progress in the agriculture field; there was an increase in agriculture production in 2020, and it is assumed that people who went to foreign employment came back to Nepal and started agriculture in their barren land.

Nepal has made significant progress in addressing food insecurity but has failed to sustain the food system and structure. Therefore, efforts and actions are imperative at all levels—local,

state, national, and global—to end hunger and malnourishment and ensure food security. Nepal is also one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate shocks, as it's located on the southern flank of the highest Himalayas, the seismic fault line. This makes it particularly susceptible to variations in weather and climate, which can have devastating consequences for its population and food security.

There is an arduous effort for the aid agencies, government, and people to work together longer to achieve progress toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. In addition, the agriculture sector, which was impacted by the conflict, earthquake, and seasonal migration, needs substantial support to sustain food security. Therefore, aid agencies and the government of Nepal need to build a sustainable system that gives power to farmers and agriculture producers to create lasting change and impact food security in Nepal.



Professor Mukti Suvedi is a Pr

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Canada and Global Food Security: Cooperation or Complicity?

By Professor William A. Sparks

Enough food is produced today to feed everyone on the planet, but hunger is on the rise in some parts of the world, and some 821 million people are considered to be “chronically undernourished” (UN News 2019)

There is an old joke about Canada in International Relations circles.

“Question: Why did the Canadian cross the road?”

Answer: To get to the middle.” (Endicott 2015) (Sparks 2006)

There is a less friendly joke also.

“Why did the Canadian cross the road? To play both sides of the street.” (Sparks, 2006)

Canada is known for its diplomatic foreign policy often respecting many viewpoints. It is also known for taking strong stances on several issues such as human rights but offering weak or no follow up in application unless pressure is applied by citizens or the media coverage.

Often public stances are in fact weakened or negated by lack of action or even support for the opposite as long as it benefits Canada.

Canada’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Global Affairs Canada (GAC) stands strong in its support for Ending World Hunger and supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number two (SDG-2) “Zero Hunger” Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. (UN, 2016)

To this end **Canada is one of the United Nations World Food Program’s (WFP) top five donors.** Canada’s support to WFP helps contribute to emergency food assistance and logistics support,

as well as safety net and school meals programs. In 2016, Canada provided more than \$299M to WFP for its operations, including \$158M in response to the UN humanitarian appeals. Part of this funding also goes to the Immediate Response Account, which is WFP’s life-saving funding facility. This funding facility allows WFP to rapidly respond to emergencies. **(Government of Canada, International 2022)**

However, Canada has not published its WFP contributions since the 2016 data despite updating its website on 14 September 2022

To find this data one has to go to the WFP website which reveals:

2016 contribution is United States Dollars (USD) at 211,004,816 & # 5 in the world

2017 contribution is United States Dollars (USD) at 199,626,298 & # 5 in the world

2018 contribution is United States Dollars (USD) at 218,393,483 & # 7 in the world

2019 contribution is United States Dollars (USD) at 189.743.634 & # 7 in the world

2020 contribution is United States Dollars (USD) at 244.020.238 & # 5 in the world

2021 contribution is United States Dollars (USD) at 313.342.498 & # 5 in the world

2022 contribution is United States Dollars (USD) at 360.645.513 & # 5 in the world

The list for the most recent year is not final and is liable to change as details of contributions work their way through the system.

WFP (2022) <https://www.wfp.org/funding>

One notes Canada has been a consistent top 5 contributor except for the years when it was overtaken by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab

Emirates. The author speculates their contributions have declined due to financial resources being drawn to the war in Yemen

Contributions to WFP in 2021

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS: US\$ 9,553,198,359

as of 21 June 2022

All Donors (including Flexible)		
1	USA	3,779,709,325
2	Germany	1,413,997,469
3	European Commission	497,938,815
4	United Kingdom	376,260,054
5	Canada	313,342,498
6	World Bank	272,581,274
7	* Saudi Arabia	259,000,081
8	Japan	226,187,020
9	Private Donors	205,295,029
10	Pakistan	204,123,733

Source: [Contributions to WFP in 2021 | World Food Programme](#)

Canada also provides on specific projects such as 11 May 2022 report from WFP Canada office

Canada supports WFP's life-saving work in Iraq

BAGHDAD – In 2021, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) received a total of a CAD 5.5 million contribution from the Government of Canada, including CAD 1 million from a regional project between Canada and WFP. This donation has helped WFP provide food assistance to 255,000 displaced Iraqi families and 72,000 Syrian refugees living in camps as well as emergency livelihood restoration activities throughout 2021

<https://www.wfp.org/news/canada-supports-wfps-life-saving-work-iraq>

However, GAC or The Government of Canada (international.gc) has not shared its total contribution to WFP. It is hard to hold Canada

accountable when citizens do not know the data. Citizens cannot support or criticize if they are unaware.

Moreover, Canada's total foreign aid envelope "overseas development assistance" (ODA) remains a small percentage of its total gross national product or gross national income (GNI).

This is quite a shame full as it was Canada, though the efforts of the late Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in the 1970s, that led the way to have the United Nations and the OECD nations set an ODA target of 0.7% of GNI

In 2021, Canada spent **US\$6.3 billion** (current prices, according to OECD preliminary data) or 0.32% of the country's gross national income (GNI) on official development assistance (ODA).

While this is an increase in Canada's total ODA over the past 2 years, The ODA in 2020 represented 0.31% of its gross national income (GNI), up from 0.27% in 2019. This increase in ODA as a percentage of GNI. still remains less than half of the target, a target consistently met by Scandinavian countries in recent years. (2022 <https://donortracker.org/country/canada>)

One also has to examine what percentage of Canada's ODA when to what the UN describes as the way to end hunger by supporting small holder farmers including women.

The UN SDG 2. states in **Target 2.3**

By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and nonfarm employment.

indicators include:

2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status

FAO (2022 a)

One interpretation of this target by the author is that encouragement is given to local farmers and villagers controlling their own planting, harvesting and consumption. This is often defined as “**Food Sovereignty**: *the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems.*” (Food Secure Canada 2022)

However, The percentage that Canada contributes directly to target 2.3 and Food Sovereignty is not broken out and reported routinely.

And, According, to the latest available figures from 44 countries, the incomes of small-scale food producers continue to lag behind those of larger-scale producers...In addition, in three quarters of the countries for which data are available, small-scale food producers have an average income of less than half that of large-scale food producers... Also, it can be concluded that even though the productivity of women is on par with that of men, women earn less for the same amount of labour, which indicates a gender pay gap in agriculture.

(FAO 2022 b)<https://www.fao.org/sustainable-development-goals/indicators/2.3.2/en/>

Also when looking at the Canadian governments response to food insecurity, one has to examine Canada’s domestic response to marginalized populations in Canada, notably Indigenous First Nations, Immigrant communities, and refugee support.

Canada through Statistics Canada has set a tracking page on how Canada measures its march to SDG 2 internally at

<https://www144.statcan.gc.ca/sdg-odd/goal-objectif02-eng.htm>

However, the data is lacking and in many cases the sub targets, while stated, have old or no data posted. Readers should continue to track these pages and insist more data is posted and that progress on indigenous populations be added to the 2.3 tracking page.

Food Secure Canada, (FSC) a Canadian Non-Profit also tracks this at <https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/indigenous-food-sovereignty-eng.pdf>

And states: Food insecurity rates in the territories are well above the national Canadian average: 46.8% in Nunavut and 24.1% in the Northwest Territories⁵

They recommend: Respect and implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which includes the principle of free and informed consent, and the right to approve or disapprove incursions onto Indigenous land. Recognize the fourth jurisdiction of government: First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance structures, alongside municipal, provincial/territorial and federal governments of Canada. Where applicable, respect the sovereignty promised at the time of treaty signing. Implement and/or establish a timeline of implementation with sufficient funding for all 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Work with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples to ensure they have more sovereignty over the foods they eat and are guaranteed access to traditional land-based foods and fishing and hunting rights. Ensure country and traditional foods are valued and acknowledged in the national food policy as healthy, nourishing and culturally significant.

(FSC 2022 a) p.5-6

Against Canada's government contributions to both the ODA and WFP, one must also look at the profit Canadian Agricultural and Food Supply Chain and Distribution Corporations have made from global food insecurity and the price of food to local folks. Such corporations are often called 'big agro' or "big food". They are often accused of growing or purchasing food and sending it to the best paying markets and countries and ignoring local hunger including the folks who grow the food under contract. Their interest is to maximize profit not feed the poor. They are considered the opposite of food sovereignty. Their food distribution to the best paying countries, communities and neighborhoods can result in "food deserts and "food mirages".

A food desert is an urban area in which it is difficult to buy affordable or good-quality fresh food.

(Oxford 2022)

A food mirage is where **grocery stores are plentiful but prices are beyond the means of low-income households**, (National Library of Medicine 2022)

These deserts and mirages can be found all over the world including Canada and are an indicator of lack of adequate food distribution on a planet where enough food is produced today to feed everyone (UN News 2019)

The Right to Food and Food as a public utility versus For Profit Enterprise

The right to adequate food is realized when every man, woman and child, alone or in community with others, has the physical and economic access at all times to adequate food or means for its procurement. – General Comment 12 (Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, CESCR, 1999). (UN FAO 1999)

Before the COVID Pandemic five "Big Agro & Food" companies controlled gigantic percentages of world food production and distribution

- 3 Firms control 90% of Global Grain Trade -Cargill, Bunge, ADM
- 4 Firms control 50% of seeds -Dupont, Bayer (Monsanto), Syngenta, Limagrain
- 5 Firms control 75% agrochemicals - BASF, Bayer (Monsanto), Dow, Dupont, Syngenta
- All cater to: big industrial farm firms, costly, ignore small scale needs

(Oxfam International June 2011)

In the USA, 4% of farm owners own almost 50% of farm land (Oxfam 2016)

For example, take Cargill,. **Cargill, Incorporated** is an American privately held global food corporation based

in Minnetonka, Minnesota, and incorporated in Wilmington, Delaware.^{[2][3][4]} Founded in 1865, it is the largest privately held corporation in the United States in terms of revenue.^[5] If it were a public company, it would rank, as of 2015, number 15 on the Fortune 500, behind McKesson and ahead of AT&T.^[6] Cargill has frequently been the subject of criticism related to the environment, human rights, finance, and other ethical considerations. It is 88% owned by the Cargill Family (

It operates in Africa, Asia, Pacific, Oceania, India, Pakistan, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, North America in Meat processing plants and grains.

Cargill reports revenues of \$114.695 billion and earnings of \$3.103 billion in 2018.^[7] , Employing over 166,000 employees, in 66 countries, It is responsible for 25% of all United States grain exports. (Wikipedia 2022)

And in Canada? Cargill Limited, also known as Cargill Canada, is the Canadian subsidiary of the Minneapolis-based multinational agribusiness giant Cargill. Depending on the source, it employs approximately 8,000 or 4,000 people across Canada..

Headquarters: Winnipeg, Founded: 1928, **Parent organization:** Cargill, Subsidiaries: Cargill AgHorizons Canada, Watson Foods, Sun Valley Foods, Tri-Way Fertilizers Ltd. (Cargil 2022)

In Ontario, A Farmer can contract with Cargill to sell their crop at any time locking in a futures contract from their kitchen laptop.

Across Canada, founded in 1882, George Weston Limited has become one of Canada’s largest publicly traded companies. Through its operating subsidiaries, it is one of North America’s largest food processing and distribution groups.

Weston’s Companies include Loblaws, NoFrills, Dominion, Fortinos, Zehrs, Your Independent Grocer, Provigo, Atlantic Superstore, Dominion, Independent City Market, Freshmart, Valu-mart, ARZ Fine Foods, Real Canadian Wholesale Club, T&T Supermarket, Real Canadian Liquorstore, Real Canadian Superstore, Maxi, Extra Foods, Pharmaprix and Shoppers Drug Mart.

Their Stock Market financials are huge for 2022

Quarterly financials (CAD)	Jun 2022	Y/Y
Revenue	12.98B	2.71%
Net income	644M	445.76%
Diluted EPS	4.32	517.14%
Net profit margin	4.96%	433.33%

Source: George Weston stock quote 4 October 2022)

Note Weston’s net profit margin increase year over year June 2022 over June 2021 of over 430%

Canadian Food Corporations have no problem consolidating wealth

In 2019 Oxfam recorded: the World's 26 richest people own as much as poorest 50%, says Oxfam. The Charity called for a 1% wealth tax, saying it would raise enough to educate every child not in school (Oxfam 2019)

During the COVID Pandemic, The world’s ten richest men more than doubled their fortunes from \$700 billion to \$1.5 trillion —at a rate of \$15,000 per second or \$1.3 billion a day— during the first two years of a pandemic that has seen the incomes of 99 percent of humanity fall and over 160 million more people forced into poverty.

“If these ten men were to lose 99.999 percent of their wealth tomorrow, they would still be richer than 99 percent of all the people on this planet,” said Oxfam International’s Executive Director Gabriela Bucher. “They now have six times more wealth than the poorest 3.1 billion people.” (Oxfam 2022)

In Canada, and some parts of the world water is a public utility service available to all with the exception of remaining First Nations still in need.

Is their hope that Food could be a public utility?

Oxfam recommends a New Global Governance, A redistribution of power: From the handful that control to the millions that produce including women.(Oxfam 2011)

It has recommended a 1% tax to assist in the redistribution of wealth and the education of girls (Oxfam 2011)

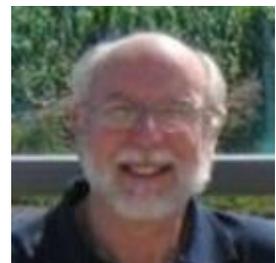
And a Growing Culture cites: **communities know best how to address the problems facing them. The dominant development narrative is that outside actors (like non profits, foreign governments, and philanthropists) can better define both the problems and the solutions, while treating communities as beneficiaries of this process. But what holds communities back is not a lack of knowledge, ingenuity, or training. It's the systemic oppression and lack of agency that the dominant food system affords them. (A Growing Culture 2022)**

While Canada supports some local small holder agricultural initiatives, it does not support changing the redistribution of power and wealth in the corporate profitmaking food system. It does not attack the big food corporation and demand reform of their food growing, purchasing or distribution systems

Conclusion.

In the authors view, Canada plays the middle of the road but in doing so plays both sides of the street. On one hand the federal government consistently is a top 5 donor to the World Food Program, but on the other hand, it has never attained the UN goal of 0.7% of Gross National Income in its Overseas Development Assistance budget unlike several counties. In fact, it remains low at less than half. Nor does Canada support changing the way Canadian and other rich countries' big agricultural and food corporations make excess profit while millions go hungry and children fail to thrive or in many cases die.

The way forward is clear. It is time for Canada to cross the road and stay on the side of the United Nation's ODA goal, the WFP emergency fund, Oxfam's call to end corporate greed support and to assist decision making control changing from the handful to the many.



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Global Food Security and Sri Lankan Context

By Asha Thrishali

Introduction

Ensuring food security is a crucial component of human life. The need for quality food and availability for accessing food is a highly concerned area in the world. The demand of ensuring global food security was a matter of strategic importance in developed and developing

countries since the cold war (Barker & Samad, n.d). However, with the covid 19 pandemic, demand for essential food items increasing significantly since the limited access to essential food. Consequently, as a global threat, all countries are facing the heightening of food insecurities. Therefore, examining food security from a global, national, and household perspective

has become a highly prioritized area in the contemporary world. When focusing on the holistic idea of food security, it is identified as the condition that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs to live an active and healthy life (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2020). With that perspective, it should be understood that food security is not only access to quality food but also availability, utility, accessibility, and stability are included in food security concept. Therefore, ensuring food security in all the above aspects is essential and with all the ideas, this paper examines the overview of global food security from global, national, and household perspectives with special reference to the Sri Lankan context.

Global Context of Food Security

According to the Global Food Security Index of 2022, the overall scores performed by all regions; with indications of affordability, availability, quality/safety and sustainability, and adaptation of food can be identified as follows.

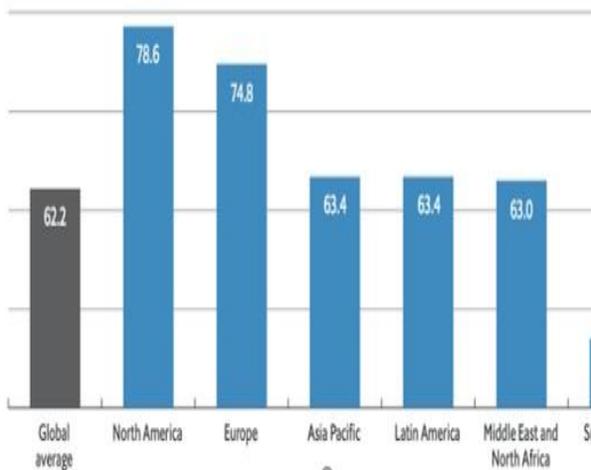


Table 1: Overall Global Food Security Index 2022 scores, by region

Global Food Security Index, 2022

According to the data, while North American countries have achieved the highest score in ensuring food security, the least developed countries of Sub-Saharan Africa have achieved 47%. That reflects social and political barriers in particular countries to access may dampen the availability of food. However, based on 11 years, the index highlights that the food system has been weakening over the years, especially in 2020-22, including the covid-19 pandemic and high commodity prices (Global Food Security Index, 2022). Consequently, this context highlights how food insecurities have influenced to main components of human life including economic security, health security, and other significant security elements which can be identified under the human security concept.

High inflation is another important factor that should be concerned. As a result of covid 19 pandemic, domestic high inflation remains around the world, and the price of food has rapidly increased when comparing previous years. Many countries are experiencing double-digit inflation while inflation in high-income countries is also increasing sharply (Food Security Update, 2022). For further understanding, the below chart shows data on high inflation in almost all low and middle-income countries, low-income countries, lower-middle-income countries, and upper-middle-income countries.

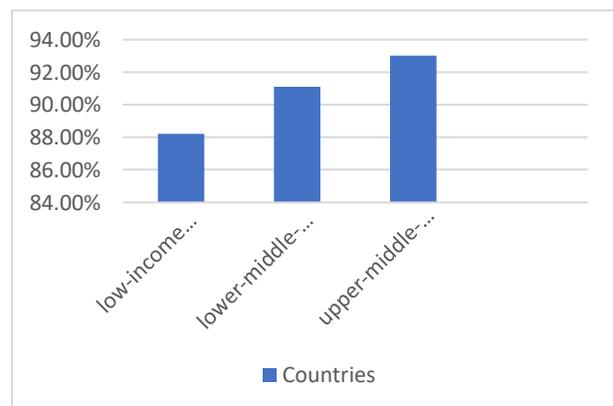


Table 2: Inflation Percentage of Countries

Source: Food Security Update, 2022

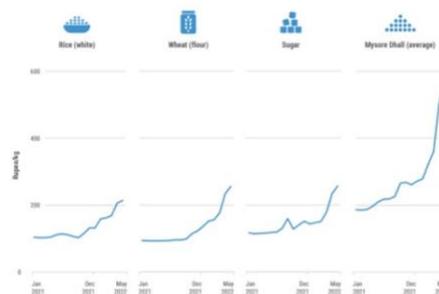
According to the above data, it can be seen that all countries are generally experiencing the worst economic challenges and as a result of that food security has been subjected to threat.

Food Security in Sri Lankan Context

When concerning the Sri Lankan context in ensuring food security, two periods in which Sri Lanka has experienced its worst period of meeting its basic requirement of ensuring food security can be identified. During the covid 19 pandemic, Sri Lanka; especially in rural areas faced many challenges to access daily consumption of food due to restrictions. And also, the decisions taken by the government have severely impacted food security in Sri Lanka. As an example, a significant tax reduction package in 2019 has meant Sri Lanka's debt burden has rapidly become unsustainable (Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Food Security Crisis, 2022). Due to the debt burden, Sri Lanka is experiencing multidimensional crises, compounded by food insecurity, vulnerable livelihoods, shortage of essential medical substances, and rising protection concerns (Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Food Security Crisis, 2022) And also, since the import of chemical fertilizers was banned without adequate preparation in 2021, Sri Lankan farmers are in difficulties in engaging agricultural activities. As Sri Lanka is primarily an agriculture-based country, with over 80% of its food producers being small-scale farmers (Gunaratne et al., n.d) and 9% of the total population in Sri Lanka are farmers, and 8.1 million people are engaged either in agriculture (Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Food Security Crisis, 2022), farmers have become more vulnerable and their grievances are directly connected to Sri Lankan development. And also,

the fishery sector in Sri Lanka is vulnerable to climate change impacts, and coastal and marine resource management (Gunaratne et al., n.d). Accordingly, the above crisis has severely affected food security in Sri Lanka. Price escalation of essential food items is another major factor that has influenced daily consumption patterns in Sri Lanka. From June 2021 to May 2022, the fluctuating pattern of price escalation of essential food items can be seen in the below figure.

Figure 1: Price Escalation of Essential Food Items (June 2021- May 2022)



Source: Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Food Security Crisis, 2022

Figure 1: Price Escalation of Essential Food Items (June 2021- May 2022)

Source: Humanitarian Needs and Priorities Food Security Crisis, 2022

The above figure has reflected how people in Sri Lanka experiencing its worst economic challenges and how their rights of accessing food have been violated. As a result of inadequate access to food, children in Sri Lanka have also faced many challenges and their education has also collapsed. Especially, UNICEF has said that Sri Lanka has become the second highest in child malnutrition in South Asia (Nilar, 2022). Now, it can be comprehensively understood the situation of Sri Lanka in terms of ensuring food security and how

it has expanded to many areas such as economic, health, education, agriculture, and other sectors. Therefore, a need for proper attention to solutions for this crisis should be discussed.

For a Better Future

In this worse situation, Sri Lanka has to take steps for addressing these issues since this directly threatens human security. Especially, according to the concept of “Food Sovereignty”, there should be much attention as an alternative development path in policy dialogues while it already applies in development practice in a country (Gunaratne et al., 2021). President Ranil Wickremasinghe also expressed his ideas including a call for a national

plan to ensure food security and nutrition in Sri Lanka (Kotelawala, 2022). And also, Sri Lanka should promote self-sufficiency, and accordingly, the government can encourage domestic agriculture, which reintroduced and encouraged the concept of small family farming and urban agrobusiness (Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2020). Finally, it is concluded that as a developing country, since Sri Lanka should be interdependent with international assistance in this situation, the dual collective approach with international and national contributions is highly needed to ensure food security in Sri Lanka.



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Global Food Security

By Sarah Hettiarachchi

Today, global food systems are highly susceptible to food safety risks, economic shocks, price volatility, and natural disasters and pandemics, such as the novel corona virus (COVID-19). The COVID-19 pandemic which was spreading worldwide and creating disastrous impacts, made nations closed their international borders for passengers and restricted the movement of commodities, which led to difficulty in self-sustenance for the countries that rely on imports

to fulfil their food supplies. The trade barriers and supply chain bottlenecks increased food insecurity and hunger by restricting producers' access to agriculture inputs, reducing stability of supplies. It has also created uncertainties and unexpected inefficiencies in the global food supply chain. Unavailability of raw material, labour shortage, complicated trade restrictions and transportation restrictions are amongst the few challenges on the supply side of food supply chains. Policy

transformations and proper coordination are crucial to develop a robust food supply chain. This article wishes to highlight how Sri Lanka is handling its food security and nutrition crisis.

Global Food Security and Nutrition Crisis: Case of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is struggling with the worst economic crisis that it has ever experienced since its independence in 1948. Prices of most food items have been on a steady rise since the last quarter of 2021 and reached a record high in August 2022, with the year-on-year food inflation rate at nearly 94 percent, further limiting the purchasing power of households. According to the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) under the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), food insecurity means the lack of regular access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food for expected growth and healthy life. The World Food Programme (WFP) has stated that about 6.3 million people, or over 30 percent of Sri Lanka's population, are "food insecure" and require humanitarian assistance. Of these, around 5.3 million people are either reducing meals or skipping meals, and at least 65,600 people are severely food insecure. This situation is likely to worsen as the crisis unfolds in the island nation due to higher inflation, loss of livelihood, weak purchasing power, and an acute shortage of essential items like food, medicine, cooking gas, and fuel.

Further, the FAO has analyzed that the agricultural sector which employs 30 percent of Sri Lankans, requires interventions to improve production capacity to ultimately boost the resilience of the agricultural sector, reduce import requirements amid shortages of foreign currency reserves and avert the rise in hunger. Although the agrochemical ban was lifted in November 2021, the effect of the ban is likely to persist in the medium term. The 35% drop in fruit and vegetable and 50-60% drop in paddy and maize production during the period of 2020–2021 are indicative of future decline. Tea, the largest foreign exchange-earning crop saw a decline of almost 50% as a result. Since mid 2020, food prices worldwide

have been consistently rising. The pandemic, and subsequently, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, has exacerbated food inflation and increased the cost of importing food. Similarly, increased crude oil prices as well as the disruption in fertilizer supplies have raised fertilizer prices. Sri Lanka's dwindling foreign currency reserves in the aftermath of reduced tourist inflows due to the pandemic, further compounded by tax cuts has led to a precarious fiscal position. In this backdrop, importing food and fertilizer is a challenge for Sri Lanka.

Challenges and Way Forward

Arguably, the nation's hold ample food to feed everybody (Udumale et al.,2020) and sometimes face food shortages because of critical circumstances for food production, eco-logical and labor issues, supply chain disruptions, economic shocks, like in the case of Sri Lanka, and pandemics (Food Security Information Network, 2020; Bui et al.,2020). COVID-19 will act as a turning point for global food systems to be sustainable. The key drivers of acute food insecurity include sharp declines in food production, conflict, weather, natural disasters, economic imbalances, and more. (Hamilton et al.,2020). The crisis is affecting food security systems in different ways; that is, availability (food supply), access (reach of food to people), utilization (nutrients intake), and stability (future fulfillment of needs).

Amid these dire scenarios, there are some positive signs, including innovations in social programs and effective collaborations amongst government authorities, and experts in the industry that have helped make food more accessible. Technological innovations, digital technologies, and e-commerce have helped reshape the food trade and supply chain systems, thus managing the associated risks and building resilience in food systems.

Cardwell and Ghaz-alian (2020), Udmale et al. (2020), and Barichello (2020) suggest various strategies to manage food security, including close monitoring of food prices, ensuring smooth logistics of the regional agri-food supply chain, and an efficient supply system to fulfil food demand. They also recommend protecting the susceptible population and offering employment to migrants, regulating the wild food markets to curb the source of disease, ensuring food access, developing 'green channels' for smooth and fast food delivery, and promoting digital technologies to cope with the crisis. Adoption of digital technologies such as blockchain technology, artificial intelligence, and the internet can lead to applications like smart farming, digital

marketplaces, real-time information availability, and digital supply chain traceability, which may lead to reduced food insecurity (Economic Research Institute for ASEAN & East Asia, 2021). Technological innovations can address food security by enhancing productivity, improving access to finance, and managing the environment and resources.

Arguably, in the case of Sri Lanka, a country which is richly endowed with natural capital, however, where its economy significantly depends upon, a long-term strategy of combining climate-smart agriculture with nature-based solutions enhanced by the adoption of digital technology is, perhaps, the best way forward.



Sarah Hettiaratchi is currently attached to an independent, non-partisan think tank based in Sri Lanka with a strong network of global partners. She has a strong interest on foreign affairs, international security, economics, trade policies and current global issues.

Sarah has a BA (Hons.) in International Business from University of Greenwich, UK and has obtained a Master's degree in China Studies from Zhejiang University, China and a LL.M in Chinese Law from the Southwest University of Political Science and Law (SWUPL), Chongqing, China.

“The Link: Food Insecurity/Security, Climate Change, And Gender Equality”

By Natalia Mercado Salazar

As a recent post-graduate from the International Development program at Centennial College, food insecurity/security, climate change, and gender equality have been my major passions and topics of interest; and in my opinion, these are the root causes of many major problems around the world, and most important we, as international

development professionals, most keep an eye on the link between this three.

During the 3rd semester of the program, we focused on how hunger and food insecurity are strongly related. The major problem with the link between hunger and food insecurity relies on access to food and the quality of food. Access to

food is uncertain in many areas around the world or even, communities are going through periods without food, and if there is access to any type of food, it might not be the most nutritious food (Food deserts), but it will be cheap, with enough calories but missing essential nutrients. These factors can lead to physiological changes, overweight, undernutrition, and obesity as consequences of hunger and food insecurity.

The aim of the Sustainable Development Goal to leave no one behind with Goal #2 Zero Hunger, has been neglected by climate change (natural disasters), human-induced disasters (climate change, war), political instability, protracted crisis, economic crisis, and balance of trade, and also, monoculture export production. Fundamental international organizations such as Oxfam and FAO have warned that the first challenge to end hunger is the alarming slow global progress to tackle this issue, which is getting slower due to the increasing global population.

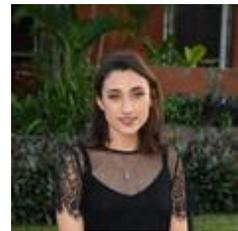
Secondly, there is a lack of political will, it is time that governments use actively the resources and policies needed to make it happen in matters that will contribute to eradicating hunger, such as scrapping biofuels mandates and incentives that increase hunger, creating frameworks and mechanisms to control the big multinationals that own the food of the world, create transparent institutions to promote the adequate environment

so local farmers and food producers can access to green fertilizers, training in sustainable agriculture and clean energy. The governments have the power to influence the capitalist system that is no longer working or allowing any type of development and instead is taking resources away from people and enriching the already rich.

But I believe that there is still hope. Women produce between 60 and 80 percent of the food in developing countries and half of the world's food (IDB, 2021). However, it is only recently that their crucial role as producers and providers of food and their decisive contribution to household food security has begun to be recognized. Therefore, as a young Latina woman, and migrant, the most important thing I have learned in this course is the crucial role of women and gender equality in transforming the Food System into a multifunctional, localized, and sustainable system, where the government and communities get involve increasing the knowledge and institutional environment to achieve sustainable rural development and as a consequence influence the urban areas to turn the big cities into green and inclusive places. During the Rural Development Class in the last semester of the program, the idea that resonated the most is that food security and sustainable agriculture are tools that we can use to tackle the climate crisis symptoms that our planet is facing as well as issues like poverty and global hunger. I truly encourage Development

professionals and workers to deepen their knowledge of the connection and impacts of food insecurity/security, climate change, and gender equality, and focus their efforts to work on projects that seek to increase knowledge, skills, and access to resources to live a more meaningful and harmonious life with nature, because, as J. Lovelock said, everything in nature is connected:

“Gaia, as I see her, is no doting mother tolerant of misdemeanors, nor is she some fragile and delicate damsel in danger from brutal mankind. She is stern and tough, always keeping the world warm and comfortable for those who obey the rules, but ruthless in her destruction of those who transgress” (Lovelock, 1974).



Natalia Mercado Salazar is a recent Post-graduate in International Development at Centennial College. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations. Natalia has worked in the U.S.A. Consulate Applicant Service Centers as part of the Nonimmigrant Visa Department for over three years, and currently works as a Business Development Intern at CASA Foundation for International Development. She is a highly creative, multilingual and results-driven professional with a passion for the environment, gender equality, and human rights

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ABOUT SPUR CHANGE...

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The program aims to increase their capacities, opportunities, and contribution to public engagement on global issues related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly gender equality.

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Thanking Note...

This to convey a grateful thanking and appreciation to all the authors of academia from all around the world who committed to write and collaborate to spread the awareness on Global Food Security/ Insecurity in order to awake the future generation about the potential crisis ongoing.

