

Extreme Poverty: Food Insecurity in Africa, Current & Potential Solutions

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Food insecurity remains prominent in most regions of Africa due to the lack of efforts from the African government. University professors Ikubolajeh B. Logan, Francis Y. Owusu, and Ezekiel Kalipeni studied the progress of potential African development and related solutions to food insecurity. The most notable statement regarding relief from food insecurity is directed toward the inaction of the African government. Logan et al. contend that it is “not sustainable to rely on a neoliberal agenda for poverty alleviation; likewise, they impugn the mechanisms of global trade for extending colonialism into the twenty-first century, while relying on the WTO, UN, World Bank, IMF, and NGOs to extricate Africans from poverty...” (2012). These organizations can only offer so much aid, thus necessitating more involvement from the African government. Throughout their briefing—along with the opinions of other scholars—the authors outlined various solutions to African hunger. This brief also suggests unconventional solutions, specifically it “suggest[s] empirical, theoretical and conceptual contributions that interrogate existing scholarship and policy prescriptions ... meaningful for addressing the poverty dilemma for people ‘on the ground’ in Africa” (Logan et al., 2012). These solutions explore the political, administrative, and developmental issues in Africa. Further, this brief suggests that a “state failure in post-independence Africa” has occurred, insinuating that Africa is incapable of being an independent state (Logan et al., 2012). Regarding additional solutions, the authors recommended rearranging states geographically to fuel food insecurity relief (Logan et al., 2012). According to Mehretu “a paradigm shift [is needed] for redemptive and emancipatory regrouping of the peoples of Ethiopia as well as those of the Horn of Africa to avert the regions slide into nihilism and to advance compatible cultural and economic geographies for the entire Horn” (as cited in Logan et al., 2012) This rearrangement would help distribute the population, work, wealth, and food in Africa (Logan et al., 2012). Lastly, fixing developmental issues

regarding Africa's resources and management would provide aid in hunger relief. This essay will explore each of these potential remedies in greater detail below.

The United Nations (UN) is an intergovernmental organization that strives to preserve international peace and security. Significantly, the UN has referred to Africans as "doomed people." In particular, the UN's concerns about Africa about the region's economic development have failed to match its sizable population growth. Similar to the scholars mentioned above, the UN ascribed responsibility to the African government to aid the continent's population. Primarily, the organization noted that "... no meaningful economic growth can occur in an undemocratic environment and without adequate infrastructure in place" (United Nations [UN]). Therefore, the African government must administer policies to ensure both social and economic development (UN). As a result, this change would create a healthier environment allowing room to grow out of the ongoing hunger crisis. The UN then suggested elevating rural and agricultural development as well as improving infrastructure. This includes early warning and food distribution systems (UN). This change would make Africa healthier, giving them the capability to tackle larger-scale problems. Lastly, the UN recommended defining a more central role for women. African women serve as producers of food and caretakers in African cultures and can serve as managers of natural resources while also entering the workforce. In closing, the UN states that implementing these proposals would better position Africans "...to effectively achieve freedom from hunger in a manner that is socially, economically, political and environmentally sustainable [while] enhanc[ing] the international standing of the continent." Cumulatively, the UN's proposals are rather incremental in scale but could ultimately result in more widespread change.

The next solution focuses on the involvement of other nations in remedying Africa's food insecurity issues. Specifically noting how the United States news handles topics on African hunger and how that information affects audiences' decision-making. Lauren Kogen, the author of *Not Up for Debate: U.S. News Coverage of Hunger in Africa*, insists that "News stories can suggest ways that audiences interpret a problem, its causes, and its potential solutions, and therefore may support one particular political action, politician, or party." Therefore, if African hunger news stories in the U.S. are framed as political issues, they may get more attention from the international community. Through analysis, it is evident that U.S. news coverage of African hunger issues only reports on problems rather than featuring potential solutions. Kogen found that articles "either did not address causes or solutions that could be used for U.S. public sphere discussion or political engagement, or they did address such solutions but indicated that the solutions were not actually feasible." That said, if solutions were addressed in the news, they mostly aimed at Africa rather than flagging opportunities for the U.S. or the rest of the international community to get involved (Kogen). Audiences typically believe what they hear on the news, meaning that if solutions are not presented, consumers will not be aware of them. Kogen goes on to remark, "By excluding solutions and debate, these stories define the public sphere by saying that this is not a topic for public sphere discussion, implying there is no problem solving to be done." As such, the U.S. news strategy as well as other international news needs to be reformed to educate the audience about solutions to African hunger rather than continuing to avoid such possibilities. While reporters themselves may be unaware of potential solutions to large-scale hunger crises, more care can be taken in encouraging audiences to find ways to take action.

Concerning current solutions, non-profit organizations such as Action Against Hunger (AAH) and Save the Children (STC) provide aid to Africa. According to its website, AAH is a more extensive non-profit with more than 40 years of experience and works with the most vulnerable populations. Their role is to help families prevent the cycle of poverty and locate means of recovery. This non-profit partners with communities and parents to educate and change behaviors as well as prevent malnutrition. In addition, AAH has food security and livelihood programs that “aim to empower vulnerable communities to improve their access to food, income, and markets [as well as to] train and build the capacity of small-scale farmers to increase production, and safely store and market their crops.” This mentoring program directly aids persons involved in humanitarian emergencies and hunger crises. STC works similarly to provide direct aid to those suffering in Africa, with the organization’s mission noting that their “frontline health teams are working across the continent to deliver emergency hunger and nutrition programs to save vulnerable children.” In addition, STC screens children for malnutrition using a mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) measurement. This process generates an immediate answer which correlates to fast-acting solutions. In terms of outreach, STC encourages the public to donate or sponsor a child throughout their life and primarily focuses on African countries that need the most aid, including South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Niger.

Through exploring potential remedies, it is evident that solutions to the African extreme poverty crises are obtainable. However, considering the inappropriate inaction of the African government and international communities, the process has been slow to start. The views of scholars and various actors help identify multiple ways out of this crisis, however, the African government must take the first step forward.

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