

The Crisis We Can Still Avert

Agriculture losses in 2022 could tip 4x more people into extreme vulnerability over next 6 months. Partner with CARE to stop it.

The issue

The escalating global food crisis has gotten so extreme that as of September, **205.1 million people urgently need food assistance just to survive**.¹ Impacts from the Ukraine crisis on nitrogen fertilizer availability for farmers worldwide and skyrocketing costs of fuel means **significantly less food could be available over the next 6 months**, driving **4 times more people into extreme hunger**.² CARE has launched a \$250M campaign to invest in climate-smart food production and better storage today, change government food systems for good, and respond to those on the brink of starvation now. With your support, we can avert crisis if we act fast.

Why now?

The immediate repercussions of war in Ukraine i.e., shortages of fertilizer and fuel are resulting in **astronomical price increases** worldwide. Compounding the effects of climate change like prolonged drought and excessive flooding, a global pandemic and conflict, small-scale farmers in poor countries simply do not have the buffer to withstand exponential costs. As a result, their families' nutrition suffers the consequences. For people living in already fragile contexts, the economic crisis is directly tied to hunger with little middle ground. It means **they cannot afford seeds nor fertilizer to produce healthy agricultural yields, storage is scarce or vulnerable to spoilage, and fuel costs prohibit them from getting their crops to market. We must support global farmers now to ensure they are able to plant crops this planting season so there is something to harvest in the months ahead.**

If we can curb the shock to the food production system and build resilience quickly, we may be able to prevent further decline. As the crisis in Ukraine continues, droughts persist around the world, and climate shocks like the floods in Pakistan continue, food production will remain low. **The hunger crisis will worsen in 2023 and beyond if we don't act now.**

Who's impacted most?

- The burden of lost production is likely to fall hardest on **people who are already living in extreme poverty**.³ People who are already close to the edge of their safety net, or who have already started to miss meals, are the first who will stop eating altogether as prices rise and supplies fall. The fertilizer crisis adds to a fuel price increase and the largest cost of living increase in a generation.⁴
- Gender inequality will play a significant role in this crisis. While responsible for families' meals, women often eat last and least. Based on current trends in gender equality and food security, **442.7 million of the 826 million food insecure will be women and girls**. To put that in perspective, that equates to the entire population of the United States.
- This food crisis will hit some countries harder than others. **53 countries and territories in the world are already facing food stress and food crisis**.⁵ The additional fuel crisis and cost of living increases will

¹ <https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC%202022%20MYU%20Final.pdf>

² The UN estimates that the crisis in Ukraine will push at least 95 million more people into extreme poverty. That is a total of 826 million people living below \$1.90 per day.

³ For the purposes of this proposal, we are using the number of people who already live in extreme poverty as people who are likely to be most likely to miss meals because of reduced agriculture production.

⁴ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/07/1122842>

⁵ <https://www.fsinplatform.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/GRFC%202022%20MYU%20Final.pdf>

further burden people in systems that are already struggling to deliver food to people who need it most.

- People from historically marginalized groups are hardest hit by every crisis—and the food crisis will be no different. **Women, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, and people who are ethnic or religious minorities** in their own communities and countries will suffer the greatest.

How do we avert this crisis?

We have the opportunity to shift the impacts of this crisis—to make sure that people can access the safety nets to cope with food crisis, the agriculture inputs to grow more food, and the decision-making power and market access to buy the nutritious food they need. To ensure that it is not catastrophic for millions of people around the world, we must:

- **Move fast:** Ensure that all emergency investments in food security are implemented with speed, transparency, and flexibility.
- **Grow more food now:** All investments must prioritize resilience efforts alongside traditional emergency food assistance, supporting small-scale farmers to produce sufficient, nutritious food for their local communities.
- **Invest in gender equality in the food system.** Women not only eat last and least, they also farm last and least because of unequal access to inputs, markets and education. This damages the whole food system and lowers food production around the world. Investing in gender equality will increase food production and reduce the number of people who face food crisis.
- **Invest in the future:** These investments must also include support for sustainable agriculture practices that support healthy communities and are less dependent upon chemical inputs, foreign fuel, and global supply chains.
- **Act across sectors:** No one actor can meet the incredible crisis we are facing. All actors—from governments to multi-lateral organizations to private sector companies must invest resources in averting this crisis, or risk kicking off the worst famine we have seen globally.

CARE's full-scale response

Our immediate response to the hunger crisis bridges the full spectrum of food and nutrition security:

- **Growing food and resilience:** our Farmer Field and Business schools support small-scale producers with more efficient farming practices, fertilizer alternatives, and safer food storage to ensure there is a next harvest.
- **Changing food systems through advocacy:** CARE works with private sector partners and donors to invest more in climate-smart agriculture, and advocates with governments to prevent repeat crises.
- **Saving lives now:** our Humanitarian Assistance team is on the ground providing immediate, vital food supplies and cash vouchers, access to job opportunities, and prevention of life-threatening malnutrition.

Funding need

With \$250 million, CARE will rally a full-scale response covering 17 countries. CARE will prioritize countries greatly affected by grain, fuel and fertilizer shortages from Ukraine and Russia and global price increases as a result that are tipping nutrition levels to alarming levels. We will advocate for better food systems and provide farmer support and/or emergency food and nutrition assistance to: Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Annex – humanizing the crisis

Zimbabwe. No seeds to plant. The people in the CARE group training in Mutare said that they won't be able to plant this coming rainy season if they cannot get help with seeds and fertilizer. They were not able to harvest much last year because of drought, and now fertilizer costs have gone from \$20 per bag to \$50 in the last six months. They expect it to spike even higher as planting season comes in and the rains start. Fertilizer prices always rise in rainy season. Godfrey says, "We hope it will be better next year, but we just don't know. Even if we have good rains, most people won't have money to farm this year. They have no animals to sell and no seeds to plant."

Somalia. Forced to migrate. Hali, a 70-year-old mother of 10 children says, "My whole life I was a pastoralist. Due to this prolonged drought in our village, my herd was decimated. I used to have 150 goats and 30 camels, now I am only left with 10 weak goats. I fled the drought and relocated to another place to raise my family."

Somalia. Gender-based violence. Millions of people have been displaced resulting in high levels of family separation that is, inadvertently, exposing women and girls to Gender-Based Violence (GBV). As families struggle to cope with the current drought situation, women are taking on more responsibilities as female-headed households increase. Women are responsible for 90% of preparing and buying food. With the onset of the drought, Women's businesses have been adversely affected forcing many to lose their sources of income.

Habiba is among the thousands of Somali women who have faced emotional and psychological abuse. As a divorced mother and sole breadwinner of 9 children, Habiba encountered stigmatization at the IDP camp she fled to due to her marital status and as a result was ostracized. "The clan fights and destruction of my life left me very scared. I lost all my belongings, and even though I settled at this camp finding food and providing for my family remained very difficult. I was forced to go out and beg for food."

Ethiopia. Catastrophic hunger. Sumaya, a 32-year-old mother who lives with her four children in a displacement camp in the Somali region of Ethiopia, is one of the millions facing catastrophic levels of hunger. "No water, no food, a hopeless life," she said. "Above all, my children are starving. They are on the verge of death. Unless they get some food, I'm afraid they will die."