



SDG2: Zero Hunger

Target: 2.1 of the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) states: “By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, **nutritious** and **sufficient** food all year round”

Assessing Nutrition

Before we look into the relationship between climate change and nutrients, we need to understand nutrition in different contexts. It is well established that in settings with limited access to food where the fear of hunger is the norm, people lack essential nutrients in their diets that are needed to sustain healthy lives. Limited healthy foods are the main focus of SDG2. [“Each day, 25,000 people, including more than 10,000 children, die from hunger and related](#)

[causes. Some 854 million people worldwide are estimated to be undernourished, and high food prices may drive another 100 million into poverty and hunger.”¹](#)

This devastating reality is one of the world’s biggest challenges to overcome, but it is not limited to low-income countries. In most high-income countries food is accessible all times of the day. “Hunger” seems to be a distant concept. In reality, access to food means shopping at supermarkets or eating in nice restaurants on a regular basis. **Access to food does not exclude food poverty.** Much of the food in developed nations is heavily processed and filled with chemicals and toxins that are lacking in nutrition and are not beneficial to our health and well-being. They are easy to make “on the go” meals that cause more harm than good, resulting in nations developing high levels of obesity among their populations and suffering high levels of mortality from numerous chronic medical conditions. Inflation, lack of education and environmental inequalities drive this health crisis that causes vitamin deficiencies even in settings where food is available. In short, our bodies are hungry for **adequate** foods that benefit our bodies and mind.



[TNR 2017: How Fast Food Chains Supersized Inequality](#)

Climate Change

By the year 2050 there will be 9.7 billion people on the planet meaning that the amount of food available will need to significantly increase in order to feed everyone.

[“Floods, droughts, more intense hurricanes, heatwaves and wildfires can drive down crop yields, destroy livestock, and interfere with the transport of food.”²](#)

Climate change affects our food systems due to extreme weather patterns that in the past occurred infrequently but are now becoming a new norm across the globe. This extreme weather is wreaking havoc on the production, distribution, and quality of food.

[“About 800 million people worldwide lack food. Many more have deficiencies in essential nutrients. 76% of the world’s population gets most of its daily nutrients from plants—yet climate change is already causing droughts and flooding that can destroy staple food crops. If extra CO2 in the atmosphere makes those crops less nutritious, it will be even harder to feed the world’s growing population.”](#)²

Given the already bad state of global access to nutritious food that provides us with the proper nutrients, we have to extend our discussion and be proactive about the impact of climate change on our food. We need to discuss hunger in the midst of the crisis, not solely with the idea of access or a future concept in mind. Climate change is actively affecting the food we eat.



[UN: 2022 Floods in Pakistan](#)

Opportunity for Change

Education and change must occur if we hope to successfully, and sustainably, feed our planet.

Food availability must increase, but this food must also be wholesome, offering the essential nutrients needed to form a healthy diet. Food is a significant part of health and well-being. Reducing meat consumption, switching to more plant-rich diets, and reducing overproduction of highly-processed and sugar-filled foods are some of the most impactful steps that nations can take to address climate change while improving health outcomes through everyday food consumption.

Reducing the amount of food wasted each day must also be a priority if we want to feed billions more people. This helps to avoid deforestation for additional farmland while ensuring that available food is used rather than discarded, thus reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

The existing farmland on this planet must be used to its fullest potential through regenerative agriculture, nutrient management, and food composting as just a few potential solutions.

There is plenty to be done at all stages of the food system. To be most effective, these actions must be taken at local, national, regional, and international levels. Every individual on this planet consumes food to live. Therefore, there is opportunity for each and every one of us to do our part in working towards zero hunger by 2030.

What will you do?

Additional Resources

[No Hunger Infographic from United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)

[Zero Hunger: Why It Matters](#)

References

1. Holmes, J. *Losing 25,000 to hunger every day*. United Nations. Retrieved December 8, 2022. <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/losing-25000-hunger-every-day>
2. *Climate Change & Nutrition*. C-CHANGE | Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Published February 3, 2021. Retrieved December 8, 2022. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/c-change/subtopics/climate-change-nutrition/>