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ADDRESSING NO HUNGER AND ZERO POVERTY: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Nur Azlina Mohamad Zahari
Centre of Foundation Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Cawangan Selangor,
Kampus Dengkil, 43800 Dengkil, Selangor

nurazlinamz@uitm.edu.my

EDITOR: DR. MUHAMMAD AIDIL IBRAHIM

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations provide a comprehensive framework for promoting sustainable development globally, with No Hunger (Goal 2) and Zero Poverty (Goal 1) as fundamental objectives. Despite significant advancements in poverty reduction and food security, substantial challenges persist. Approximately 690 million individuals worldwide suffer from chronic hunger, while over 700 million people live in extreme poverty, surviving on less than \$1.90 per day. The coexistence of hunger and poverty creates cyclical patterns of deprivation that undermine human dignity and impede socioeconomic progress. This article aims to elucidate the complex interplay of factors contributing to hunger and poverty, provide strategic recommendations to address these issues, and

highlight initiatives worldwide that strive toward achieving these ambitious goals.

Factors Perpetuating Hunger and Poverty

The persistent issues of hunger and poverty are deeply rooted in a multifaceted web of contributing factors. At the forefront are inequitable access to resources, stark economic disparities, environmental degradation, and political instability. These primary challenges lay the groundwork for sustained cycles of deprivation and insecurity.

Conflicts and natural disasters significantly exacerbate the conditions of hunger and poverty. For instance, in Syria, the protracted conflict has not only devastated the economy but also displaced millions, severely limiting access to food and basic necessities. Similarly, in Yemen, years of war have culminated in one of the most severe humanitarian crises, with widespread food insecurity and malnutrition affecting a substantial portion of the population.

Environmental degradation and the escalating impacts of climate change further compound these challenges. In Bangladesh, frequent flooding and cyclones wreak havoc on agricultural productivity and infrastructure, leaving communities vulnerable to food shortages and economic instability. Sub-Saharan Africa faces similar adversities, with prolonged droughts undermining agricultural outputs and



Image 1: A displaced family in the Al-Hol camp in Syria
(Source: The United Nations News, 2022)

exacerbating food scarcity and economic hardship in nations such as Ethiopia and Kenya. Moreover, inadequate access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and viable economic opportunities significantly aggravates the plight of marginalized communities.

In rural India, limited access to quality education and healthcare services impedes socio-economic progress, entrenching poverty and limiting future opportunities.

In Brazil, systemic barriers prevent marginalized communities from accessing economic opportunities, perpetuating their vulnerability and reinforcing cycles of poverty. These interconnected factors underscore the necessity for comprehensive and integrated approaches to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.

By ensuring equitable access to resources and opportunities, and by mitigating the impacts of conflicts and climate change, it is possible to disrupt the cycles of destitution and vulnerability that afflict millions of individuals globally.

Addressing these issues requires coordinated efforts at local, national, and international levels to foster sustainable development and resilience among the world's most vulnerable populations.



Image 2: Floodwaters in Bogura, Bangladesh, near the Brahmaputra River, in mid-July 2020
(Source: The New York Times, 2020)



Image 3: People scavenge for food in the trash at Recife's municipal market, Brazil
(Source: The Brazilian Report, 2022)

‘inadequate access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and viable economic opportunities significantly aggravates the plight of marginalized communities’



Image 4: Police Training School donates five cows to disadvantaged families in Gishari, Rwanda (Source: Rwanda National Police, 2023)

Global Examples of Initiatives Addressing Hunger and Poverty

In Bangladesh, microfinance programs like Grameen Bank have empowered impoverished individuals, particularly women, to establish small businesses and improve their economic well-being.

The success of such initiatives underscores the importance of targeted interventions in addressing poverty and hunger simultaneously.

Similarly, Rwanda's One Cow per Poor Family program has enhanced food security and provided sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable households, demonstrating the impact of strategic initiatives in alleviating poverty.

In regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, climate change-induced factors such as prolonged droughts threaten food security and exacerbate poverty levels. Countries like Kenya have

responded by investing in drought-resistant crops and water management strategies to build resilience among farming communities and mitigate the impacts of climate change on food production.

These examples highlight the importance of climate resilience and sustainable agricultural practices in addressing hunger and poverty.

Strategic Recommendations for Achieving No Hunger and Zero Poverty

To advance the objectives of No Hunger and Zero Poverty by 2030, strategic investments in sustainable agriculture are essential. Brazil's Zero Hunger program has effectively reduced poverty and hunger by promoting small-scale farming, enhancing food distribution systems, and providing nutritional support to vulnerable populations. Similarly, India's National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) has created job opportunities in rural areas, contributing to poverty reduction and economic empowerment.

Robust social protection programs, including conditional cash transfers and healthcare assistance, play a crucial role in alleviating poverty and providing a safety net for vulnerable communities. Mexico's Prospera (previously Oportunidades) program, which offers cash transfers linked to healthcare and education, has lifted millions out of poverty and improved overall well-being.

These programs underscore the importance of social protection in breaking the cycle of poverty and fostering sustainable development. Education, skill development, and job creation are pivotal in empowering individuals to escape poverty traps and build resilient livelihoods.

Vietnam's investments in education and vocational training have led to significant poverty reduction and economic growth, enabling individuals to secure stable employment and contribute to community development. Initiatives like South Africa's Youth Employment Network focus on creating job opportunities for young people, addressing youth unemployment and promoting economic empowerment.

Initiatives promoting climate resilience, disaster preparedness, gender equality, and social inclusion are critical in addressing the interconnected challenges of hunger and poverty. Nepal's community-based disaster risk reduction programs have enhanced local resilience to natural disasters, safeguarding livelihoods and reducing the vulnerability of marginalized groups. Organizations such as UN Women have advocated for gender equality and women's empowerment globally, recognizing the pivotal role of women in poverty alleviation and sustainable development efforts.

Conclusion

As we approach the target year of 2030, the goals of No Hunger and Zero Poverty stand as beacons of hope for a more equitable and sustainable future.

Initiatives promoting climate resilience, disaster preparedness, gender equality, and social inclusion are critical in addressing the interconnected challenges of hunger and poverty.

By adopting a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty, investing in sustainable solutions, and fostering inclusive partnerships, substantial progress can be made towards achieving these ambitious goals. Drawing inspiration from successful initiatives worldwide, we can work collectively to create a world where every individual has access to food, opportunities for advancement, and the dignity they deserve. Through collaborative efforts and sustained commitment, we can pave the way for a future free from hunger and poverty, characterized by shared prosperity and enhanced well-being.

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