



**ACTION  
AGAINST  
HUNGER**

# **2023 HUNGER FUNDING GAP REPORT**

**WHAT'S NEEDED TO STOP  
THE GLOBAL HUNGER CRISIS**





# DOES RISING **HUNGER** LEAD TO INCREASED FUNDING FOR **HUNGER** PROGRAMS?

Photos: Cover page and current page Sandra Calligaro for Action Against Hunger

[One in ten](#) people worldwide go to bed hungry each night, the highest rate in decades.

The world's hunger crisis, already driven by climate change and conflict, has now been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. Around 828 million people across the world are struggling to afford basic foods.

Now, with [50 million people in 45 countries](#) on the verge of famine, we asked: **Does rising hunger lead to increased funding for hunger programs?**

This report answers that question and provides essential insights into what it will take to close the hunger funding gap.

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**50  
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# OUR URGENT ANALYSIS



## TO DEVELOP THIS REPORT, WE:

# 1

### IDENTIFIED THE "HUNGRIEST" COUNTRIES

13 countries met our criteria\* and experienced “crisis” levels of hunger— or worse— in 2021.

**They are:** Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan.

# 2

### ANALYZED THE FUNDING THOSE COUNTRIES RECEIVED

We looked at how much funding those countries subsequently received, both for ongoing and emergency hunger-related programs in 2022.

# 3

### CALCULATED THE GAP BETWEEN THE NEED AND RESPONSE

We determined the difference between what the “hungriest” countries need and what the global community provided.\*

That is the hunger funding gap.

*\*Please see the “methodology” section for details.*

Photo: Sebastien Dujindam for Action Against Hunger

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# ALARMING FINDINGS: THE WORLD HAS A 53% GAP IN HUNGER FUNDING



Photo: Sandra Calligaro  
for Action Against Hunger

1

## ONLY 47% OF HUNGER FUNDING NEEDS ARE MET — DESPITE LOOMING FAMINE

We found a staggering hunger funding gap of 53%, which is the combined average shortfall in contributions relative to what countries need to address crisis levels of hunger.

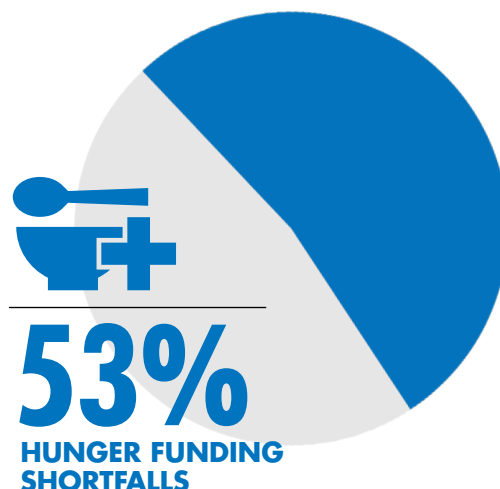






Photo: Lys Arango for Action Against Hunger

# 2.

## THE HUNGER CRISIS IS RISING

While overall funding rose slightly in 2022, support was spread even thinner as needs grew. As some donors, most notably the U.S. government, increased donations, the number of people facing a hunger crisis rose 18% — far faster than funding. This continues a decade-long trend uncovered in the 2022 Hunger Funding Gap report.

### GROWING NEED

2021

2022

18% INCREASE

NUMBER OF PEOPLE FACING "CRISIS" LEVELS OF HUNGER, OR HIGHER



# 3.

## GREATER HUNGER DOESN'T INSPIRE GREATER FUNDING

Following a trend we identified last year, our analysis found that greater hunger levels (2021) don't lead to greater funding for hunger programs in the following year (2022).

MORE SEVERE HUNGER CRISIS

COUNTRIES WITH WORST HUNGER CRISIS
Afghanistan
Haiti
Central African Republic
Madagascar
Honduras
Ethiopia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Sudan
Pakistan
Guatemala
Somalia
Kenya
Mozambique

LESS SEVERE HUNGER CRISIS

*Percentage of population at "crisis" levels of hunger or worse.*

HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF APPEALS FILLED

COUNTRIES WITH GREATER HUNGER FUNDING
Central African Republic
Somalia
Kenya
Ethiopia
Madagascar
Afghanistan
Sudan
Pakistan
Democratic Republic of Congo
Mozambique
Haiti
Guatemala
Honduras

LOWEST PERCENTAGE OF APPEALS FILLED



Photo: Sebastien Dujindam for Action Against Hunger



# 4.

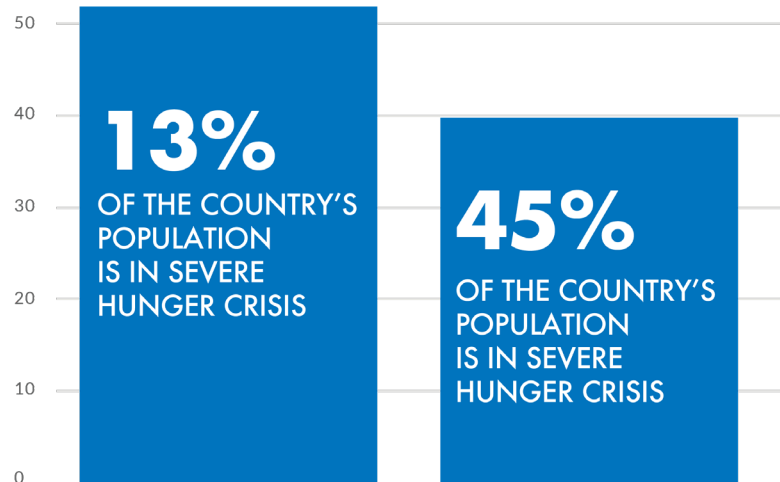
## THE GREATER THE CRISIS, THE LOWER THE FUNDING PROVIDED IN RESPONSE

Countries experiencing the worst hunger crises received less hunger funding (by the percentage of appeals filled) than countries with lower rates of hunger.

Within our data set, the two countries that were the most food secure (Mozambique and Kenya, with 13% of the population at crisis hunger levels) had hunger appeals filled 32% more often than the two countries with the greatest hunger crisis (Afghanistan and Haiti, where 45% of the population faced crisis hunger levels).

None of the countries in the Horn of Africa that we analyzed had UN appeals for hunger funding fulfilled in 2022, even though a growing number of people are on the brink of famine.

### PERCENTAGE OF HUNGER APPEALS FILLED





# 5.

## MOST HUNGER PROGRAMS AREN'T EVEN SUPPORTED HALFWAY

On average, only 3% of hunger-related appeals were fully funded.

In 2022, most hunger programs (65%) were not even funded to the halfway point. In 2021, 57% were not funded halfway.

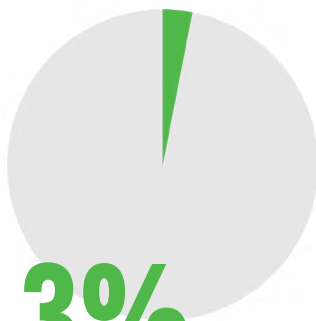
## AS NEEDS RISE, HUNGER FUNDING IS NOW SPREAD THINNER

HUNGER APPEALS FUNDED TO THE HALFWAY POINT

43% 2021

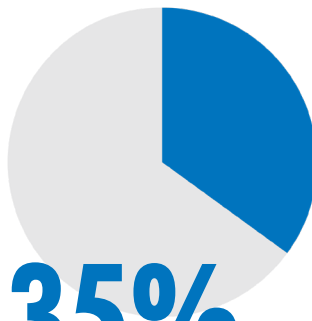
35% 2022

## THE STATE OF HUNGER FUNDING IN 2022



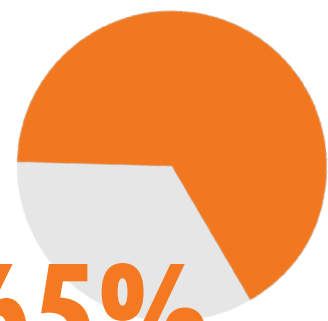
3%

PERCENTAGES OF APPEALS FULLY FUNDED



35%

PERCENTAGE OF APPEALS FILLED TO HALFWAY POINT OR MORE



65%

PERCENTAGE OF APPEALS NOT FILLED TO HALFWAY POINT





Photo: Carmen Moreno  
for Action Against Hunger

# CLOSING THE HUNGER FUNDING GAP

The world already has enough resources to meet the UN [Global Goal](#) of Zero Hunger by 2030. It would take \$4 billion to fully fund the hunger-related appeals of the 13 countries in this report. That's roughly equivalent to:

- [1/4](#) of what the American public bet on the Superbowl.
- The estimated cost of the 2030 [winter Olympics](#).

Wealthy countries not only give too little to close the hunger funding gap, their contributions too often come too late to prevent needless suffering. These countries need funding that is:

- Multi-year, so organizations can plan ahead to meet hunger levels that will remain high.
- Targeted directly to local NGOs with experience and staff in the places they serve.
- Flexible enough to respond to rapidly-changing needs.
- Provided from a broader array of donors for greater stability of funding streams.

Donor countries must prioritize funding for hunger programs and additional countries must realize an obligation to give. To fully close the gap, individuals, philanthropic foundations, and the private sector also would need to step up, and the donor community would need to balance immediate humanitarian support with reliable funds for long-term development needs.



**ONE FOURTH**  
**OF WHAT THE**  
**AMERICAN PUBLIC**  
**BET ON THE SUPERBOWL**





# PUTTING THE NUMBERS IN CONTEXT: ADAN'S STORY

Photo: Lys Arango Cash for Action Against Hunger

After five failed rainy seasons, the Horn of Africa is suffering its worst drought in 40 years. In Somalia's Bay Region, Hassan and Jelow Lamow struggle to survive. Hassan labors at construction sites and Jelow works in fields for \$2 per half-day. It's rarely enough for millet and cooking oil. Food prices have skyrocketed due to the drought and the war in Ukraine.

Work is scarce. Farmers who once hired Jelow now have no crops due to the drought. Inflation means Hassan's pay is no longer enough to feed their children. Their two-year-old son Adan Kher started eating sand to quell his hunger. Adan developed [kwashiorkor](#), leaving his legs and stomach swollen with fluid and the rest of his body weak and emaciated. His skin was peeling off and his ribs protruded from his small chest. Desperate for help, the trio trekked 15 miles from their home to Action Against Hunger's Nutrition Treatment Centre in Baidoa. Adan was clinging to life.

As Adan slowly stabilized, Hassan and Jelow worried about their four other children, who stayed home to avoid the difficult journey. Their 10-year-old daughter was left in charge, with only five glasses of millet and two hens to sustain them. The couple decided that Hassan would watch over

Adan while Jelow took their last dollar and made the long walk home.

After five long weeks, Adan recovered completely. Action Against Hunger also provided Hassan with three months of emergency cash assistance to help buy food despite lost wages.

Even as they left, more severely malnourished children than ever before were being admitted to Bayhaaw Treatment Centre, where Action Against Hunger added more beds to accommodate the influx. The UN has proclaimed that "famine is at the door" in Somalia. Without increased humanitarian assistance, half a million children under five years old, like Adan, could die from malnutrition in early 2023.

## CAN BUY

**\$20** A FUEL EFFICIENT STOVE

**\$25** AN EMERGENCY HYGIENE KIT

**\$42** LIFESAVING EMERGENCY THERAPEUTIC FOOD





# OUR PERSPECTIVE: HUNGER MUST TOP THE GLOBAL AGENDA

Photo: Said Musse  
for Action Against Hunger

**WE SEE AN ALARMING NEAR-TERM OUTLOOK FOR GLOBAL HUNGER, LARGELY AS A RESULT OF CONFLICT, THE CLIMATE CRISIS, AND CHRONIC INEQUALITY.**

**Conflict:** This report is being released around the one-year anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, which destabilized markets for food, fertilizer, and energy and increased food prices. Even if the war were to end today, it is likely to have a lingering impact on global hunger.

**Climate:** Similarly, climate-driven hunger crises will not resolve quickly. Notably, the Horn of Africa is facing a [potential sixth failed rainy season](#). Even if rains come now, it will take time for displaced people to return to their homes, for wells and soil to be replenished, for crops to grow, and for agricultural livelihoods to be fully restored. The U.S. government should be commended for prioritizing additional funds for parts of the Horn of Africa, which may have helped prevent an even higher death toll as far too many people there face famine-like conditions.



**Chronic inequality:** Emergency funds are vital, yet seldom enough to foster long-term resilience for families, communities, or countries. In addition to meeting the immediate needs that are the focus of this report, the global community must also address underlying chronic inequality that drives millions, especially the vulnerable, into hunger when faced with inflation, climate shocks, and other stressors. For example, Haiti has long been the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere and the latest reports show that [4.7 million Haitians](#) are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity.

Haiti also is an example of the ways that conflict, climate change, and chronic inequality can work together with devastating effects: roughly 19,000 people in Haiti now are facing famine-like conditions.

This report is not intended to raise questions about whether resources should be taken from those who are hungry to address the needs of those facing famine: the world is rich enough that every life can be well nourished. We also need to be smart enough to tackle hunger, since it casts a long shadow.

## HUNGER'S LONG SHADOW

Nutrition is not only a humanitarian imperative, but also key to advancing other priorities — including political stability and long-term economic growth.

Hunger is both a consequence and a cause of conflict. Chronic hunger in children leads to stunting, and it impacts emotional and cognitive development, often permanently. Stunted children have lower earnings later in life, perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Particularly given the aging global population, it is imperative for us to prevent child hunger and treat malnutrition.

These are complex issues and funding is just one part of what it takes to address them. Yet, after working for more than 40 years in approximately 50 countries, we know that closing the hunger funding gap is a critical step to ending hunger in our lifetimes.

We need long-term solutions to the long-term hunger crisis. By spotlighting the serious and growing gaps in hunger funding relative to need, we hope this report will help mobilize action to end hunger for everyone, for good.





# METHODOLOGY

Photo: Sebastien Dujindam for Action Against Hunger

To develop this report, we used 2021 hunger data and 2022 funding data to control for a degree of causality – i.e., that hunger levels would be lower in countries that receive more funding because that funding has been effective. Although long-term funding patterns still likely influence long-term hunger levels, we nonetheless hope this analysis shines a brighter light on how responsive funding is (or is not) to immediate needs.

We began by selecting countries that were experiencing “crisis” levels of malnutrition or worse, meaning they were categorized as Phase 3 or higher in the [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#). We focused on 2021 to establish clear need for hunger response prior to 2022 funding decisions being made.

We then analyzed relevant funding for 2022 Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), which are developed for a protracted or sudden onset emergency in a country that requires international humanitarian assistance. Those countries’ most urgent funding needs are addressed within the international humanitarian system, as well as with Flash Appeals, and Regional Response Plans as tracked through the [UN OCHA Financial Tracking system](#). By including “flash appeals,” we were able to better reflect both expectations for ongoing needs as well as the impact of the war in Ukraine and climate disasters.

- The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) is prepared for a protracted or sudden onset emergency that requires international humanitarian assistance. When it comes to hunger, HRPs may prioritize urgent funds for treating potentially life-threatening forms of child malnutrition and contain requests for comparatively less funding for long-term agricultural sector development, for example. The report’s countries with HRPs included: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Honduras, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Guatemala, Sudan, and Somalia.
- Regional Refugee Response Plans (RRPs) are developed to respond to the needs of a specific refugee population found in the neighbouring countries of the region. The report’s countries with RRP included: Afghanistan and Democratic Republic of Congo.
- A Flash Appeal (FA) is an inter-agency humanitarian response strategy to a major disaster that requires a coordinated response beyond the capacity of the government plus any single agency. The report’s countries with FAs included: Haiti, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique and Pakistan.



For this report, we drew on 2022 data (recorded in February 2023) driven from the [OCHA Financial Tracking Service](#). It is notable that data and funding appeals are consistently being recorded and data may differ as appeals are updated.

This yielded a list of 13 countries, which are the focus of this report: Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan.

For each country, we compared the percentage of the population facing IPC Phase 3 or greater with the percentage of the Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) with Flash Appeals (FA) or Regional Response Plans (RRP) that were funded, focusing on three priority sectors for fighting hunger (Food Security, Nutrition, and WASH).

## LIMITATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

We note several limitations, which we hope future research might address. These include:

- This report assumes that Humanitarian Response Plans, Flash Appeals, Regional Response Appeals, and requested funding amounts adequately reflect actual needs and hunger levels. Alternate approaches could yield additional insights and should be considered.
- We focused our analysis on countries where adequate data was available both on [IPC classification](#) and UN appeals made through the OCHA Service. As a result, some countries facing high levels of hunger (IPC Phase 3 or greater) were excluded since they did not appear in the OCHA data set, and vice versa.
- Data sets reflect the fact that some countries have combined Flash Appeals and Regional Response Appeals.
- Data sets reflect the fact that some countries only have Flash Appeals, Humanitarian Response Plans, and Regional Response Plan data.
- Our report methodology offers an initial analysis that looks at a narrow window in time and focuses only on “crisis” levels of hunger (IPC Phase 3+). Yet, earlier and greater funding also is needed to help prevent communities at IPC phase 1 and 2 from seeing their hunger levels rise. Future reports could take a broader view.

Over the long term, hunger levels are influenced by funding patterns as well as a host of other complex issues such as climate, conflict, and humanitarian access, among others. While we welcome additional research, the world can't afford to wait – particularly in the hunger hotspots featured in this report. We must take action and come together against hunger now.

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FREE FROM  
HUNGER

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Photo (Top): Taste of London for Action Against Hunger  
Photo (Left): Action Against Hunger