

The Food Aid Quality Review (FAQR) Project led by faculty at Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy provides the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Food for Peace (FFP) and its partners with actionable recommendations on ways food aid can make a significant impact.

LOOKING AHEAD: UPCOMING CHALLENGES FOR THE FOOD AID AGENDA

Why the World Needs Food Aid

BY THE NUMBERS



Will the U.S. Government still need to deliver food aid to poverty stricken people globally in 2020?

The answer is **yes.**

Although poverty is falling, nutrition is not improving everywhere. In the world's flashpoints, malnutrition and related mortality are on the rise. The average length of time for conflict-related displacement is now 26 yearsⁱ, with 60 percent of individuals receiving aid for more than eight consecutive years. There is no indication that these numbers will trend downward any time soon.

In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goalsⁱⁱ to “end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture,” the U.S. must continue to play a lead role in ensuring that hunger and malnutrition do not go unheeded. But it must also take the lead on bringing cutting-edge science and industry together to ensure that food aid works to its full potential.

FOOD AID MATTERS MORE THAN EVER

The world of 2017 is a dangerous place for too many innocent people. As the scale of humanitarian crises grows, the duration of protracted complex emergencies is unprecedented. In addition to the **65 million people displaced by conflict or drought**—more than at any time since World War II—there are **millions of mothers, infants and children in 40 countries of the world who need help just to find food to stay alive.**ⁱⁱⁱ **Almost 10 percent of the world's population (795 million) does not have enough to eat.**^{iv} **More than 150 million children are stunted** (too short for their age), which compromises their learning ability and productivity as adults.^v

Many were reached in **2016** with life-saving humanitarian aid in the form of tents, cash transfers, medicines or water. Roughly **100 million people received food assistance.**^{vi} But the number requiring help is growing because of famine conditions in Nigeria, South Sudan, Somalia and Yemen. In addition, ongoing regional conflicts (including the Syria crisis) and the spread of droughts across Africa are adding to humanitarian demand.

Targeting food to the right people saves lives; delivering the right kinds of food can cost-effectively protect lives beyond an immediate crisis. Ensuring that the U.S. Government has the right tools and resources to act decisively in humanitarian actions around the globe is a top priority.

ACHIEVING MORE IMPACT, COST-EFFECTIVELY

Food aid offers immense value-for-money. By tackling hunger and malnutrition, the U.S. Government helps reduce mortality in fragile states, buffers against migration and serves as an investment in future productivity—growth which will translate into markets. The U.S. is the largest food aid donor in the world. In FY 2016, USAID provided over \$2.8 billion in emergency and development food assistance to the poorest corners of the world^{vii}, **saving millions of lives and laying the foundations for economic and political stability.** However, doing it right matters.



Figure 1 | Photographer: Figure 1. Ashraf Shazly/AFP/Getty Images

A professional commitment to ensuring value-for-money helps maximize the impact of every dollar spent. Successful partnership has long existed among U.S. farmers, traders, food processors, shippers and non-government partners. But today, even greater cost-effectiveness is necessary to allow each dollar to go further. Delivering a meal to a hungry child is life-changing in that moment. But unless the child's malnutrition is treated using appropriate kinds of foods, the risk of death remains. A malnourished child is many times more likely to die of simple infections than a well-fed one.

Malnutrition causes nearly half of preventable deaths in children ages 2-5—more than three million deaths each year.^{viii} Which is why the quality of food aid operations is as important as delivering large quantities of U.S. food.

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