

Famine in southern Africa

Information provided by World Vision Australia

General statistics

Country-by-Country Food Aid Needs

Country	Population needing Emergency Food Aid*	Emergency Food Aid (metric tonnes) required - 2002-2003s
Angola	1,500,000	(TBC)
Lesotho	444,800	68,955
Malawi	3,188,000	207,689
Mozambique	515,000	70,050
Swaziland	231,000	17,720
Zambia	2,329,000	174,383
Zimbabwe	6,075,000	705,000
TOTAL	14,281,800	1,243,797 (not including Angola)

* Predicted number of people needing Emergency Food Aid by the end of March 2003.

Compiled by the World Food Programme (WFP)

- > What is a metric tonne in kilograms? Can you think of another way to describe how much food is in a metric tonne – using people, using objects, using food itself?
- > Look at the populations of each of the seven countries. What is the percentage of the population that needs Emergency Food Aid in each country?
- > Choose one of the above countries and divide the required food aid (in metric tonnes or kilograms if it is easier for you) by the population. What is the ratio? This is a yearly requirement. Does that seem like very much food to you? Divide that number into 365 days per year. Does that seem like very much food to you? Compare some of the countries. Why might there be differences in the amount of food required?

Following is a comparison which gives us some idea about what our food consumption could buy:

Ice-cream	In just 40 hours Australians consume a stack of two-litre tubs 120 kilometres high worth \$3.15 million	\$3.15 million could provide school materials, desks and teachers for 40,000 children in Angola
Lollies	In just 40 hours Australians will consume more than \$7.7 million worth of confectionery	This could build a brand new school in 365 villages in Somalia
Soft drinks	In just 40 hours Australians spend more than \$9.5 million on soft drink	\$9.5 million could immunise over 350 000 children in Zimbabwe
Bottled Water	In just 40 hours Australians spend more than \$1.4 million on bottled water	This could build 365 wells in Africa

- > Make a list of what you eat over the next 40 hours. Highlight the food items that you think you could do without if the money could go to help a child in Southern Africa. Add up the cost of those items. If every child in your school had an average of one chocolate bar or bag of chips they could give up, how much money would that be?

- > Read the following article, “Stories of hunger” by Winnie Ogana, May 2001

Kyunda, a 14-year-old Congolese boy, together with his mother and six siblings took refuge in Zambia to escape civil war in their homeland, the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Their new life at the Kala Refugee Camp is different in many respects, including learning to live without Kyunda’s father and sister, whom the family lost to the war.

Kyunda hurriedly washes his feet before going to school, where he will have to sit under the tree that is his classroom. On most days he runs to school without breakfast - there is no breakfast. When he lived in Congo, he would have a big breakfast. He was one of the top pupils then. Now he is often so hungry he is dizzy and tired, and he worries that his schoolwork is suffering. Among the most difficult adjustments to make is surviving on the relief food distributed at the camp. There is a food shortage and the camp is on half rations. “Now all we get is one meal a day: lunch,” remarks Kyunda. “Lunch means beans. I can no longer stand beans since they have become too monotonous. Besides, the servings we get are never enough.”

Kyunda’s mother, Kasibwe, is growing some vegetables on a tiny plot of land to help feed her children. They all help with the garden, but it will be a while before the potatoes, tomatoes and pumpkins are ready to be harvested.

What does Kyunda think about his lunch?

- > Why isn’t Kyunda’s father with the family?
- > How is Kasibwe trying to help herself and her family?

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is a general term that indicates a lack of some or all nutritional elements necessary for human health. Look at the pictures below of children suffering from malnutrition. Sudden food deprivation due to natural or manmade emergencies produces a condition known as kwashiorkor. Apathy, swelling (oedema) of the extremities, torso and face, cracked, peeling, infection-prone skin and unnaturally blond, sparse hair are its visible characteristics.

- > Visit www.who.int/nut

This is the website of the World Health Organisation.

- Read about nutrition on the website.
- What is the definition of malnutrition?
- What is Protein-energy malnutrition?
- Which vitamin deficiency is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children? What are some other symptoms of this vitamin deficiency?

- > Read the article by Pamela Bone called “Love in the time of hunger”, The Age, 26th August, 2002 at www.education.theage.com.au

- Joseph and Esinati are facing a famine situation. The article also points to the love they feel for each other. Does this surprise you? Why?
- Using this article, make up a list of statistics regarding Malawi that can be used in a presentation to a group who are considering donating money to aid Southern African countries in crisis.



Picture provided by World Vision Australia

Water

An important part of food is water. Human health is dependent on clean and sufficient amounts of water and safe sanitation. In affluent countries, water services are largely taken for granted, but in developing countries they are much rarer. It is estimated that at any given time about half the people living in developing countries are suffering from water-related diseases. These diseases can be either infectious, such as cholera and malaria, or non-infectious such as fluorosis, from high fluoride levels. Poor hygiene and inadequate sanitation quickly spread diseases. Of the nearly 2 million children who die from diarrhoea and other water-related diseases, almost all are under five.

> Visit

www.worldvision.com.au/resources/topic_sheets.asp

This is the website of World Vision Australia. Here you can download a pdf on Water and read about how water can affect people's health.

- Read about the different water-related diseases.
- List the different types and their definitions.



Andile Sithole waters a vegetable patch planted at his school to help feed AIDS orphans or those who are hungry because their parents are sick and cannot work. Photo by Paul Weinberg, provided by Oxfam Community Aid Abroad.