

FORUM:	General Assembly
ISSUE:	Measures to Ensure Children’s Health by Tackling Hunger, Malnutrition, and Stunting
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Introduction

There are over 2.2 billion children (aged 0-19) worldwide, representing boundless potential. That said, children’s health is very vital for the future. However, in reality, there are many children who still does not have good health. Children’s health is mainly affected by hunger, malnutrition, and stunting.

The cause of children’s hunger are not only due to the food shortages in a country, but also the food availability. Some children suffer from hunger because of food shortages in their area, and for specific reasons. Some may be because they cannot afford enough food. It may be both. Generally, the main cause of food shortage in a country is poor environmental condition. Drought, in many countries, causes soils drying out and plants dieing, causing hunger to many children. Infrastructure greatly contributes to food availability in a country. Poor Infrastructure causes less availability of sufficient quantities of food by making it difficult to transport foods to areas that foods are needed. Thus, causing hunger to many children. In many developing countries, this is the case.



Poor Environmental Condition

Addressing hunger is more than providing food for people and making sure they get the sufficient amount to sustain their bodies. The quantity of food is, indeed, important, but the quality is just as important. When people do not have the proper nutrients from food, it is called malnutrition. Malnutrition is the cause of several problems which include lack of protein , minerals and/or essential vitamins, and frequent illness.

Malnutrition is most harmful in the early childhood. Malnutrition during the 1000-day period from pregnancy to the age of 2 can cause threat to children that can last a lifetime. A visible effect of malnutrition in early childhood is stunting – an adult that has a height much shorter than that of a normal adult. Stunted children are prone to problems such as life-long health effects, difficulties studying in



school, decrease in lifespan, and less chance to have a healthy children when grown-up. Consequently to ensure children's health, nations and global organizations should pay more attention to this serious issue and come up with solutions to save children.

Background

According to the UN (United Nations), in 1990, roughly 12.494 million under-five deaths occurred, which means about 34000 under-five deaths occurred every day. Conversely, in 2019, roughly 5.189 million under-five deaths occurred, which approximately 14000 under-five deaths occurred every day. Though the number of deaths under-five from 1990 to 2019 reduced by more than 50 percent, the number of deaths that take place every day is still a devastating number.

The reduction of under-five deaths from 1990 to 2019 can be explained by the increase in the number of more economically developed countries (MEDCs), reducing the total under-five deaths occurring per year. In fact, 82 percent of all under-five deaths in the world in 2019 occurred in just two regions: sub-Saharan Africa (53 percent) and South Asia (27 percent), which are relatively regions that consist of less economically developed countries (LEDCs). Thus, most of the children's health problems results from rural areas.

Children continue to face widespread regional and income disparities in their chances of survival, especially in less developed countries. As of 2019, sub-Saharan Africa still has the highest under-five mortality rate in the world, with 76 deaths per 1,000 live births. In 2019, 1 in 13 children in sub-Saharan Africa died before the age of five, which is 15 times higher than the risk of children born in more economically developed countries (MEDCs) and 20 years behind the world average, which achieved a 1 in 13 rate by 1999. Differences in children survival abound by the country level as well. For instance, children born in the countries with the highest mortality rates are about 70 times more likely to die before the age of 5 than in the countries with the lowest mortality rates, and all five countries with mortality rates higher than 100 deaths per 1,000 births are countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Surprisingly, malnutrition is the cause of death of 2.6 million children every year – one-third of the total death of children. Due to malnutrition in children, one in four of the world's children are stunted.

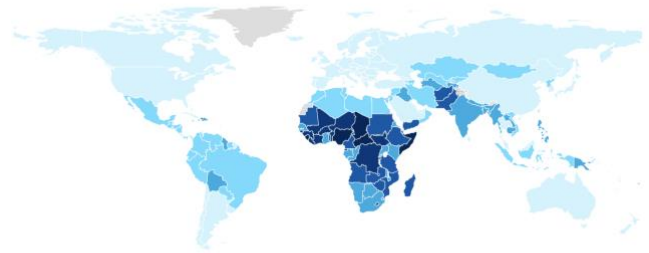


Problems Raised

Obstacle to Sustainable Development

The “Genius Hypothesis” states that the larger the population, the greater the chances for great innovators. Since innovation is the source of development in society, a population decrease will cause economic growth stagnation. A larger population increases the opportunities for intellectual exchange with different human resources, thereby promoting development in society. The population decline reduces the likelihood of this happening. Also, as the population decreases, the number of people engaged in research and engineering jobs decreases, which has a negative impact on the country’s R&D performance. More importantly, the decrease in the population of the younger generation will cause the society to lose the creativity that is needed for productivity. Thus, children’s health is very vital to future economic development.

Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births) by country, 2019



● ≤10 ● 10 to 25 ● 25 to 50 ● 50 to 75 ● 75 to 100 ● >100

Under-five mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births) by country, 2019

Potential Increase in Conflict between Different Age Groups

As the children population decreases, the proportion of elderly in country increases in substantial amount. As elderly, who does not have his or her own ability to pay tax, accounts for more proportion of tax in the country, the tax for people who have their responsibility to pay tax has increased. This will, in long-term, result in complaints of young people to the elderly group. In addition it will impact the government’s budget because they would have to give more and more pensions for the retired elderered citizens, reducing the amount of money nation has for economic and social development.

Children’s Human Rights not Fullfilled

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that all human have the right to food, which means that hunger is a human rights violation. Indeed, this violation involoes children.

International Actions

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) are a list of 17 goals that were set up in 2015 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly. Sustainable Development Goal number 3 was set to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages. Specifically, one of their plans targeted to end all preventable deaths under children under 5 years of age by the year 2030.

Over the past years, the UN has constantly provided access to safe and effective medicines and vaccines, doctors and time proportionate international health volunteers, and health care systems for children under 5 years of age. Since 2000, the risk for children dying decreased by approximately 45 percent, reaching 43 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015. The neonatal mortality rate reduced by 31 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 19 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015.

WHO has also provided a lot of countries with conferences regarding environmental health's effect on children. The first conference took place in Bangkok in 2002 and the second in Buenos Aires in 2005. The third conference took place in Busan in 2009. WHO is constantly planning conferences in countries all around the world to raise awareness regarding the environment's effect on children and provide medical education.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Sustainable Development Goals



Conference from World Health Organization

Key Players

World Health Organization (WHO)

The WHO, a UN organization, was created on April 7, 1948. They were created to provide or help people to have the highest quality of health possible. They overlook health systems in all member states by researching, funding, and providing response teams to countries in need.

They especially work with members states to improve the lives of children and meet the targets of Sustainable Development Goal 3, which aims to prevent deaths of children under the age of 5 by 2030.



Logo of WHO



Healthcare from WHO

Recently, WHO has worked with sub-Saharan Africa, and they have provided them with 5000 adequate time proportionate international health volunteers and 1500 doctors. They also provided health care systems to those who are not available to get medical care.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

The UNICEF, a UN organization, was founded to provide humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. They established the Declaration of the Rights of the Child within the UN in 1959. UNICEF was founded after World War II for children who suffered from the repercussions of the war, which many children did not receive proper nutrients. One of UNICEF'S main focuses is to provide emergency care, immunizations, and clean water to children in need. Since the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, UNICEF has assisted 153 countries and territories with critical supplies and financial/technical support, reaching 261 million children with vital health.

Possible Solutions

Improvement in Food Availability and Food Shortages

Organizations can provide funds for raising more nutritious crops or training for farmers to grow the crops well to decrease malnutrition. To decrease hunger, some organizations can provide more access to healthy foods and establishing more market areas, or delivering food directly to the rural areas that have a lack of access to food. Lack of food supply is also associated with lack of income, so there can be efforts from organizations to provide adults in charge of families a sustainable job so they can get regular income for their family.

Support from Organizations that Provides Health Care

Most of the Less economically developed countries (LEDCs) have a high mortality rate compared to more economically developed countries (MEDCs) due to the lack of money to improve the health care for children. By creating a program that pairs a member of MEDC with a member of LEDC to provide funds and guidance to improve health care for children, would allow the Less economically developed countries (LEDCs) to receive funding, without heavily taxing citizens. Because this type of funding would not be global funding, there will be no conflict between countries regarding funds unevenly distributing.

Glossary

R&D

The part of a company's operations that seeks knowledge to develop, design, and enhance its products, services, technologies, or processes.

Human Rights

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more.



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