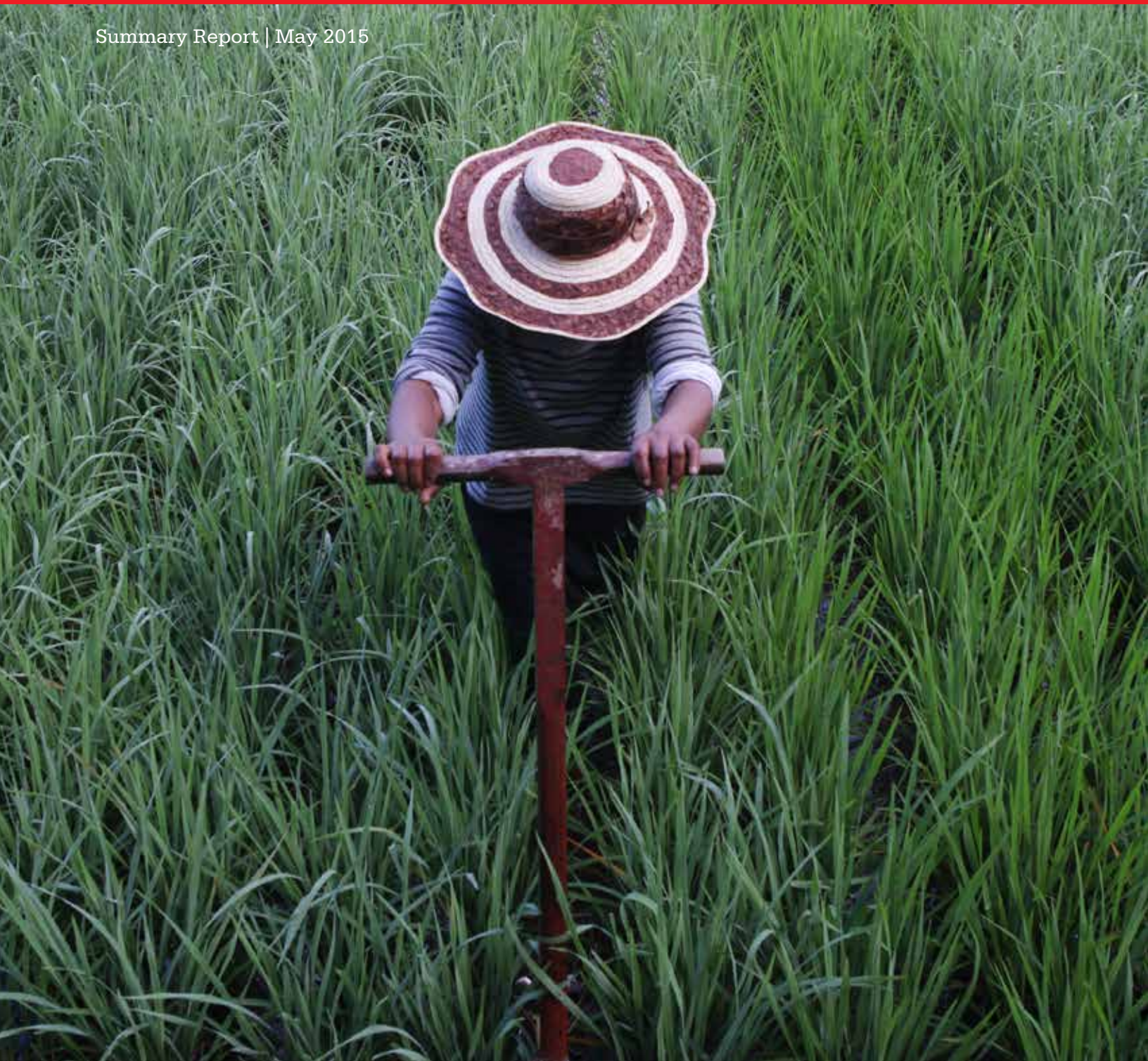


Caritas Internationalis Food Security Study

Summary Report | May 2015





Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

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About the Survey

The report was conducted for Caritas Internationalis and supported by Catholic Relief Services (a Caritas member that is the international humanitarian organisation of the Catholic community in the United States) and by Grey Matter Research & Consulting of Phoenix, Arizona, U.S.A. It addresses the incidence and impacts of food insecurity, what are its main causes, how is the right to food protected by laws and policies, women in relation to food insecurity, access to markets for small-scale food producers, solutions to improve food security and the Caritas work in this field.



Executive Summary

The world needs to do much more to fight hunger, says a new survey made by Caritas Internationalis among its member organisations. The Food Security Study shows that the best way to end the scandal of hunger is to support small scale farmers, especially as they try to adapt to the changing climate.

Caritas Internationalis is the humanitarian and development organisation of the Catholic Church, a confederation with over 160 national members worldwide. According to 98 Caritas organisations in countries comprising 83 percent of the world's population, the top three causes of food insecurity are lack of resources for small scale farmers, low agricultural productivity and the impact of climate change.



Laura Elizabeth Pohl for CRS

Just 19 percent of Caritas respondents said that their countries enjoyed full food security, defined as reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Almost a third said their countries faced food insecurity and almost half said their countries were only somewhat secure in their food resources.

The main results of food insecurity are hunger and malnutrition, but also increased migration, income disparity and crime, affected health and education and created a culture of dependence on handouts and welfare.

The best way to end the scandal of hunger is to support small scale farmers

The Food Security Study is one of the outputs of the Caritas Internationalis *One Human Family, Food for All* campaign aimed at ending hunger by 2025 by helping the poorest and most disadvantaged to access the resources essential for a dignified life.

Over a third of those responding to the survey said the single most important action that would reduce hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity is improving agriculture (35%).

In many cases public policies on food security exist, but they are poorly implemented. Having laws protecting the human right to food would not in itself eradicate hunger, but it would spur government action. The survey found that such laws tend to exist in countries where provisions on agriculture, markets, women and civil society reinforce one another.

Caritas organisations providing food security programmes within their own countries estimate that an average of 1.36 million people benefitted from those programmes in 2013. The top areas were farmer training (41%), sustainable agriculture (39%), food or seed distribution after emergencies (39%) and improving nutrition and health (39%).

This survey shows that much more needs to be done to combat food insecurity, but that if farmers can grow enough food to feed themselves, their families and their countries, improvements will follow across the board – better health, better education and a better life for all.

Hunger and Food Insecurity

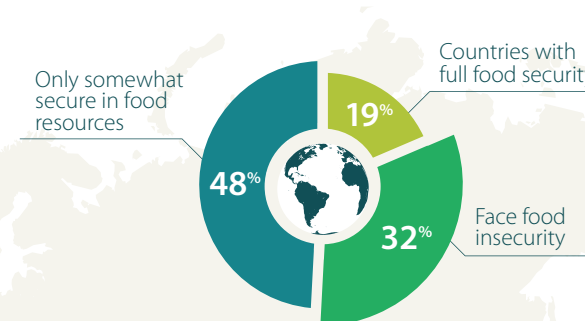
Top 3 Causes



Reasons Vary by Region

- Sub-Saharan Africa:** low agricultural productivity and climate change
- Asia:** lack of smallholder farmer access to resources, plus the lack of governance
- Latin America and the Caribbean:** food price speculation and lack of infrastructure
- Middle East and North Africa:** conflict and lack of clean water

Level of Food Security



Major Areas of Impact

HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION	MIGRATION	INCOME DISPARITY	CRIME
HEALTH AND MORTALITY	EDUCATION	CORRUPTION	DEPENDENCE ON HANDOUTS

Improving Agriculture*

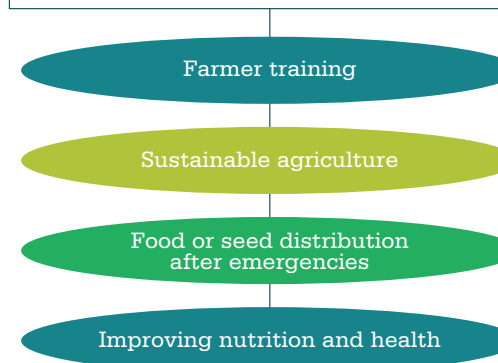


The single most important action that would reduce hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity.

*access to markets, seed, tools, adequate land and credit

106.42 Million

people benefitted from Caritas programmes** in 2013 including programmes focused on:



**in-country Caritas programmes only

Lack of Access to Food

A third of those surveyed said their country lacked food security (consistent and reliable access to food for its people). About half said their country was "somewhat secure" while only a fifth thought their country was food secure.

The impact of food insecurity is wide ranging, as recorded by the 71 countries which reported some level of the problem in their countries. They include increased crime, corruption, depression, disease and many others. Almost all described ways their population is impacted by food insecurity – from hindering education, to increasing social isolation, to accelerating family disintegration, to triggering migration towards cities.

Two areas stood out above all others. One of these was hunger and malnutrition (58%), which included stunted growth among children due to improper nutrition.

The second major category was negative social impacts (52%), which included the specific issues of migration, either within the country or out of the country (22%), the poor being affected the most (14%), increasing income disparity (8%), unemployment (6%), crime and addictions (6%), exploitation or isolation of people (4%), social unrest (4%) and family disintegration (4%). Seven percent noted that another consequence of food insecurity were escalating food prices.

A substantial minority said health is harmed by food insecurity in their country (38%). Most simply said disease is more common (33%), but a few talked about emotional or mental health problems such as depression (6%), inability to afford healthy food (4%) or obesity (3%).

A quarter said education is affected in their country (24%). Money that could be used for school fees is instead needed for food, for example. Children might be unable to attend due to the lack of school fees or pulled out of school in order to work. Even if they do attend school, children may have trouble paying attention due to hunger.

Two out of ten said mortality is higher due to food insecurity (21%). Eleven percent talked about mortality rates in general, while others specified child or infant mortality (4%), maternal mortality (3%), suicides (3%) or greater chances that the sick will die (3%).

Fourteen percent said food insecurity led to major national issues, including having to import most food, an overreliance on welfare, corruption and poor implementation of food laws or policies. Eleven percent said food insecurity has caused or contributed to conflicts (for example, people fighting over land).

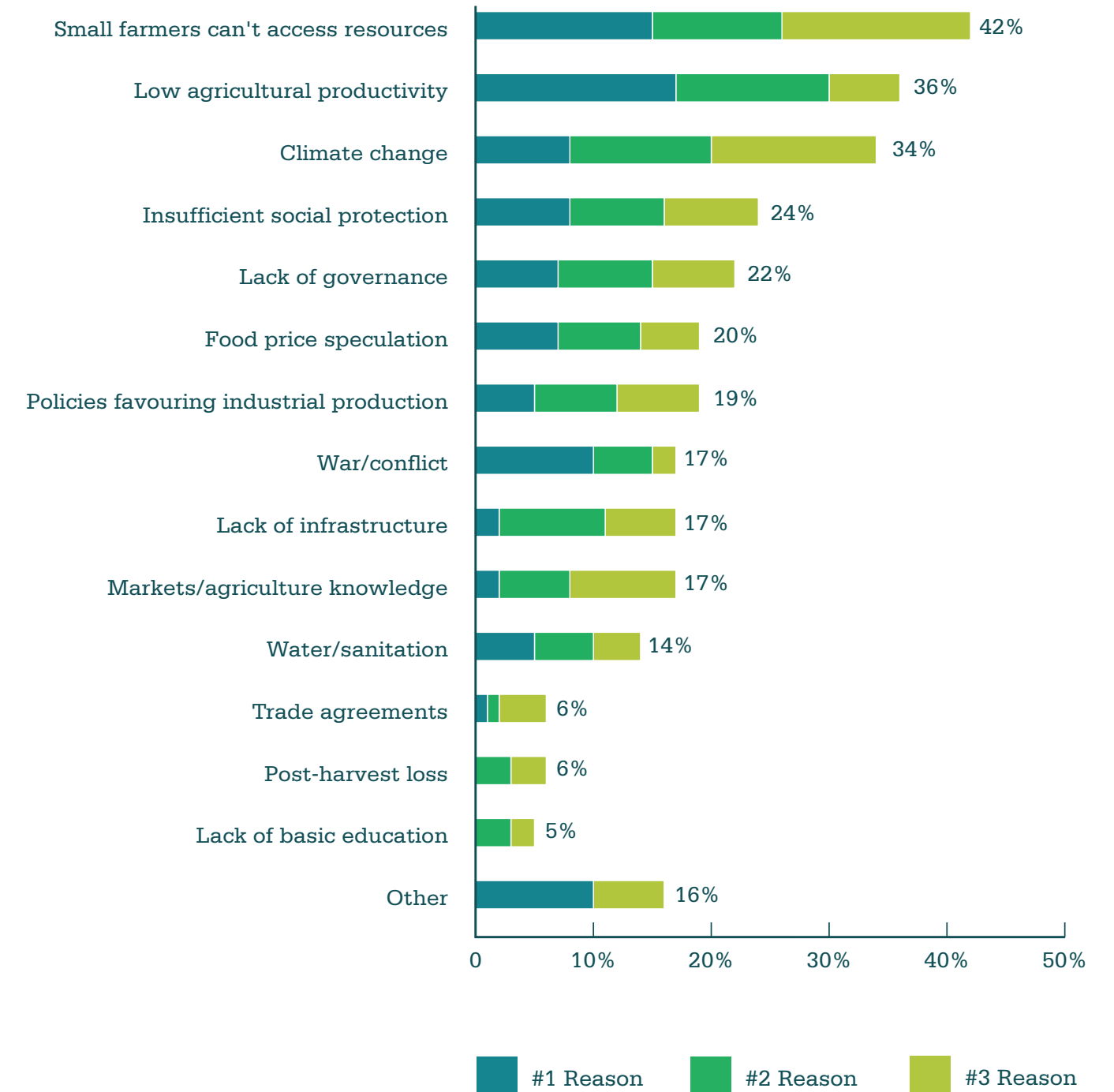


Michael Stulman/CRS



Alexander Buehler for Caritas Iraq

Top Reasons for Hunger and Food Insecurity



¹ "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life." World Food Summit, 1996. This definition was strengthened with the notion of "social access" in FAO, *The state of Food Insecurity in the World 2001*, Rome 2001, p. 49.

Ensuring Access to Food



A few examples of the comments survey participants made on the impact of food insecurity.

The first impact on people is social exclusion: the way they see their situation (shame, guilt and being unable to support themselves and take on the role of feeding the children in the family). They cannot welcome friends and family in their homes. They are ashamed to go to food distribution centres, which all too often makes them feel stigmatised.

Malnutrition resulting in reduced size, weight and academic performance among children, adolescents and young people; anxiety and exhaustion among parents, especially single mothers, who have to ensure there is enough food each day, to the detriment of care and affection for their children.

Disease, dependence on other countries, lack of schooling, tribal conflicts.

Depletion of household assets, poverty, poor education since resources meant for education are often diverted to buy expensive food commodities, children drop out of school due to hunger. Eventually it encourages inequality (economic disparity) and poor economic growth, leading to poverty and despair.



Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS

Rural migration, poverty, exploitation, different sicknesses connected with low levels of nutrition, a search for jobs in cities and also taking up low-paid jobs outside the country. Family break-ups. Villages left with only old people and small children.

Small scale farmers are now migrating to cities because they face floods or droughts; they are more vulnerable to such disasters.

De-ruralisation, urbanisation of cultivable land (available land for cultivation is disappearing as settlements expand).

The effect of food insecurity is impoverishment of rural society, which is not guaranteed a basic need such as food. This leads to social breakdown, which drives an exodus in search of other ways of life and means of livelihood. The effects are an increase in malnutrition, a growing urban population, crime, violation of human rights and extremist ideologies.

If you want to help the hungry, help the small scale farmers who provide so much of the food we eat. While the responses to the survey about the reasons for food insecurity were also many and varied, over 40 percent mentioned as one of the top three reasons the lack of access that smallholder farmers have to resources. That could mean fertilisers and seeds or loans and education.

Second, low agricultural productivity was chosen by 36 percent of respondents among their top three reasons. Thirty-four percent identified climate change among the top three causes. Climate change affects food security because changing weather affects agriculture: from drought to water scarcity, to altered rainfalls, to soil erosion, to extreme weather events.¹

Respondents cited government policies that provide insufficient social protection, favour industrial production or fail to provide adequate infrastructure.

One in ten said conflict was the top reason for food insecurity. Six percent of respondents said that trade agreements were the cause of food insecurity.



A large number picked “another reason”. These answers often focused on economic factors, as the following examples illustrate.

Poverty is the main cause for food insecurity.

The biggest problem is unemployment and low incomes of people.

Disease, dependence on other countries, lack of schooling, tribal conflicts.

Land grabbing.

Lack of funds for people affected by food insecurity.

Lack of access to markets for smallholders, plus lack of jobs.

Financial and economic crisis during the five last years.

Empowerment helps people avoid food insecurity. If people had better access to resources, the markets for farmers would be more profitable, spurring better agriculture. A third said poverty is not just a cause of food insecurity, but a result. As food becomes scarcer, prices rise and people cannot keep pace as food takes up more of their income.

There were regional variations. In Africa, 36 percent picked low agricultural productivity and 24 percent named climate change, a factor that was rarely picked as the top reason in other regions. This reflects a tougher agriculture environment in many parts of Africa, made even more difficult by the effects of climate change, particularly increasingly erratic rainfall patterns in semi-arid regions.

In Asia, the main reasons were seen as those three, along with lack of governance and lack of knowledge about markets or agriculture. European participants most commonly cited insufficient social protection, then climate change, lack of governance, conflict and smallholder farmers’ access to resources.

Respondents in Latin America and the Caribbean blamed smallholder farmers’ lack of access to resources and food price speculation. Middle East and North Africa most commonly saw the problem as lack of clean water.



Sean Sprague for CRS

¹ See Caritas Internationalis *What Climate Change Means for Feeding the Planet*, p. 13-14.

Right to Food Laws

The presence of a right to food law seems to have little effect on the ground. Among participants in countries where there is a national law guaranteeing the right to food, just 11 percent said the official assessment is that their countries are food secure, while 58 percent characterised them as somewhat secure and 32 percent reported no food security.

In countries where there is no such law, but there are various pronouncements on the right to food, the tally was still 21 percent secure, 43 percent somewhat secure and 36 percent not secure. Where there are no such laws or pronouncements, the official assessment was 24 percent secure, 52 percent somewhat secure and 24 percent not secure. So it appears that the presence of right to food laws or pronouncements has little or no correlation with actual food security.

There were varied responses from countries without a right to food law about the possible impact of passing one. The most common answer was that such a law would not help (30%), often because there are too many other problems (such as war, drought or corruption).

But there were many who believed such a law would make at least some difference. Twenty-two percent felt it would help reduce hunger and malnutrition by leading to more government action, improving agriculture, or simply increasing advocacy and awareness on the issue of food security.

One government action that did seem to make a difference was the presence of policies in favour of small scale farmers, animal herders and fishing communities. Sixty-three percent reported at least some policies in this area. The more secure food was, the more such laws existed (33% reported many laws of this nature in countries where food is secure, 16% where food is somewhat secure and 7% where there is no food security).

Such policies were far more common in countries where there are also right to food laws – 37 percent from countries with such laws also said there are many policies in this area, compared to 13 percent from countries where there are only right to food pronouncements and just 5 percent where there are no right to food pronouncements. So, while right to food laws themselves might not be seen as making a difference, they may lead to policies that do make a difference.



Jennifer Hardy/CRS

Some comments about these measures from countries with many or some such policies.

Many policies have been put in place, but often they are not followed up.

They're not implemented. The constitution includes many of them. A process is underway to fight for the integral rural development law. But it's yet another law that isn't in the interests of the oligarchs and the powerful.

There are some policies in favour of small scale farmers, animal herders and fisher folk but all these lack sincere implementation and follow up.

The few policies developed are much more geared towards farmers and very little towards animal herders and fishing communities.

Our government gives support to promote production of farming by providing seeds and fertilisers.

Implementation poses serious problems, due to bad governance in the sector and poor mobilisation of resources and a lot of improvisation.

Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food

The FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations) Voluntary Guidelines on the Progressive Realisation of the Right to Food¹ were proposed as a tool in the framework of the Caritas campaign to work on food security.

Only 6 percent of all respondents said the Voluntary Guidelines are very well known within their organisation. Just 21 percent said this document from the Council of the UN's FAO is even somewhat well known in their organisation. Forty-nine percent were aware of the document but that is about all, while 24 percent were not even aware of it.



A number of participants commented on this question.

It is good to know about them, but promoting and taking ownership of them is another matter.

The process of becoming aware of them has begun.

The Voluntary Guidelines are not applied in our country and in no way form part of the agenda of the political programme.

We are witnessing food insecurity situations which we are striving to find solutions to by starting up training initiatives for small farmers, including awareness raising and training regarding crop management, without using the right to adequate food guidelines. Better knowledge of these guidelines would allow us orientate and organise our future actions in this area.

Just 27 percent of participants claimed to have seen any government initiatives in their country related to these Voluntary Guidelines, such as policy change or a capacity building event promoting them. Thirty-five percent said they have not seen any such initiatives, while 16 percent admitted that they were not sure. The remaining 24 percent had not heard of the Guidelines in the first place, so there was no way they would know about any events related to the Guidelines.

Awareness of any initiatives related to the Voluntary Guidelines was much higher in countries with a right to food law (47%) than in nations with only some government pronouncements (25%) or countries with no laws or pronouncements on the Right to Food (14%). Awareness of such initiatives was also much lower in Europe than in other regions and it was much lower in smaller countries.



Michael Stulman/CRS

¹ The Voluntary Guidelines on the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security, adopted in 2004, provide guidance to States in implementing the human right to adequate food, covering a wide range of actions to be considered by governments in order to enable people to feed themselves in dignity and to establish safety nets for those who are unable to do so.

Women and the Right to Food

Even less common were policies which favour access and control of production resources by women (for example, inheriting land). Just 2 percent said their country has many such policies, 31 percent said there are some, 32 percent very few and 35 percent none at all.

In countries where a right to food law exists, 6 percent said many policies favouring women exist, with 28 percent saying there are some. In countries where there are government pronouncements but no laws, 38 percent said there are some such policies. Where there are not even right to food pronouncements, just 14 percent said there are some such policies.



Ric Francis for CRS

“ The comments on this showed how varied this issue is.

Very difficult to implement policies because of a tradition not favourable to the empowerment of women.

The family code favours land inheritance by widows, but the application is insufficient.

In our country, there is no legal difference between women's and men's control of production.

A law regarding inheritance of land by women has been passed, which enables their access to land.

Women do not get a special treatment from the government. This comes into reality when NGOs are involved in activities, as equality is quite often strongly underlined by NGOs.

Habits and customs do not favour women's access to resources. They are excluded from the list of heirs. No law has been passed to reinstate women's rights.

Access to Markets

Much work on the food security issue focuses on markets, recognising their power in getting food to people and getting money to farmers.

So participants were asked whether their country promotes local markets in urban and remote rural areas. The news was encouraging on this question: while only 13 percent said this happens very much, half did say it happens some, 33 percent very little and just 4 percent said it doesn't happen at all.

Again, the promotion of local markets is far more common in nations where food is secure and far less common where there is no food security. It happens more often in countries where there are right to food laws or pronouncements than in countries where the right to food is largely ignored by the government.

“ Some comments on the markets question.

Most large-scale local produce is sold off in the cities.

Markets in remote areas are usually less attractive in terms of supplies and prices.

Promotion of local markets in urban and remote rural areas is a priority of the government.

Local markets are based on private initiatives and are also a cultural trait.

Remote rural areas have almost nothing.



Patrick Nicholson/Caritas

Challenges and Actions



Sam Tarling for CRS

Caritas agencies were asked to describe the single most important action they would take to help reduce hunger and food insecurity in their country if they could directly influence policy.

The most common answers had to do with agriculture (35% of those surveyed and 60% of those in Africa). This included protecting farming, fostering better agricultural practices, helping small farmers and helping people grow food in their own gardens.

Seventeen percent called for an action related to economic or social welfare policies such as providing more in the way of social welfare or safety nets, increasing incomes, job creation, lowering food costs and better water policies.

There were other types of actions mentioned by smaller proportions of participants: passing a right to food law or promoting such policies (11%), promoting land rights and more access to land (10%), better governance (8%), directly feeding people (8%), ending conflict (5%) and promoting education (3%).



Comments from Caritas agencies on how to improve the food situation.

Investments in smallholders and agro-ecology. Currently most investments are made by governments in cash crop production towards GDP growth. Smallholders are neglected. We need to reverse this trend.

Quality seeds and food subsidies.

Stop land grabbing.

Credit access for small farmers.

Lower tax on food.

Introduce school feeding programmes.

Universal coverage of social safety nets.

Use native seeds, implement a wide-ranging agricultural extension and technical assistance programmes, capacity building for small producers, technology transfer, alternative marketing.

Support for small producers, promotion of consumption of local products, organisation of local markets and protection of local products.

Supervision and support for family farming.

Education of farmers on climate change patterns for the growing of food, the right to food, facilities to move from subsistence farming to mechanised, processing and commercialised agriculture.

Advocate for access to credit and inputs for small agricultural producers.



Pass a law guaranteeing adequate food as an inalienable right.

Begin with education, empowerment of women, assistance to marginal and small farmers, redistribution of land and resources and controlling corruption.

Start programmes in school where children will have a well-balanced meal. This will revive the local markets in the villages and feed poor children.

Reduce conflict and provide access to local and regional markets.

People have access to resources such as land for agriculture. Secondly, encourage people to grow food for consumption. Thirdly, provide more opportunities for the local people to set up businesses and prioritise the locals with employment opportunities. Lastly promote healthy living and eating locally grown food to avoid dealing with the high cost of living.



Jim Stipe/CRS

Development activities should pay special attention to facilitating production of nutrient-rich foods and diversification of agricultural systems. Identifying methods to use water, land, fertilisers and labour more efficiently and with less negative impact is essential for ecological sustainability. It's equally important to provide local communities with means to improve their diets. This entails comprehensive healthcare and education campaigns, social protection measures that promote resiliency and initiatives that boost employment and generate income.

Recovery of the countryside (after its abandonment due to poverty and violence) with subsidies, capacity-building and organisation policies, and as a life project. Promotion and strengthening of local markets, with exchange of products that are not suffocated by monopolies and middlemen. Responsible consumption that is not elitist, but rather builds relations and social cohesion and fosters peace.

Invest in small producers' production infrastructure and encourage the organic farming production model, given that 73 percent of our main food production is carried out by small producers who use age-old local seeds, which are now tending to disappear along with all ancestral wisdom.

Caritas Engagement

Just in the countries represented by the survey responses, in-country Caritas programmes related to food security benefited 100 million people – a figure that is considerably larger than the total population of the Philippines, Germany or Egypt. Considering that the countries in this study represent a total of almost 5 billion inhabitants, one can estimate that just in-country programmes run by Caritas agencies benefited over 2.1 percent of all residents in these countries.

This figure ranged from small (around 100 people helped in a country of 40 million residents) to large. There were nine different agencies that estimated their domestic programmes benefited more than 10 percent of the country's residents (six of these were in Africa, with one each in Asia, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean). These weren't small countries – only one was under 2 million people and six had at least 10 million residents.

The total number of people helped by the 29 countries that have programmes outside of their own country was estimated at 69 million or an average of 2.4 million, with a median of 113,000 (the median is the number separating the higher half of a data sample from the lower half).

The average Caritas agency invested \$1.78 million¹ in tackling food insecurity in 2013 in its own country, with a median of \$225,000. The range went from nothing to \$50 million. In total, \$141 million was spent domestically on programmes addressing hunger and food insecurity.

There were 29 participants that reported spending on these issues in other countries. Those totals ranged from \$20,000 to \$300 million (the \$300 million figure was not representative: the next highest figure after this was \$20 million). The average expenditure was \$14 million. A total of \$411.5 million was estimated by these 29 agencies.

Each of the Caritas agencies was asked to relate its top three areas of focus in tackling hunger and food security problems. Those varied as much as the obstacles each country faces.

Four Areas Stood Out

- **Farmer training** (41% in the top three, including 14% who put it first);
- **Sustainable agriculture** (39% and 22%);
- **Food or seed distribution after emergencies** (39% and 14%);
- **Improving nutrition and health status** (39% and 11%).

Among the areas mentioned by those programmes that answered "other" were everything from emergency feeding during a drought to a bee farming project to helping the disadvantaged in agriculture to raising awareness of the food issue. The answers showed that Caritas agencies adapt to the needs on the ground and don't have a top-down, a one size fits all model.

There was variation according to the size of the country. Farmer training, food or seed distribution after emergencies, improving health or nutrition status, supporting women farmers and crop irrigation were all emphasized in smaller countries with populations under 50 million. Boosting livelihoods of small food businesses and cash for food programmes were much more likely to be a substantial focus in the large nations. Sustainable agriculture and organic farming were much less likely to be emphasized in the smallest countries.

Respondents were asked how the work of their Caritas has changed the lives of people through increasing food security and decreasing hunger and malnutrition over the last three years or so.

There were three areas on which many respondents concurred. Number one, cited by 35 percent of the Caritas agencies, was that increased food security, the distribution of food and better access to food, especially more nutritious food, had the greatest impact on hunger.

A close second was agricultural improvements: better crops, improved production, better farming practices, access to irrigation and increasing the hope people have in the field of agriculture.

Third was an improvement in levels of income, by increasing and stabilising incomes as well as helping businesses grow, which helped to reduce poverty.



Oscar Leiva/Silverlight for CRS



Comments respondents made about the impact of their work.

Return to ancestral good production practices; awareness of the use of native plants with high nutritional content.

Communities changed from a buyer of agriculture products to become a seller of agriculture products in the traditional market.

Empowerment of women, dissemination of key health practices.

Reduction in malnutrition, greater predictability and diversification of produce.

Reduced farmers' suicide. Regained hope in agriculture.

Reduced use of chemicals. Climate adaptability. Institutionalised farmer clubs.

Linkages to banks and government schemes.

Mainly lifesaving in emergencies, in some cases framework for family farming has improved, in some places progress was washed away by war or climate change.

Food availability, significant decrease in cases of malnourished children, adoption of new food habits, high rate of schooling and keeping children at school.

We do much more work on nutrition education than previously. Also, linking people with public benefits in addition to actual food distribution.

A change from production actions to entrepreneurship based on self-management and autonomy.

Easier and more reliable access to clean water, women in particular have more time for everything else that needs to be done in the community.

People were able to sell the surplus of their crops and use the money to take their children to school. They could afford to go to hospital and pay for transport.

Improvement of family production, improved crop management, access to potable water and sanitation infrastructure.

Quality of life improved. People have increased access to food, improved sanitation and clean water.

Through one of our micro-projects to produce food and meals, we have been able to provide the needy and vulnerable (especially refugees and children) with good nutrition.

For the people involved in our programmes, their food security has increased at least 20-50 percent.

We have improved capacities and in many cases broken the circle of poverty, so that people gain autonomy and resiliency.

¹ U.S. dollars

Conclusion

Realising the right to adequate food and ensuring food security for all is part of a vision aimed at integral human development. That is at the heart of the Caritas Internationalis *One Human Family, Food for All* campaign.

"The Caritas Internationalis campaign has raised awareness of the right to adequate food," said one respondent.

Ending hunger by 2025 means fighting the structural causes of food insecurity. This requires change in policies, laws, the way we produce and consume food, but also in societies and cultures, so as to open access to resources for the most disadvantaged.



The consequences of food insecurity go beyond hunger, involving problems that hamper human development.



The main solution to food insecurity is to support agriculture at small scale, considering that small scale farmers produce most of the food that is eaten in the world.



Lack of access to production resources, low agricultural productivity, climate change and inadequate government policies are the main causes of food insecurity worldwide.



Although laws guaranteeing the human right to adequate food would not eradicate hunger, they would spur government action and interventions.



The UN's Voluntary Guidelines on the progressive realisation of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security need to be used more to make precise assessments on food security in countries.



Women must have equal access to and control of resources for food production



A good agricultural market system, in particular the promotion of local markets, is a powerful instrument to avert the consequences of food insecurity.



Civil society dialogue with governments has to be strengthened in view of improving policies, laws and systems to ensure food security, as well as to strengthen cooperation.



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