



Muslimah Writers Alliance

NATIONAL HUNGER AWARENESS DAY 2006
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Five Facts on World Hunger Children and Wasting

A condition that represents severe malnutrition.

- 78% of the world's 5.5 million wasted children live in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh; nearly two thirds of those in India alone.
- Wasting is a complex condition that is not simply caused by conflict, such as political instability or famine alone.
- High HIV/AIDS rates are contributors to worsening nutrition, both from the direct effects of the disease and from the indirect impact on household food security and childcare.
- Wealth creation at a national level does not preclude the persistence of wasting on a large scale.
- The problem of wasting needs to be addressed wherever it is identified, not just in emergencies.



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Hunger Awareness Symposium, June 5, 2006

A coalition of organizations in the agriculture sector, federal government, conservation groups, the food industry and the faith community will convene on the eve of National Hunger Awareness Day to address the issue of hunger and chart a course for change in 2006. "I look forward to representing Muslimah Writers Alliance at this year's symposium, and I am equally thrilled to present MWA's first newsletter offering three thought provoking essays on the subject of hunger written by MWA members from Kenya, Florida and Saudi Arabia." ~Aishah Schwartz, MWA Founder and Director

FEATURE: Hungry for Humanity, By Fatima Aly-Jaffer

It is part of the basic vocabulary a child first learns, and an essential expression for survival. More recently, it has become an extreme global issue, heart wrenching to witness and unimaginable to bear. "We dream of being rid of it, but do we fully comprehend the concept of hunger?"

What is hunger?

Is it when you've skipped breakfast, are 'absolutely starving' by lunchtime and must have something to eat or else you'll 'faint' or 'just die!'?

Is it when you send your child to school, not for the education, but because of the free lunch program?

Is it when a child has gone so long without water that his parched throat no longer has the elasticity to swallow?

Or is hunger being so emptied of energy that a person can only stare out at the world through sunken eyes with lids too dehydrated to mercifully fall in the final moments of life?

Tragic images of the hunger-stricken are broadcast daily through our television sets. Celluloid images of the hungry, glaring accusingly, demanding accountability for the tragedy of lives lost to lurk in our consciousness. Often, we forget that hunger is in the streets of America, as well as the deserts of Africa.

However, numbers grab attention and with millions dying (estimates for the eastern and northern regions of Africa alone fall between 6 and 11 million) from lack of basic nutritional needs, plenty of newsworthy stories can be found in these famine stricken regions.

Every so often our global consciousness awakens. Two decades ago it was the Live Aid concert, last year it was Live 8, and between these peaks of public generosity, a steady stream of donations pour in from selfless individuals and publicity-seeking organizations.

So why are people still starving? Where is all the money going? Why aren't the dollars solving the problem?

What few people realize is that the hunger issue isn't about not having food, it is about not having a means to obtain food. Financial aid is merely a temporary solution.

The dying are people, just like you and me. But we treat them like second-class citizens of the world, doling out the surplus of our lives and expecting kudos for relegating them to eternal begging. Perhaps we like having a few under-privileged masses; they nurture our sense of charity and make us feel like better human beings. Does that sound offensive to you?

Then why not do something to prove it wrong? The world needs permanent changes.

We need to stop indulging ourselves and get involved. Neglecting the plight of the hungry contributes to it.

The realization that around the globe people are dying from starvation should make us appreciate what we take for granted - moving us to help those less fortunate.

Policy changes and long-term solutions have to be a part of the plan if those suffering are to survive not only another month, but also another year.

- The root causes of hunger and malnutrition for each affected demographic have to be assessed.

- We must lobby for amendments to the way aid is distributed, and for changes in trade policies with developing countries.

- Aid organizations must be held strictly accountable for the distribution of funds provided in assistance.

- Jobs, health care and education must be a priority.

Awareness to hunger means participating actively and tackling the challenges to secure change.

Are you willing to recognize that the plight of humanity cannot be ignored even one more day? Are you ready to get involved?

If you answered "yes" to the above questions, join Muslimah Writers Alliance in support of **National Hunger Awareness Day - June 6, 2006** - and welcome back to humanity.

The Eyes of Hunger

By Karam Thomas

Have you ever seen the eyes of hunger? I am referring to the eyes of a child who has not eaten for days. The eyes of children who have given up, the light in their eyes gone; they are too weak to cry - or even ask, "Why?"

Most people have not seen the eyes of hunger, or even given it much thought. It's hard to think about hungry people when your own stomach is full.

Society of Excesses

Many of us have heard shocking statistics like the one reporting that approximately 35,000 children die every day due to

hunger and malnourishment related diseases.

The average fast food restaurant meal costs more than what some people spend to feed their entire family for a week.

A study conducted a few years ago concluded that, on average, for a two-week period, the amount of food thrown away in the United States could feed the people of India for a whole year.

Visual Aid

Picture a baseball stadium filled to capacity on a Sunday afternoon - fans gathered to eat, drink, and spend too much money on food - much of which ends up wasted - all for the sake of having a good time.

Now imagine the same stadium filled with children; only this time there is no ball game, no food, no water. At the end of the day they will all be dead.

Reality Check

I am not trying to make you feel guilty; however, you can assume a degree of responsibility to help those who are less fortunate.

Experiment for a week, and try living a little more frugally.

- Don't let those leftovers in the refrigerator go to waste.
- Pack a lunch for work instead of eating out.
- Cut down on those trips to your favorite coffee shop.
- Donate the money you save to your local food bank.



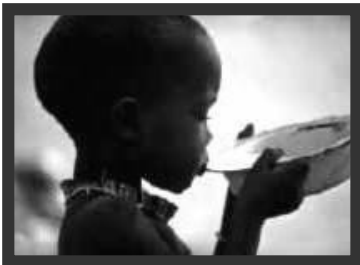
We all have the power to make a difference. Let this be our first step towards it.

Thank you on behalf of the children for helping to end world hunger.

CRISIS:

Poverty and Hunger

By Seatah Al-Dossary



In a world where there is a solution to almost every problem, a cure for almost every disease, and accomplishments like sending people to outer space, why do so many people suffer from hunger? Is it because there isn't much food on our planet? Or is it something else? Can something be done to help those who are suffering while others eat until their stomachs hurt?

About 1.2 billion people suffer from hunger, and approximately 9 million people die each year from either hunger or deficiency diseases. About 5 million of these deaths are attributed to children, yet 1.2 billion suffer from obesity.

According to one study, our planet can feed more than 40 billion people. This figure is more than 6 times the current world population and, according to some scientific estimations, far more than the planet will ever inhabit.

Poverty is one of the main reasons that lead to hunger. Many people can't afford food. Food is for those with resources. Solving world hunger cannot happen unless poverty is addressed first.

So how can you help? You can help by sending a donation to one of the many hunger organizations.

Another way you can help is to save what remains from your last meal and distribute it to those workers you always see in the street. Or, you can give it to those you know are in need instead of throwing it in the trash can.

In the Quran Allah (God) says; "Whoever saved a life, it shall be as if he had saved the life of all mankind." [Quran 5:32]

By helping those in need you will, Insha'Allah, receive mercy and great reward from Allah, "So establish regular prayer and give regular

charity and obey the apostle; that ye may receive mercy." [Qur'an 2:110]

The rewards for being charitable are also manifold: charity purifies our wealth and Allah, Most High, has promised us a great reward for being charitable towards our fellow human beings.



www.islamicrelief.com

Established in 2006, MWA is an internationally based organization with a mission to inspire Muslim women to collaborate with one another for the sake of Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala and the common good of the Muslim Ummah, in addition to being of support to one another in fulfilling their aspirations to become established writers. Applying Islamic principles, boundless enthusiasm, experience, and resourcefulness to every project embraced, MWA members are dedicated to one another's success.