



**ACTION
AGAINST
HUNGER**

THE HUNGER FUNDING GAP

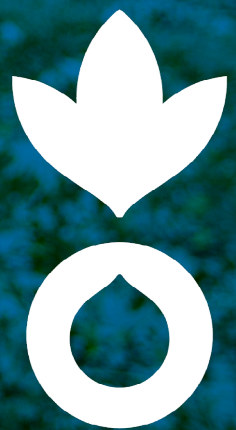
**HOW THE WORLD IS FAILING
TO STOP THE CRISIS**

Photos: Cover : Peter Caton
for Action Against Hunger

This Page: Sebastien Dujindam
for Action Against Hunger

ABOUT ACTION AGAINST HUNGER

Action Against Hunger is a nonprofit leader in a global movement to end hunger in our lifetimes. It innovates solutions, advocates for change, and reaches 25 million people every year with proven hunger prevention and treatment programs. As a nonprofit that works across 50 countries, its 8,300 dedicated staff members partner with communities to address the root causes of hunger, including climate change, conflict, inequity, and emergencies. It strives to create a world free from hunger, for everyone, for good.



GLOBAL HUNGER RATES HAVE REACHED DANGEROUS LEVELS.

An estimated 828 million people — one in ten worldwide — were undernourished last year, the highest in decades ([FAO](#)). As many as 50 million people in 45 countries are on the verge of famine ([World Food Program](#)).

The climate crisis, war, and soaring inflation are impacting farmers' ability to grow food and families' ability to afford what is available. These factors also are increasing the cost for humanitarian organizations to secure and transport supplies, contributing to a growing hunger crisis in many parts of the world.

Photos: Peter Caton and Guy Calaf for Action Against Hunger



RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

To shed new light on the state of funding for hunger-related programs, Action Against Hunger compared the severity of hunger with the funding response from the global community. We focused on 13 countries that experienced “crisis” levels of hunger or worse in 2020 and how the global community responded with funding in 2021.

We hope this report will help mobilize action by illustrating serious gaps in hunger funding vs.need, and would like to emphasize a few critical points up front:

- Everyone deserves to be well nourished. And, there is enough food and funding to meet the UN [Global Goal](#) of Zero Hunger by 2030. This report is not intended to raise questions about whether resources should be taken from those who are hungry to address the needs of those facing famine.
- It is possible to end hunger in our lifetimes. Between 2005 and 2014, the number of undernourished people dropped almost 30%, from 806 million to 572 million ([FAO](#)).
- Fighting hunger is not just a question of having enough food. While climate change and conflict are major drivers of hunger, for the purpose of this analysis, we specifically focused on funding patterns in areas most directly associated with hunger.
- We hope this analysis shines a brighter light on how responsive funding is (or is not) to immediate needs, even as we recognize that hunger levels are influenced by long-term funding patterns and a host of other complex issues such as climate, conflict, and humanitarian access, among others.
- While funding is just one part of what it takes to address the complex challenges of hunger, we’re unlikely to end global hunger in our lifetimes without also closing the hunger funding gap.
- To avoid the worst-case scenario, quality funds need to reach people who are most in need. But, after working for more than 40 years in approximately 50 countries, we suspected that was not happening consistently. That is why we developed this report

Photo: Sandra Calligaro
for Action Against Hunger





**“BY COMING TOGETHER
AGAINST HUNGER,
WE BELIEVE THE WORLD
CAN MAKE PROGRESS
ON THIS URGENT ISSUE”**

- Dr. Charles Owubah, CEO
Action Against Hunger



To develop this report, we analyzed hunger levels in 2020, and then measured the 2021 humanitarian funding response, as tracked through the [UN OCHA Financial Tracking Service](#). 2021 is the most recent full-year data available.

We used 2020 hunger data and 2021 funding data to control for a degree of causality — i.e., that hunger levels would be lower in countries that receive more funding because that funding has been effective.

We began by selecting countries from 2020 data that were experiencing “crisis” levels of malnutrition or worse, meaning they were categorized as Phase 3 or higher in the [Integrated Food Security Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#).

We then cross-referenced that list with a database of annual [Humanitarian Response Plans \(HRPs\)](#), which are developed by countries requesting assistance and outline those countries’ most urgent funding needs within the international humanitarian system. Humanitarian Response Plans typically are designed to address acute needs rather than long-term development, which could help prevent hunger. When it comes to hunger, HRPs may prioritize urgent funds for treating potentially life-threatening

forms of child malnutrition and contain requests for comparatively less funding for long-term agricultural sector development, for example.

For this report, we drew on 2021 data available in the [OCHA Financial Tracking Service](#) reports. From our initial list of countries experiencing crisis levels of hunger (or greater), we excluded countries that did not have a Humanitarian Response Plan. We also excluded countries that did not offer reporting on funding response in the following areas: Food Security; Nutrition; and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH). We included WASH because water and sanitation are [deeply related](#) to hunger and nutrition outcomes.

This yielded a list of 13 countries, which are the focus of this report: Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Honduras, Mozambique, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen, and Zimbabwe.

For each country, we compared the percentage of the population facing IPC Phase 3 or greater with the percentage of the Humanitarian Response Plan that was funded by focusing on three priority sectors for fighting hunger (Food Security, Nutrition, and WASH).


Photo: Hanz Rippe for Action Against Hunger

MEDIA COVERAGE

We also analyzed media coverage of our core 13 countries. Specifically, we used the [Muck Rack](#) platform to search for articles in print and online English-language media outlets globally that appeared between January 1, 2021 and January 1, 2022. Our method consisted of tallying the number of articles that mentioned – in either the headline or body – each individual country from our dataset.

U.S. PUBLIC OPINION

To find out how most Americans view this issue, we worked with [The Harris Poll](#). The public opinion data in this report are drawn from a survey conducted online within the United States by The Harris Poll on behalf of Action Against Hunger from September 15-19, 2022, among 2,075 adults ages 18+. The sampling precision of Harris online polls is measured by using a Bayesian credible interval. For this study, the sample data is accurate to within +/- 2.8 percentage points using a 95% confidence level.



**“MY NEIGHBOR’S CHILD’S
CONDITION WORRIES ME A LOT,
WHICH IS WHY I SOLD THE ONLY
BUCKET WE HAD FOR \$1.50 TO
BUY FOOD.”**

- Mumina Afyarow



EIGHT KEY FINDINGS

Photo: Nada Al-Saqaf for Action Against Hunger

1.

COMPARED TO A DECADE AGO, HUMANITARIAN NEEDS ARE UP OVER 500% WHILE 42% FEWER UN APPEALS ARE FULFILLED.

While global funding has increased 223% over the past decade, overall humanitarian needs are up 500%, so 42% fewer UN appeals being fulfilled.

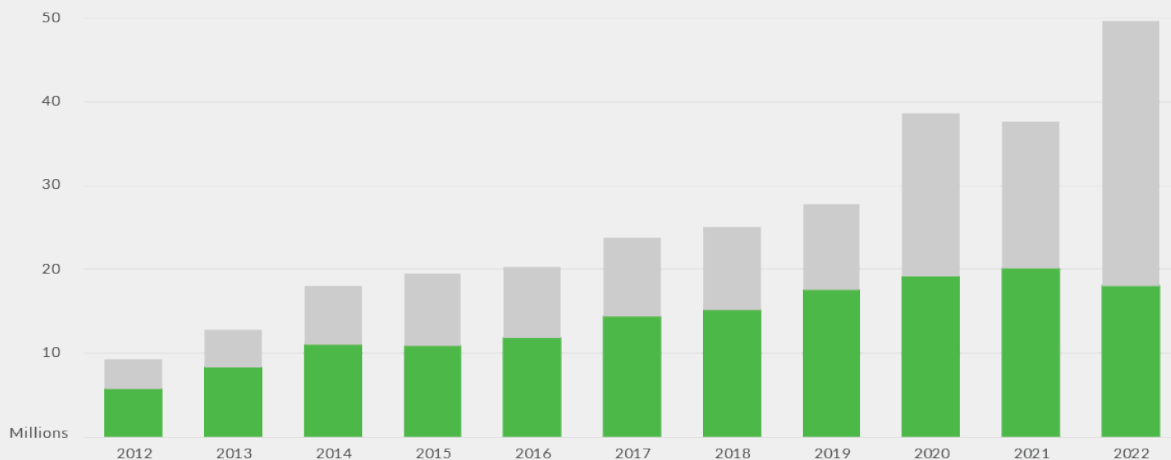
Across all sectors, UN response appeals, and countries, the percentage of humanitarian response plans that have been funded has fallen from 63% in 2012 to 36% as of September 2022. That is a decrease of 27 percentage points (42%).

This has impacted funds for hunger-related programs, which represented 40% of requests for support via countries' 2021 Humanitarian Response Plans, on average. For the countries analyzed in this report, hunger-related programs represented 45% of 2021 requests for support.

TRENDS IN RESPONSE PLAN / APPEAL REQUIREMENTS

GREEN / RESPONSE PLAN / APPEAL FUNDING

GREY / UNMET REQUIREMENTS



2.

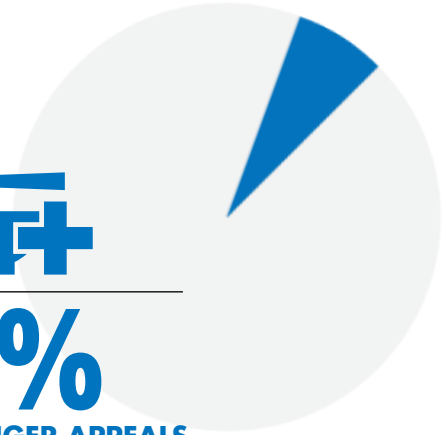
AS FAMINE LOOMS, ONLY 7% OF URGENT UN HUNGER APPEALS ARE FULLY FUNDED

Today, the hunger gap is 93% - meaning that, on average, only 7% of hunger funding needs were fully met across the countries we analyzed. What's more, the majority (61%) of UN appeals analyzed in this report were not even funded to the halfway point.



7%

**HUNGER APPEALS
ARE FULLY FUNDED**



3.

THERE ARE MAJOR FUNDING GAPS ACROSS THE BOARD, WITH NO UN WATER AND SANITATION APPEALS FULLY FUNDED IN 2021.

On average, across the 13 countries examined:

15% of UN Nutrition appeals were fully funded.

7.6% of UN Food Security appeals were fully funded.

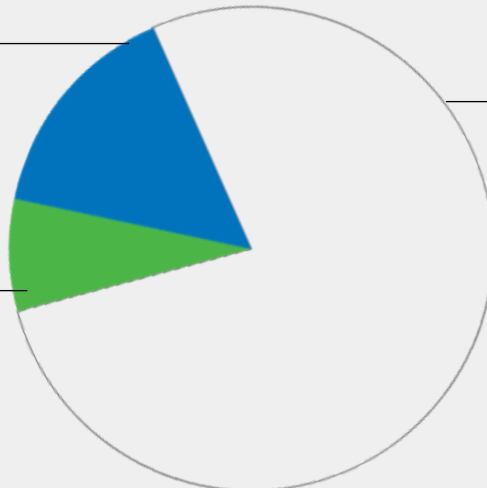
No UN water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) appeals were fully funded.

15%

**UN NUTRITION
APPEALS
FULLY FUNDED**

7.6%

**UN FOOD SECURITY
APPEALS FULLY FUNDED**



**NO UN WATER,
SANITATION,
AND HYGIENE
(WASH) APPEALS
WERE FULLY
FUNDED.**

4.

GREATER HUNGER LEVELS DON'T LEAD TO GREATER FUNDING

Countries where the hunger crisis was greatest actually received less hunger funding (by percentage of appeals filled) than countries experiencing half the rate of hunger.

Specifically, the four countries where at least 40% of people faced crisis level rates of malnutrition* (Haiti, Central African Republic, Yemen, and South Sudan) received proportionally less funding for hunger programs than the four countries (Somalia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Burundi) where half as many people (less than 22% of the population) experienced a hunger crisis.

On average, countries where crisis levels of hunger were twice as great had UN appeals fulfilled to the 35% mark (vs. 49% for the comparison set).

For example, among the countries analyzed, South Sudan faced the greatest hunger crisis in

2020 (by percentage of the population in IPC 3 or greater). Yet, in 2021, its hunger-related UN appeals were only 42% fulfilled. In contrast, in 2020, Somalia had the lowest burden of hunger (population facing IPC 3 or greater), and, in 2021, had 57% of UN hunger appeals fulfilled.

However, needs can change quickly. As of September 12, 2022, 6.7 million people, 41% of Somalia's population, are experiencing a hunger crisis and parts of Somalia are now on the brink of famine. See the Somalia spotlight below.

Despite the fact that greater hunger levels do not necessarily mean greater funding, the majority of Americans (59%) believe that global funding for hunger relief usually goes to countries that need it the most.

SOMALIA



In Somalia, 10% of the population is facing IPC 3 or greater.

Somalia received **\$404 Million USD** in funding across all three sectors.

SOUTH SUDAN



In South Sudan, 53% of the population is facing IPC 3 or greater.

South Sudan received **\$431 Million USD** in funding across all three sectors.

Percentage of UN funding appeals fulfilled, by sector

5.

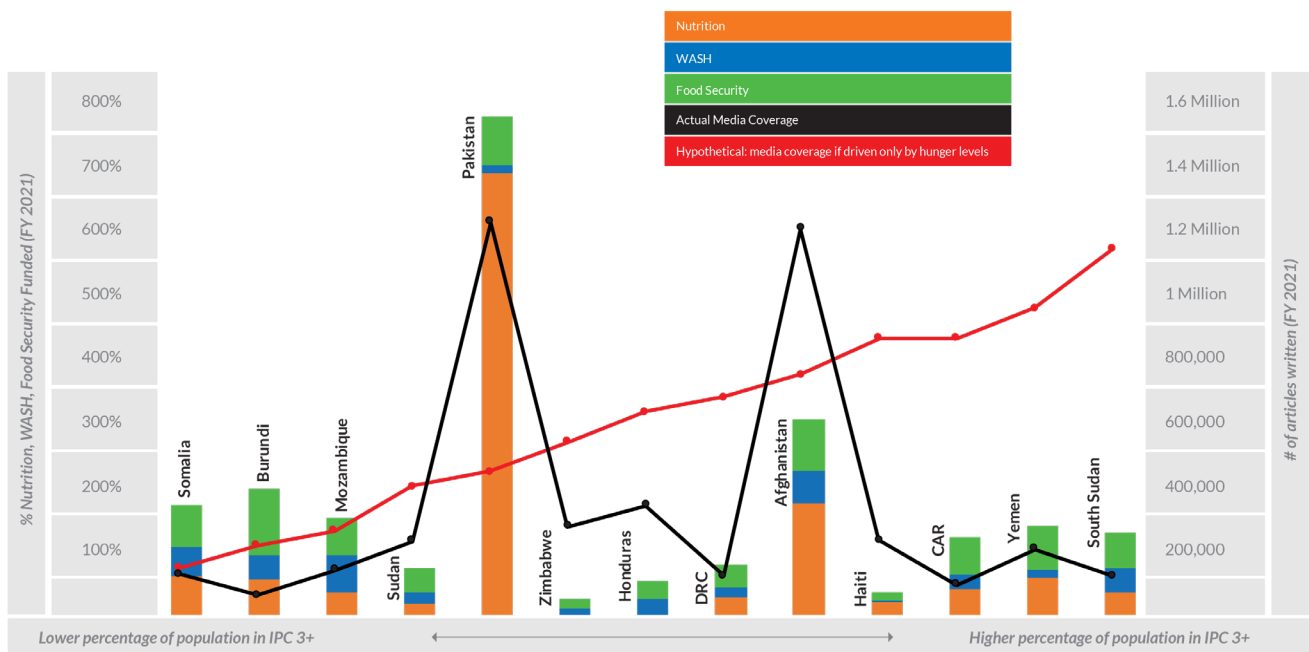
MEDIA HEADLINES CORRELATE TO FUNDING LEVELS – NOT HUNGER LEVELS

Global English-language media headlines during the funding period did not focus on countries where hunger or the unmet need for humanitarian support was highest. Media coverage appears to correlate closely with funding amounts – although this does not necessarily mean there is a causal relationship and in some cases there were exceptions.

For example, in Afghanistan, media coverage was highly influenced by the United States’ withdrawal from the country. Similarly, media coverage of Haiti ticked up around the 2021 earthquake and in response to the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. Honduras also saw slightly higher media coverage, largely centered around that country’s presidential election, issues of mass migration and climate-related disasters.



Photo: Peter Catton for Action Against Hunger



6.

AMERICANS SIGNIFICANTLY UNDERESTIMATE THE SEVERITY OF THE HUNGER FUNDING GAP.

More than 84% of Americans underestimate the severity of the hunger funding gap, believing that 10% or more of funding requests for hunger, clean water, and sanitation were fulfilled in 2021. Additionally, more than one in four Americans (27%) believe that 50% or more of hunger, clean water, and sanitation funding requests are fully met, when, in reality, only 7% of those requests are fully funded.

HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF IPC 3+

Countries Organized by IPC Phase 3+
South Sudan
Yemen
Central African Republic
Haiti
Afghanistan
Democratic Republic of Congo
Honduras
Zimbabwe
Pakistan
Sudan
Mozambique
Burundi
Somalia

LOWEST PERCENTAGE OF IPC 3+

RANKED BY HIGHEST % OF APPEALS FILED

Countries Organized by OCHA appeals filled
Pakistan
Afghanistan
Burundi
Somalia
Yemen
South Sudan
Central African Republic
Democratic Republic of Congo
Sudan
Honduras
Haiti
Mozambique
Zimbabwe

*Appeals include Nutrition, Food Security and WASH





Photo: Peter Caton
for Action Against Hunger



HUNGER IS A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM, BUT ONE WE CAN SOLVE.

90% of Americans believe that global hunger remains a serious problem in the world today, up slightly from the 86% who held that view in a survey conducted by The Harris Poll on behalf of [Action Against Hunger in 2021](#).

- Americans aged 45+ are more likely to believe that global hunger remains a serious problem in the world today (93%) than those ages 18-34 (85%).
- Americans agree relatively equally that global hunger remains a serious problem in the world today across regions of the United States (91% Northeast, 90% South, 88% Midwest, and 91% West), and across Black (87%), Hispanic (88%), and non-Hispanic White Americans (91%), and across gender (89% men vs. 90% women).

EVEN SO, MORE THAN HALF OF AMERICANS (57%) AGREE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO END GLOBAL HUNGER IN THEIR LIFETIME.

SOME ARE MORE LIKELY THAN OTHERS TO AGREE THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO END GLOBAL HUNGER IN THEIR LIFETIME

More likely to agree	Less likely to agree
Younger adults (ages 35-44) (70%)	Older adults (age 45+) (50%)
Men (60%)	Women (53%)
Black (70%) and Hispanic (63%)	White, non-Hispanic (53%)
Northeast and West (both 60%)	Midwest (51%)
Parents with children under age 18 (69%)	Those who are not parents of children under age 18 (51%)

8.

AMERICANS SEE FUNDING AS KEY TO ADDRESSING HUNGER, AND LOOK FAVORABLY ON POLITICAL ACTION

Most Americans (75%) believe that lack of funding is a major barrier in addressing global hunger. This view is shared across gender, age, racial/ethnic groups, income levels, marital status, and regions in the country.

A majority of Americans (77%) agree that they would think less of a U.S political candidate who did not support emergency hunger assistance for children at risk of starvation, no matter where in the world the children live.

This view was broadly shared across most key demographics, with no significant differences based on race/ethnicity, income level, region of the country, and even parental status. One difference was age, with older Americans (age 65+) more likely than younger Americans (18-34) to think less of a U.S. political candidate who did not support emergency hunger assistance programs for children at risk of starvation, no matter where in the world those children live (84% vs. 70%).



75%

MOST AMERICANS BELIEVE THAT LACK OF FUNDING IS A MAJOR BARRIER IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL HUNGER.

77%

A MAJORITY OF AMERICANS AGREE THAT THEY WOULD THINK LESS OF A U.S POLITICAL CANDIDATE WHO DID NOT SUPPORT EMERGENCY HUNGER ASSISTANCE FOR CHILDREN AT RISK OF STARVATION, NO MATTER WHERE IN THE WORLD THE CHILDREN LIVE.

Photo: Peter Caton
for Action Against Hunger



Soaring food prices, unprecedented drought, and conflict are driving the alarming rise in hunger in Somalia, where six regions could face famine this year. The drought has already forced 800,000 people to abandon their homes in a desperate search for water and food, leading to conflicts over what few resources are still available. In the 30 years that Action Against Hunger has worked in Somalia, there have never been more people seeking life-saving treatment at our hunger stabilization centers.

Mumina Afyarow has no milk left to breastfeed her youngest daughter, just five months old. “What can I give her?” asked the 29-year-old widow and mother of three.

Last year, the drought killed her goats and donkey – the family’s primary source of income and food. Desperate for food and a new livelihood to support herself and her children, Mumina left her home in the village of Garasweyn and walked more than 11 miles to the nearest displacement camp. She was four months pregnant at the time and knew she would need health care and a safe place to deliver her baby.

Photos: Top: Said Musse for Action Against Hunger
Right: Tom Gustin for Action Against Hunger

Life at the camp has not been easy. There are severe food shortages and malnutrition is common among young children. Most people depend completely on humanitarian assistance from groups like Action Against Hunger.

“I do not want my child to starve,” said Mumina, who saw a neighbor’s two-year-old child fall critically ill with malnutrition. “My neighbor’s child’s condition worries me a lot, which is why I sold the only bucket we had for \$1.50 to buy food.”

Across Somalia, [fuel costs have doubled](#), and the price of food continues to climb. In the El Barde region, for example, costs of staple goods have more than doubled since May of 2021: vegetable oil has increased by 129% (3 liters has risen from \$3.50 to \$8), flour by 133% (50 kilograms from \$30 to \$70), and rice by 112% (50 kilograms from \$33 to \$70).



Inflation also is increasing the cost of delivering humanitarian assistance, yet donations are not keeping pace with rising needs. To address this challenge, Action Against Hunger's local team meets with donors more than once a week, on average.

“Even with our greatest efforts, we are still seeing funding levels drop, though we know these appeals are able to be filled,” said Mohamed Abdi Hahji, program director for Action Against Hunger in Somalia. “For example, this year we requested \$5.3 million for nutrition programs, yet only \$1.7 million was received. That means our Nutrition programs didn't even receive half as much as they needed to be successful. We do our best in these circumstances, but we want to be able to do more.”

The team has been working to secure quality funding, or flexible, multi-year support that enables anticipatory action – such as preventing hunger rather than waiting to treat malnutrition when it has reached crisis levels – or worse.

“Since word spread that Somalia is on the brink of famine, more than half of what we requested at the beginning of the year came between July and September,” Hahji explained. “It is great that we have funds coming in, but if we'd had this when we asked the first time, we might have prevented the current crisis. In our nutrition stabilization centers, we have seen a 51.3% increase in children admitted for acute malnutrition [since last year]. Children are coming to us on the brink of death. We don't want to be here; we want to be able to intervene before we get to this point.”

FAST FACTS: SOMALIA



POPULATION:
10.81 MILLION

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION
FACING “CRISIS” HUNGER LEVELS IN 2020:
10 MILLION PEOPLE

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION
FACING “CRISIS” HUNGER LEVELS IN TODAY:
6.7 MILLION PEOPLE

PERCENTAGE OF THE POPULATION
HELPED BY ACTION AGAINST HUNGER IN 2020:
9%

PERCENTAGE OF THE COUNTRY'S
HUNGER FUNDING NEEDS THAT HAVE
BEEN MET AS OF OCTOBER 2022:
15%

LIMITATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

We note several limitations, which we hope future research might address.

These include:

- This is, by definition, an initial analysis that looks at a narrow window in time. The data does not fully reflect the ongoing impact of rising prices and growing hunger related to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war in the Ukraine, and other stressors. We hope that future analyses might take a longer-term view and consider the full historic data set to provide insights into trends over time.
- This report assumes that Humanitarian Response Plans and requested funding amounts adequately reflect actual needs and hunger levels. Alternate approaches could yield additional insights and should be considered.
- We focused our analysis on countries where adequate data was available both on IPC classification and UN appeals made through the OCHA Service. As a result, some countries facing high levels of hunger (IPC Phase 3 or greater) were excluded since they did not appear in the OCHA data set, and vice versa.
- We focused on news headlines, and while a preliminary analysis of headlines and full coverage yielded similar results, this could be an area of additional study. Media analysis focused only on English-language outlets globally. We included international media outlets because funding comes from multiple sources and countries. Future studies could include coverage in multiple languages for a more robust picture.
- Data sets reflect the fact that some countries, notably Honduras and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, did not receive or detail Nutrition funding.
- This report focuses on “crisis” levels of hunger (IPC level 3+). Yet, earlier and greater funding also is needed to help prevent communities at IPC levels 1 and 2 from seeing their hunger levels rise. Future reports could take a broader view.

Photos: Said Musse
for Action Against Hunger





LOOKING FORWARD

It's critical for the public and policymakers to understand funding relative to need, particularly since the number of people facing chronic hunger has risen 80% since 2016. In 2021, global hunger exceeded previous records, with 193 million people across 53 countries/territories acutely food insecure and in need of urgent assistance ([Global Report on Food Crises 2022](#)).

Among other factors, we are concerned about rising inflation and food supply chain stressors, the impacts of the war in Ukraine, and the historic drought in the Horn of Africa. None of the countries in the Horn of Africa that we analyzed had appeals for hunger funding fulfilled in 2021, and a growing number of people are on the brink of famine.

While this report examines the hunger funding gap, another crucial issue is the timing of funding – which is not only too little, but often comes too late to prevent needless suffering. The humanitarian sector needs to place even greater emphasis on [quality funding](#), which is flexible, unearmarked, multi-year, and accessible.

As a next step, we welcome additional research to address the questions raised in the “limitations and considerations” section of this report. Yet, even as additional insights are useful, the world can't afford to wait. We must take action and come together against hunger now.





Photos: Peter Caton
for Action Against Hunger



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Left: Christophe Da Silva for Action Against Hunger