

Editor's Note [Volume 26 No. 5 (2026)]

Can World Hunger Ever Be Eliminated?

My life has just done a 360 degree circle. A month ago, I buried my husband of over 50 years in the same community where I started my rural development work. As I look back, it dawned on me how much the community had changed. At the time of my intervention, it was as if poverty was staring at me in the face. Now at the burial of my husband, I observed many young men looking for just any job to do. A young man would tell you he is married and needs to provide for his young wife and children, and for his aged parents. In the past, there was a lot of poverty and people, especially women, needed the knowledge and encouragement to work harder to increase yields. There was hunger then, and there is hunger today. As the world advances in science, technology, and economic development, the persistence of hunger remains one of humanity's greatest paradoxes. Global food production today is sufficient to feed the world's population, yet hundreds of millions of people continue to experience food insecurity, undernutrition, and hunger. This raises an enduring and uncomfortable question: Can world hunger ever be eliminated?

The answer is both encouraging and challenging. Hunger is not primarily a consequence of insufficient food production. Rather, it reflects deep inequalities in access to food, poverty, conflict, climate change, economic instability, poor governance, and inadequate investment in agriculture and rural livelihoods. In many regions, food exists but remains inaccessible to those who need it most.

Recent global crises - including pandemics, armed conflicts, rising food prices, and extreme weather events - have demonstrated how fragile food systems can be. Climate change increasingly threatens agricultural productivity, particularly in low-income countries where smallholder farmers remain highly vulnerable. At the same time, rapid urbanization, population growth, and environmental degradation continue to place additional pressure on food systems.

Yet, there are also reasons for optimism. Scientific advances, improved agricultural practices, nutrition-sensitive policies, social protection programs, and strengthened local food systems have shown that progress is possible. Countries that have invested consistently in education, agricultural development, women's empowerment, public health, and social safety nets have significantly reduced hunger and malnutrition.



Eliminating world hunger, therefore requires more than increasing food production. It demands political commitment, equitable economic growth, sustainable agriculture, resilient food systems, and recognition of food as a fundamental human right. Particular attention must be given to vulnerable populations, including women, children, smallholder farmers, and marginalized communities. The Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030 has proven ambitious, and current trends suggest that many countries may fall short of this target. Nevertheless, ambition remains essential. The question may not simply be whether world hunger can be entirely eliminated, but whether societies possess the collective will to address the structural causes that perpetuate it. As this issue of AJFAND explores the interconnections between food systems, nutrition, agriculture, health, and sustainable development, it invites researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and communities to reflect on both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Evidence-based solutions exist. The task before us is to implement them equitably, sustainably, and at scale. The elimination of hunger is not merely a technical challenge; it is a moral imperative. A world free from hunger remains possible if humanity chooses to make it a priority, and where there is good governance.

I dedicate this issue to my late husband, Professor Emeritus Clement Meshack Oniang'o who always cheered me on to do better. May his soul continue to rest in eternal peace.

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We have 14 excellently reviewed manuscripts in this issue

