

SL IB Geography



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9.3 Stakeholders in Food & Health

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9.3.1 The Role of International Organisations in Food & Health

International Organisations Food & Health

Roles of International Organisations

- **International organisations** are important in the fight against **food insecurity** and **disease**
- They provide:
 - Key **policies** for food provision
 - **Funding** for food production and consumption
 - **Education**
 - **Research**
- They also influence the Nutrition Transition, working towards improving food and reducing disease

World Food Programme

- **The World Food Programme (WFP)** was founded by the United Nations in 1961
- **Mission:** Ending the global hunger crisis and food insecurity, and supporting sustainable development
 - Food support during emergencies and crises
 - Helping communities with nutrition and resilience
 - Development aid and relief
- Main focus points of the WFP:
 - **Emergency response and preparedness**
 - Response to natural disasters, pandemics and conflict
 - Preparing for emergencies, reducing the impact and providing early warning systems
 - **Climate Action**
 - Disasters caused by climate change e.g. floods or droughts can damage food production systems
 - Preparation, mitigation strategies and insurance support
 - **Forecast-based Financing** - providing money to at-risk families, to purchase food and make their homes more resilient to disaster e.g. Bangladesh flooding in 2019
 - **Nutrition**
 - Battling malnutrition (deficiencies and surplus) to support **Sustainable Development**
 - Programmes to support healthy diets for vulnerable groups e.g. pregnant women, children and immunocompromised people (HIV)
 - **School-based programmes**
 - Provision of school meals to support child nutrition and education
 - Homegrown school feeding sources food locally, bringing income to local farmers
 - Also working to provide water, sanitation and deworming
 - **Small farms**
 - Helping small farms produce sustainable food with business training
 - Improving infrastructures like roads to transport food to markets



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- **Resilience**
 - **Food Assistance to Assets Programme** - provides money for people to afford food, so their focus goes towards other vital projects e.g. climate disaster resilience
 - **Cash Assistance** - provision of money or vouchers to improve food choices. This also supports local food production and the economy
 - **Country Strategic Plans** - educating those who work in the public, private and civil sectors, to better mitigate disaster and improve food security. It also provides investment into early warning systems for disasters
 - E.g. The Ethiopian government received support in using drones to track flooding areas
- It is donation-based and is currently experiencing a **funding crisis**, with a heavy financial shortfall in 2023
- In 2022, the WFP supported around 160 million people, a new record

Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

- Part of the United Nations, which focuses on ending world hunger and ensuring food security
- Founded in 1945
- **Mission:**
 - **Ending food insecurity, malnutrition and world hunger**
 - **Improving sustainability and productivity of agriculture**
 - Ensuring agricultural efficiency to reach food security
 - **Lower poverty in rural areas**
 - Hunger and food insecurity are higher in rural areas
 - **Inclusivity and efficiency in agricultural systems**
 - The globalisation of agriculture has caused inequality for small-scale farmers
 - **Disaster protection**
 - Natural disasters or conflicts can affect vital food resources, impacting those dependent on food production and consumption
- An example of an FAO programme:
 - **Brazil-FAO International Cooperation Programme:**
 - School feeding projects in Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Latin America and the Caribbean Without Hunger 2025 initiative
 - Sustainable Rural Development in Latin America and the Caribbean
 - Development of sustainable aquaculture in Latin America and the Caribbean

World Health Organization

- The **World Health Organization (WHO)** is the leader in health emergency response
- The organisation:
 - Is working towards improving **health care access**, preventing **diseases** and supporting **wellbeing**
 - Is part of the **United Nations**
 - Was founded in **1948**
 - Working towards **Goal 3 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals:**



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- **'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'**
- Funded through the 194 member states' **'memberships'** and other **voluntary donations** from organisations and the private sector
- Vital for leading the world on health advances, research, creating policies and tracking world health
- Led successes e.g. the eradication of smallpox

Role of Governments

- Governments are vital in providing policies and research that support food security:
 - **Import policies and subsidies e.g. the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)**
 - **Stabilises** food supply, **protects** farmers and their money, and **maintains** the environment and rural beauty
 - Ensures food is of good quality, safe and affordable
 - Ensures there is enough food
 - Improves standard of living for farmers
 - Main ideas:
 - **Viable food production**
 - **Sustainable resource management**
 - **Balancing rural development**
 - CAP uses roughly 40% of the EU's budget
 - It has been criticised as it increases **prices** for consumers and increases **competition** for developing countries
 - It has also resulted in food dumping from an **overproduction** of food
- **Local projects, e.g. in the UK**
 - Free school meals
 - **Meals on wheels**
- **Government support in combatting disease:**
 - **Laws or policies for disease control**
 - **COVID-19** lockdowns, border closures and other mitigation strategies
 - **Ebola** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; the CDC supported the country with personnel aid, including surveillance, testing, tracing and education
 - **Vaccine rollouts**
 - Global **COVID-19 vaccine**
 - The **Malaria Vaccine** Implementation Programme 2019 (by the WHO) began the rollout of the first malaria vaccine
 - **Health education**
 - In 2008, the Chinese Government introduced the **National Health Literacy Promotion Project**
 - Media advertisements about important healthcare information
 - Health literacy to become part of school learning
 - Health education in workplaces and other public areas
 - Extra support where development is lower



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Role of NGOs

- NGOs or Non-Governmental Organisations are non-profit or charity organisations
- This means they are primarily donation and volunteer-based

The Trussel Trust

- This is a UK-based **foodbank initiative**
- There are 1300 Trussel Trust foodbanks across the country
- The organisation:
 - Provides food to those in need, through **food donations**
 - Provides support to help improve people's lives
 - Works towards **ending** the need for UK food banks
- In 2022/2023, the Trussel Trust provided nearly 3 million food parcels

NothingButNets (United to Beat Malaria)

- This is part of the **United Nations Foundations**
- It is a grassroots organisation, working to combat Malaria
- The organisation:
 - Has supported 39 million people with nets and other resources
 - Pushes for more global assistance and funding
 - Gives high priority for the most **vulnerable** groups e.g. children, pregnant women, displaced people and rural communities

MSF (Medecins Sans Frontieres) – Doctors Without Borders

- Provides **Medical support** to those in need e.g. people hit by disasters, conflicts, epidemics
- Founded in 1971 by French doctors, following the war in Nigeria
- The founding principles of MSF are:
 - **Impartiality**
 - **Independence**
 - **Neutrality**
 - **Bearing witness to inequalities**
 - **Being transparent**
- Donation-based, with volunteers and permanent staff



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9.3.2 Transnational Corporations & Food Consumption

The Influence of Transnational Corporations & Food Consumption

Transnational Corporations (TNCs)

- **Transnational Corporations (TNCs)** are companies that operate globally
- As a result of **globalisation**, TNCs have developed
 - TNCs are companies which operate in two or more countries
 - As communications and transport have improved so have the number of TNCs
- TNCs are **powerful** and can majorly influence our food consumption habits

Agribusinesses

- **Agribusiness** is the different stages of commercial agriculture, controlled by a TNC
- They operate through:
 - **Expansion** (purchasing smaller holdings)
 - **Deforestation** and **land clearing** to increase the size of the land cultivated
 - **Monoculture** (in large amounts)
 - Heavy **pesticide** and **fertiliser** use
 - Using **technologies** and **high-yielding seed** varieties
- Agribusinesses are **vertically integrated**
- **Examples** of Agribusinesses include:
 - Cargill
 - Syngenta
 - Alpha Foods
 - Monsanto
 - DuPont
- Agribusinesses **lower costs** for consumers as large-scale production is cheaper
- They increase **food security** globally through **exports**
 - This improves food access for areas with food shortages
- TNCs control **where food is sold**
 - TNCs bring in more 'Westernised' products into nonwestern developing countries
 - This can impact nutrition patterns (and resulting nutrition-related diseases)
- Through **monoculture**, TNCs control the **food market**
 - Farmers grow whatever TNCs require, meaning farmers grow fewer cultural or local foods
 - Consumers therefore have less choice
- TNCs focus on **food enjoyment**, rather than providing foods that are nutritious
 - This encourages people to **buy and consume more**

The influence of the media

- TNCs often use the **media** to shape people's consumption patterns

- TNCs **market** or **advertise** their products, to encourage consumption
- As LICs develop, they become more **technologically connected**
 - TNCs can then advertise via the media
- This could be both good and bad:
 - Marketing of **highly processed foods** can impact **obesity** rates and other **food-related diseases**
 - May impact **younger people**, as adverts are more appealing to the younger generation
 - Some adverts have **pester power**, so parents purchase unhealthy foods for their children
 - Can completely change **attitudes** toward foods e.g. **the avocado**
 - Avocados were previously an unknown fruit - the alligator pear
 - The negativity surrounding high-fat diets during the 1980s impacted the sale of avocado
 - An avocado mascot appeared - Mr Ripe Guy!
 - The Superbowl marketed the humble avocado, with a guacamole recipe competition with NFL players
 - Through major advertising, avocados are now a hugely successful commodity
- Foods are advertised as **convenient** and **quick**, which panders to the majority of the population
- Using **celebrities** and **well-known/trusted individuals** influences more people
- The growth of **TikTok** and other **social media platforms** allows TNCs to gain greater influence over people's diets



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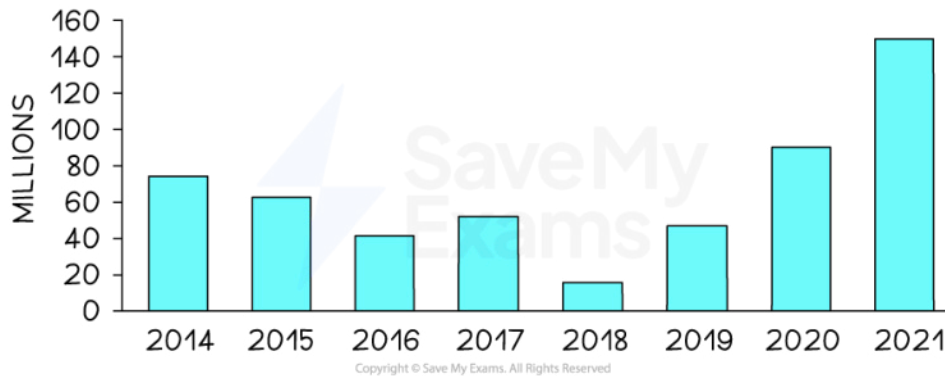
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9.3.3 Gender Roles, Food & Health

Gender Roles & Food Production

Women in food production

- Women are more at risk of **food insecurity** as a result of gender disparities in the **division of labour**, **decision making** and **resource access** within agriculture



Inequality in food security

- If men and women had **equality** in food production, **productivity** would be higher:
 - Supporting **food security**
 - Reducing poverty** and **growing the economy**
 - Supporting the move to **sustainable agriculture**
- With higher incomes from food production, women could spend more money on education and healthcare
 - This would boost **development levels**

Division of labour

- The **division of labour** can impact food production
- Typically in the developing world:
 - Men take the lead in **large-scale commercial** agriculture
 - They will undertake the physical tasks within agriculture:
 - Ploughing
 - Transporting food
 - Women tend to take a more **subsistence** role:
 - Weeding, planting or looking after animals
 - Marketing
 - Food preparation



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- This division of labour can impact **productivity** and **economic growth**
 - Women miss out on economic growth opportunities and making profit within this sector
 - Productivity within food production may not increase, as women undertake these smaller-scale activities
- **Education** is vital for improving food production and reducing food insecurity and malnutrition
 - Men have higher education rates
 - Many girls still do not have equal access to schooling

Decision-making

- Within the agricultural industry, men tend to make more of the **decisions** e.g. the types of crops, distribution and finances
- Women typically don't contribute to decision-making
- Particularly in the developing world, this is a major **cultural barrier**
- **Female empowerment** in decision-making is vital to improving income

Resource Access

- Women have less access to large-scale agriculture, credit, funding and land tenure
- Men typically have better access to **agricultural resources**
 - These resources support agricultural production
- Women struggle to find or **afford** tools and technology
 - Lower incomes or lack of funding mean women cannot afford to buy high-quality seeds, pesticides, fertilisers or other vital resources to boost productivity
- Land is often passed down to men **generationally**
 - Less land means lower yields
 - Women are less likely to put effort into land that isn't theirs
- Women struggle to access markets, reducing their incomes
- In some countries, **governments** may limit women's access to resources
- Women also use their **time** for other activities like collecting freshwater or caring for family
 - This means women may struggle to be productive in the agricultural sector

Closing the gender gap

- Many strategies are being put in place to combat these issues
- Several projects work to support women in agriculture:
 - **PepsiCo and CARE in Uganda**
 - Providing education and technology to female farmers to help grow sustainable crops
 - 'Closing the Crop Gap' is an awareness campaign, where women speak their experiences to the world
 - **The World Bank**
 - Women in agriculture are now at the forefront of their goals
 - Supporting women in accessing land and incomes
- **Feed the Future (US government's food initiative)**

- Provided 2.4 million women with skills in agriculture
- Helped 420,000 women access financial support



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Gender Roles & Disparities in Health

Females and health

- Women have longer **life expectancies** than men
 - Gender inequality impacts the health of females
 - They may have higher rates of age-related diseases like arthritis or depression
- Women in developing countries may have more gynaecological issues. This is because:
 - The issues are a **Taboo** topic
 - There may be rules around male doctors/health carers touching women
- During **pregnancy**, lack of healthcare access in developing countries may result in higher rates of deficiency-related diseases
 - This can impact the health of newborn babies
- Women may be more likely to be in **poverty**, due to lower rates of **stable employment**
 - Poverty can impact health (poor quality food, lack of healthcare and limited health education)
- Within the health industry, more women tend to work as carers or nurses (in health and social care)
 - In developing countries, education rates for women are lower
 - Results in more **male doctors**
 - This can result in **discrimination** towards women
- Women have less **autonomy** over their bodies, for example, in sexual relationships
 - This can result in unwanted pregnancy or disease
- Women may not be able to make **decisions** about their bodies and their healthcare options
 - They may not be able to access information about the support they need

Males and health

- Men typically have **lower life expectancies** than women due to **lifestyle choices**
 - Men may eat more unhealthy foods or may be more likely to drink more alcohol and smoke
 - More likely to be involved in violent or dangerous activities
 - May have multiple sexual partners, increasing their risk of sexually transmitted diseases
- Outdated concepts of **masculinity**
 - **'Manning up'** may push men away from finding healthcare

Gender diversity

- Individuals not conforming to the **gender binary** may be more likely to experience higher rates of mental illness like depression and anxiety
 - **Transgender** individuals may have the same experience
- Transgender people may also face higher rates of **mistreatment** in healthcare
 - They may also experience higher rates of **violence**



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9.3.4 Factors Affecting the Severity of Famine

Factors Affecting the Severity of Famine

- **Famine** is the result of an **extreme lack of food**
- Famine can cause extreme malnutrition, **starvation** and even **death**
- Numerous factors affect the **severity** of a famine

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Global pattern of hunger in 2020

Governance

- Some governments do not **prioritise food supply** in their country, resulting in a higher risk of famine
 - In **Liberia**, soils are perfect for agricultural production. However, there is very little access to tools and resources, so more food is imported at a higher price
 - If people can't afford food, this results in a **Food Entitlement Deficit (FED)**
 - In other countries, famine would most likely not occur, as food is produced in **excess** e.g. in more developed countries
- **Conflict** and **corruption** can severely impact food security:
 - If corruption exists in a country, there is very little focus on economic development and providing citizens with food
 - Conflict can cause **displacement**; many people become refugees and have food access restrictions
 - Corrupt governments may also **misuse foreign aid**
 - People may have to spend their vital income on **food bribes**, as there is less food to go around
 - Food may be **weaponised** in a conflict, limiting people's access
 - Conflicts can **damage** crops and kill livestock, reducing food availability
 - If food availability goes down, this results in a **Food Availability Deficit (FAD)**
- How governments deal with famine also impacts the severity
 - The Great Famine of 1845 (potato famine) in Ireland resulted from potato blight
 - The British government **exacerbated** the famine
 - Britain sent in grain as food support, but Ireland didn't have enough infrastructure to process the grain
 - Poor and starving people were forced out of their homes by their British landlords as they couldn't afford rent
 - Exports to the rest of Britain, of meat and other high-quality food products continued throughout the famine

Power of the media

- **Media campaigns** can make people more aware of a famine situation in another country e.g. the news



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- Images of famine-stricken areas can often play with people's emotions
- This means that people are more likely to **donate** money
- With the rise of **social media**, this is even more prevalent
- **Celebrities** support fundraising campaigns e.g. Live Aid concerts to raise money for the famine in Ethiopia
- Media campaigns may cover up the root cause of the issue, manipulating viewers and donors
- Continuous media barrages may cause compassion fatigue

Aid availability

- Other countries send food aid or funding to support food shortages after conflicts or disasters
- **Governments** or **non-government organisations (NGOs)** and **charities** donate money
- Aid may be provided but under certain conditions
 - This results in an uneven **power complex**
 - Countries become dependent on aid, making it difficult for future development
- With food aid, **food supplies** will naturally increase in the country
 - This lifts people out of **food insecurity**
 - Increased food supplies cause local food **prices** to go down, impacting local producers
 - Farmers may also be less inclined to produce food
- Food aid may be **stopped** if it is handled incorrectly
 - USAID and the World Food Programme sent food aid to Tigray in Ethiopia in 2023
 - Food was being mishandled, diverted and stolen
 - This resulted in a **Food Pause**, causing even more deaths

Population

- The global population is growing, resulting in the need for more food
- If the population grows in an area at risk of food shortages, this could increase the risks of famine
- More land is used for housing instead of food production
- **Thomas Malthus**, an economist and demographic theorist, stated that:

'Famine will be inevitable as the population rises because food production simply cannot keep up'

- Although there have been many arguments against **Malthusian Theory**, many of Malthus' ideas seem to make sense in less developed nations

Poverty

- In areas already facing **extreme poverty**, famine severity may be high
- Farmers may not have access to **technology** to support agricultural production
 - They rely on more **traditional** methods, which may not be productive
- Countries may **export** more of their food, whilst not being able to afford to **import** food, resulting in food shortages
- Countries may have poor-quality **transport infrastructure** to distribute food

Physical characteristics

- **Climate** can impact how severe a famine may be

- In places with warmer climates, drought is more likely to occur
- **Climate change** may bring more severe droughts and reduced rainfall
- This can impact the success of **crop yields**
- Droughts that last a long time also create a higher risk of famine
- How the land is used could also impact famine
 - Some land is converted for non-food crops e.g. food for animals or biofuels
 - This reduces the amount of land available for food growth, possibly causing or exacerbating existing famine
- **Natural disasters** like hurricanes, flooding or earthquakes can damage crops, causing severe famine



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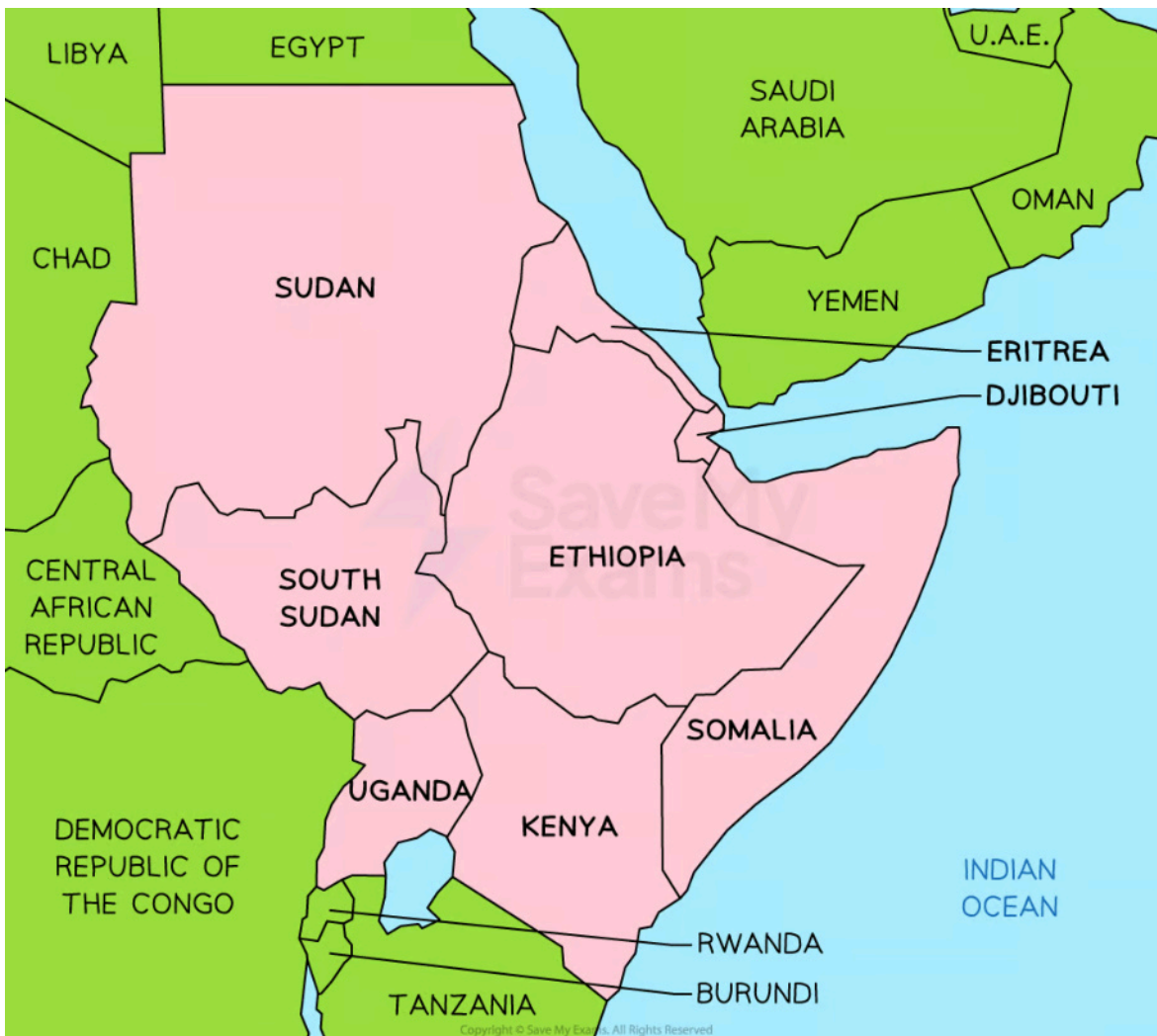


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9.3.5 Case Study: Famine

Case Study: Famine in the Horn of Africa

- The Horn of Africa is the region in **East Africa**
- The famine began in this area in 2011, affecting Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia
 - It affected roughly **13 million** people in the region
 - Roughly **250,000** people died in Somalia
 - **50%** of these were children under the age of five years old
- As of 2023, another acute famine is **predicted** to arrive



Map of the Horn of Africa

IPC scale

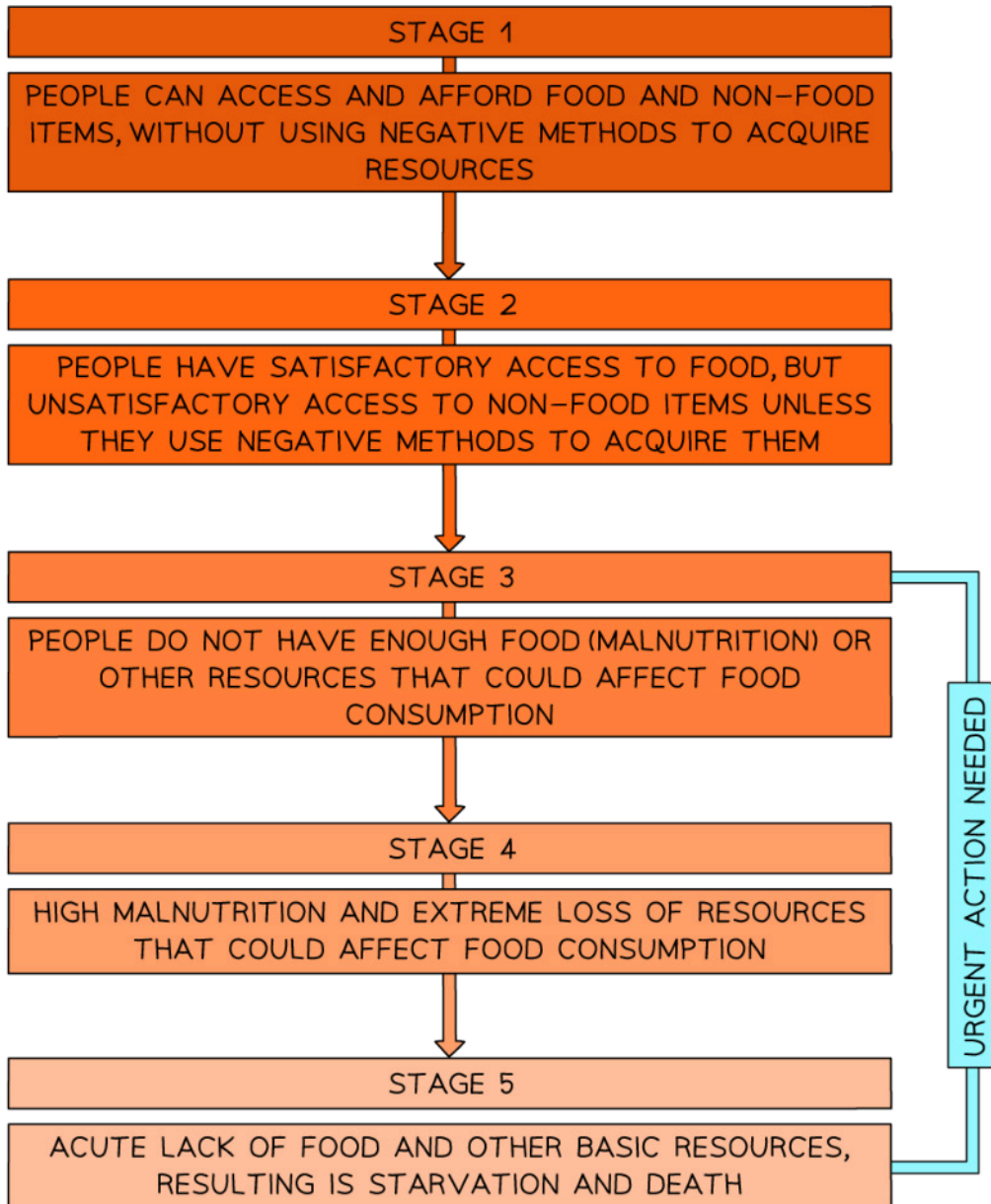
- The **IPC scale (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification)** measures how severe a famine is
- In 2011, parts of East Africa, e.g. Somalia, hit **phase 5**, a catastrophe
- Other areas, like Kenya, hit **phase 3+**, where urgent action is required



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IPC scale

Causes of the famine



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Drought

- Drought was one of the major culprits of the 2011 famine
- The area experienced very low rainfall over several years, leading to extreme drought
- This meant crop growth was impossible

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Map of drought-affected areas in 2011 at the Horn of Africa

Conflict

- Parts of the Horn of Africa were experiencing conflict, e.g. in Somalia
- The Siad Barre regime was removed from power in 1991
- Since then, there has been no leading government, causing conflict
- For years, the country has been riddled with Civil War
- Fighting caused damage to crops
- The Al-Shabaab militant group began to rise to power
 - This group caused a blockade of food aid during the famine
 - Al-Shabaab controlled certain areas, where aid was not allowed in
 - Killed aid workers
- Displaced people migrated to Kenya, as a result of the conflict

Poverty

- The countries in the Horn of Africa were already suffering under extreme poverty
- Farmers don't have access to **technologies** which may increase productivity
- High population rates and regular food shortages are a recipe for disaster
- Food prices increased massively in 2011, like corn and maize
 - This was a result of decreased food supply globally
 - The land was used for the growth of biofuel instead of food e.g. US corn ethanol

Responses

- The response to the crisis was incredibly slow, roughly 6 months
 - Some donors wanted to see evidence of the crisis, rather than trying to stop it from happening
 - Early warning systems detected the crisis in 2010
 - By 2011, malnutrition was high
- **Oxfam funding appeal:**
 - Oxfam worked to bring people and emergency support to the area
 - Raised over \$100 million
- The **UN World Food Programme (WFP)**, the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** and the **UN Children's Fund (UNICEF)** supported relief efforts
- Funds from the **Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)** were funnelled into food aid and other vital areas e.g. vaccination and sanitation