

## **Teach a Man to Fish**

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The sun sets after a joyful day in the autumn of 1621. A jubilation and harvest day feast that we know today as the first Thanksgiving, just took place celebrating the success of the Plymouth colony. This success, however, would not have occurred without the intrepid nature of the Native Americans who imparted their knowledge of growing crops and hunting animals for food to the Plymouth colonists. In the present day, we have a worldwide dilemma in which American agriculturalists must play the role of the Native Americans and spread our agricultural knowledge and skills to those who need it. Is American agriculture prepared to accept this valiant task?

Today as we look at the issue of world hunger, let us explore current solutions being offered to solve this growing problem, and we will explore the possibility of American agriculture sharing our agricultural wisdom with hungry and undernourished nations around the globe to assist them in meeting their own food needs.

If you question the validity of world hunger as a major global issue, consider these statistics: "one in eight people in our world do not get enough food to be healthy and lead an active life; hunger and malnutrition are the number one risk to health worldwide, being a greater threat than AIDS, Malaria, and Tuberculosis combined" (World Food Programme, 2013). And if you think hunger is merely an issue in some poor village on the other side of the world, then you should know that in 2011 fifteen percent of the households in the United States were living in a state of food insecurity (Cohen, Mabli, Potter, & Zhao, 2011). Furthermore, food insecurity contributes to political distress and riots that lead to national and international security threats eventually affecting everyone in its reach. Hunger and malnourishment are real. And as our population grows, so will the severity and consequences of these issues.

So what is being done today? Perhaps the best program currently in place is the Feed the Future program, which is the United States Government's Global Hunger and Food Security Initiative. This is a program that works to reduce world hunger and malnourishment by tackling the issue of poverty. The focus of Feed the Future is to develop programs based on the specific needs and the resources available in the nineteen countries that have been identified as having the most significant issues with hunger and malnourishment. It is a collaborative effort that came out of the 2009 G8 Summit and was reaffirmed at the 2012 Summit. The United States is one of the eight most highly industrialized nations in the world who have joined forces in making a global commitment to fight the issue of world hunger. Many agencies of the United States government are involved as well, including the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Since 2009, Feed the Future has helped 1.8 million food producers in the targeted countries adopt improved technologies or management practices that will lead to more resistant crops, higher yields, and increased incomes (United States Agency for International Development [USAID], 2012).

We must implement "community-based initiatives in urban farming, school gardening and feeding, and indigenous livestock preservation" into the communities within these countries and teach them the skills necessary to utilize these programs (Prakash, 2012). This not only allows for food security to be promoted but also confidence in national security to be strengthened. In Afghanistan, an initiative of this nature is already in place to "help improve household food security and increase income through professional training" (Davis, 2011). With success from these programs obvious in the Middle East, we must begin developing small scale agriculture in Asia and

Oceania which "are home to around 564 million of the world's hungry people" (World Food Programme, 2012).

By placing centralized, small-scale agriculture programs within poor communities across the globe, we give the citizens there the opportunity to take their food production and consumption into their own hands. Then, by presenting them with the knowledge, tools, and skills necessary, we give them the ability to seize that opportunity. If American agriculture employs these techniques to spread our wisdom of the agricultural industry throughout developing nations, we will become the catalyst in the chain reaction of individual countries accepting, undertaking, and mending their own food shortages. This, in turn, will lead to the elimination of the problem of world hunger, the creation of a sustainable macro food supply, and the stabilization of international security. Remember those colonists in Plymouth? They weren't much different from the hungry people around the world who lack the basic knowledge needed to produce nourishing food on their own land.

American agriculture has proven itself time and time again. Each year when statistics are taken, Americans continue to enjoy the most affordable, safest, and abundant food supply in the world, with our citizens spending only ten percent of their disposable income on food (American Farm Bureau, 2011). As the years pass and as our population grows, we will find ourselves in the situation of producing more on less, and being challenged to create technologies to make this happen. According to the 50/100/70 rule as stated by Dr. David Kohl, "by the year 2050, we will have to produce one hundred percent more food on seventy percent of the land used in agriculture production today to meet the demands of our growing global population" (Kohl, 2012).

World hunger is real today, and it will only grow to be a more devastating problem if we don't act now, both in the United States and around the globe. The year 2050 seems like a long time from now, but it is actually a mere thirty-seven years into the future. There is no time to waste in finding solutions today.

America has long played the role of care-taker of the world. We have done this proudly, through military actions as well as humanitarian efforts in times of disaster. World hunger has been an issue of the past and will be an issue in the future. It is an issue that could reach dire levels if we don't act today. Perhaps it's time for us to take a different look at the way we help solve the issue of world hunger. For instance, rather than ship loads of rice to Kenya, maybe we should be teaching Kenya's people how to farm; instead of creating a detrimental cycle of food and personal security, we should advocate a system in which both work to solve one another. The Chinese proverb, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime", seems to be an unquestionable fact as we realize and accept our role as America's agriculturists in feeding and educating a growing and hungry world.

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