

THE PRICE OF INACTION:

Failing to Prevent Famine Is Costing Children Their Futures

FAMINE PREVENTION AND FOOD SECURITY

POLICY BRIEF OVERVIEW

A WORSENING HUNGER CRISIS UNFOLDING FOR CHILDREN

Global hunger is accelerating at a moment when humanitarian and development resources are being cut. Conflict, climate shocks and lack of political will are converging to push millions closer to catastrophic hunger with children hit first and [hardest](#).

- Across [multiple hunger hotspots](#), [food insecurity](#) is worsening despite clear early warnings.
- Children face acute hunger, malnutrition and “hidden hunger” that permanently damages growth, learning and health.
- [Aid cuts](#) are widening the gap between needs and resources, increasing mortality and long-term instability.

HUNGER: A HUMAN-INDUCED CRISIS AND PREVENTABLE

Famine represents the most extreme form of food deprivation, [IPC Phase 5](#). It is overwhelmingly caused by **conflict, blockades, denial of humanitarian access, and the erosion of international law**, not by natural scarcity alone.

- Nearly [70% of acutely food-insecure people now living in fragile, conflict-affected countries](#).
- Violence and politico-economic instability disrupt food systems, markets, health services and aid delivery.
- [Climate change accelerates risk](#) by destroying livelihoods

Early warning systems consistently identify where hunger will worsen. What is missing is **timely action and predictable financing** to prevent crisis escalation.



Famine is not inevitable. It is predictable, preventable, and driven primarily by human decisions. Without urgent investment in famine prevention, children will continue to pay the highest and most irreversible price.

AID CUTS: A FALSE ECONOMY

Reducing humanitarian and development budgets **increases long-term costs and human suffering.**

- Recurrent emergency responses are more expensive than crisis prevention.
- Cuts to food and nutrition programmes undo years of progress in child survival and development.
- Recurrent crises trap communities in cycles of dependence, instability and loss.

For children, the consequences are lifelong. Hunger in early years permanently limits physical growth, cognitive development and future opportunity.

WHAT EFFECTIVE FAMINE PREVENTION LOOKS LIKE

Predicting and preventing famine requires right resources, political will and early and coordinated action across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus:

- **Robust and integrated early warning systems** that bring together food and nutrition data, climate risks, conflict and insecurity analysis, market prices and supply chain disruptions and displacement trends to anticipate crises before they escalate.
- **Empower communities** to lead, with local solutions tied to automatic triggers that activate early funding, food assistance and livelihoods protection.
- **Political will and accountability** to confront famine for what it is: a largely human-induced crisis.

WORLD VISION'S APPROACH

World Vision's famine prevention work is **integrated, child-focused and system-strengthening**, grounded in the belief that communities are active agents of resilience.

Our work spans **humanitarian response, recovery, and long-term development**, ensuring immediate needs are met while reducing future vulnerability.



Integrated programming that combines food assistance, cash and livelihoods support, giving families choice, supporting local markets, and delivering more dignified, effective humanitarian aid.



Child-centred advocacy, including the [ENOUGH campaign](#), that puts girls and boys at the centre of decisions on hunger and malnutrition, ensuring children's voices shape policy and fund decisions across 82 countries.



Climate-smart solutions, such as climate resilient agriculture and [farmer-managed natural regeneration \(FMNR\)](#) and [Vision Fund's Financial Inclusion and Economic Empowerment programmes](#) that offer compelling, evidence-based solutions aligned with evolving priorities.



A SHARED COMMITMENT

FROM HUNGER TO HOPE:

With political will, donor partnership and collective action, famine can become a failure of the past not a feature of the future.

Protect children and prevent famine before it strikes.

World Vision remains committed to work alongside children, families and communities not only in moments of crisis, but in building their sustainable futures.

CALL TO ACTION

To move from reacting to hunger to ending it, decision makers must:

- **Scale up** life saving food, cash and nutrition support
- **Put children first** in hunger prevention and response
- **Strengthen** child-sensitive protection systems and fund them properly
- **Take** diplomatic action now to stop famine and protect civilians
- **Enforce** international law, secure safe humanitarian access, and uphold UN commitments to prevent
- **Break silos** by supporting joined up humanitarian, development and peace efforts

Contact Information

Amanda Rives

Senior Director, Humanitarian Policy, Advocacy and Partnerships,
Disaster Management
amanda_rives@wvi.org

Paul Kinuthia

Senior Director, Food & Cash, Markets,
Disaster Management
paul_kinuthia@wvi.org

Viviana De Annuntiis

Sr. Advisor, Humanitarian Policy, Advocacy, and Partnerships,
Disaster Management
viviana_deannuntiis@consultant.wvi.org



Food Assistance and
Livelihoods in Emergencies