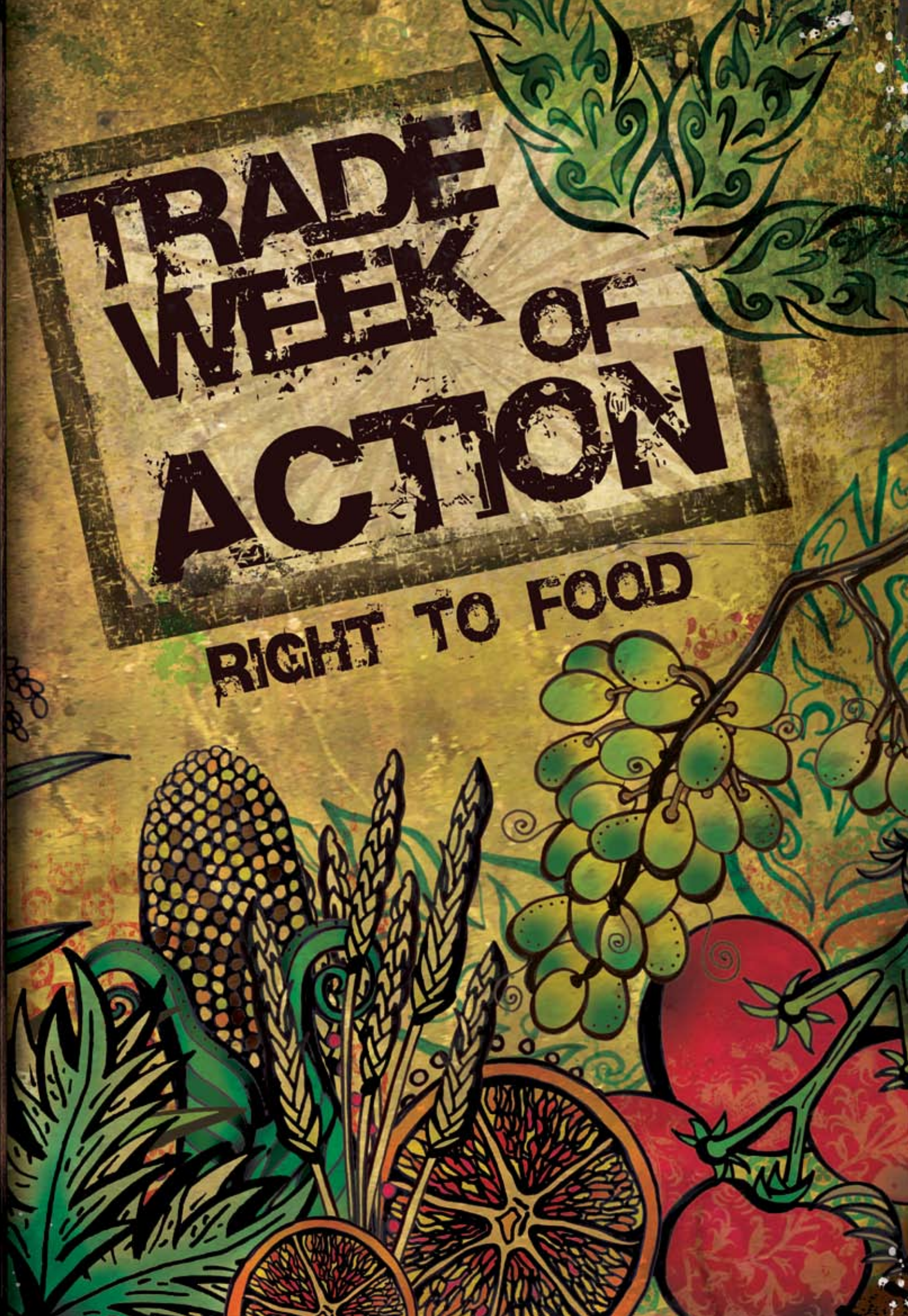


TRADE WEEK OF ACTION

RIGHT TO FOOD



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A 24-page version of this guide with more resources is available at www.tradeweek.org/guide and includes:

- * Trade, agriculture & food - what's the problem?*
- * How does trade liberalization impact on the poor?*
- * Debunking the myths*
- * Who and what needs to change?*
- * Many more action ideas*
- * Tips on lobbying and working with the media*
- * Liturgy, worship tips and sermon ideas on trade justice*

What's in this guide?

This action guide introduces the Trade Week of Action on the Right to Food at a time when food prices are pushing millions more into poverty. The guide explores the interactions between trade, agriculture, food and human rights. It considers what the Bible has to say about trade and food, and tells the stories of real people affected by free trade policies. The guide offers action ideas, liturgy and other worship resources. The cover of this booklet can also make a good poster to advertize the Trade Week of Action (download cover at www.tradeweek.org/guide). This guide is designed to help you play your part – with others in congregations, community groups, peoples' movements, national coalitions and international networks – in the Trade Week of Action.

What is the Trade Week of Action?

Since 2005, churches have been joining together with other civil society groups in a Global Week of Action calling for trade justice. The first week brought together the voices of 10 million people in 80 countries, and was the first big event in the global call to make poverty history. In October 2007, thousands of events took place across the globe, from local trade fairs in Bogota to petitions in Washington, D.C., hunger strikes in India and demonstrations in the Philippines.

You can hold a Trade Week of Action in your community to call for just trading relations. You can choose the issues and actions that make the most sense in your context, knowing that you are connected to thousands of people, churches, and communities around the world in a movement calling for change. The week in October goes from Sunday to Sunday and incorporates World Food Day (October 16) and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17). The focus is typically on agriculture, hunger and human rights, but you can focus on other issues, and hold the Week at a time when you can best make an impact.

Taking action to promote just trading relations is the most important step – from fasts and agape meals, marches and hunger tribunals, street theater and church services, exhibitions and petitions – there are many other creative and colorful ways of getting messages heard and seen.

"True compassion is more than flinging a coin at a begger; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggers needs restructuring."

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



Why take action on trade and the right to food?

*Do you eat every day?
Is the food you eat sufficient?
Is it healthy?*

If you say yes to all three of these questions, you're one of the lucky ones. If your answer to any of them is no, then you're one of the 854 million people in the world today who are hungry. This is more than one in ten people. In the developing world as a whole, that proportion rises to one in six, and in sub-Saharan Africa, to one in three. This situation is getting worse, not better.

Yet there is more than enough food produced in the world to feed everyone. One tenth of the world is hungry not because the planet cannot sustain us all, but because of the systems and structures we have created around the way we produce, sell, buy and share food. The good news is that these are things we can change.

Trade is one of the key elements in the complex web of structures that determine whether or not a person has enough to eat. All people have an internationally accepted Right to Food, a right that is being violated for millions of people. This is an outrageous reality of our time, but if we act together we can transform our world.

As Christians and as members of faith communities, we are compelled to action by both the Old and New Testament understanding of justice as taking the side of the poor and oppressed. We are inspired to strive for justice, each in our own place and according to our separate gifts. We are called to the struggle to make trade a means to share the bounty of the earth and the fruits of human labor, and to ensure that people's right to food is fully respected.

The Trade Week of Action is a chance to tell the world that enforced free trade is inflicting misery on millions of poor people, and that there are alternatives.



Paul Jeffrey/EAA

*Can we actually change anything?
If we cry out for justice in trade will our voices
be heard?*

The answer is yes. We have done it before – in the campaigns against slavery and for women's rights, Gandhi's Indian Independence Movement, the civil rights movement in the US, and the worldwide anti-apartheid movement, the campaigns to ban landmines and cancel debt, and the recent shift in international awareness of climate change. Time and time again, ordinary people taking action together have been able to change the world.

Across the world, the trade justice movement is strong. Even small actions like calling your government representative can make a difference in the way trade affects our lives. Together, we have the power to bring about enormous change. We must refuse to settle for a world of poverty and hunger.



The Bible says...

The Bible tells us different stories about bread: about famine and plenty, about exploitation and sharing...

The children of Israel are reduced to slavery because of famine. Applying Pharaoh's commodity rules, Joseph takes first their money, then their livestock and ploughs, then their land, and finally themselves in exchange for bread: "...and the land became pharaoh's. As for the people, he made slaves of them from one end of Egypt to the other" (Gen. 47:20b-21).

Later, liberated from slavery and in the wilderness, God gives the Israelites a new economy that begins with a new bread, manna. It proves to be exactly the opposite of Pharaoh's commodity storehouse bread. It can't be stored or it will rot. It can't be exchanged because it is not a commodity but a gift of God's grace: "they gathered, some more, some less... he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; each gathered according to what he could eat" (Ex.16:18). The economy of God is given shape by this radical new logic of distribution.

The right to food

The right to food says that all people are entitled to adequate food that is sufficient, safe, nutritious and culturally acceptable. The right to food was recognized in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1976 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Access to food is not understood as merely being given food through aid. It means access to an income base either through access to productive resources (land, water, seeds, livestock breeds, fish stocks, etc.), work or, if neither of these is possible, adequate social safety net policies.

People and communities can demand that governments **respect, protect** and **fulfill** their need for appropriate access to sufficient food of an acceptable quality. If people are to actually realize these rights, government obligations need to be translated into laws.

The obligation to **respect** the right to food requires governments to avoid measures that prevent access to adequate food. The obligation to **protect** requires measures to ensure that no one else deprives other people of access to adequate food. And the obligation to **fulfill** means that states must take active steps to strengthen people's access to, and use of, resources to ensure their livelihood.

It is recognized that not all states are entirely and immediately able to fulfil their obligations to respect, protect and fulfill. But they must work towards that end.

It is also up to us to take action, to demand our rights! Under pressure from civil society, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in 2004 adopted "Voluntary Guidelines for the progressive realization of the right to adequate food in the context of national food security". These got the support of all 187 FAO state members! The text is a useful tool with which to challenge unwilling governments.



The Bible says...

In the Lord's prayer we ask: "Give us today our daily bread." As Martin Luther explained in the 16th century, "When you ask for your 'daily bread,' you ask for everything that is necessary in order to have and enjoy daily bread and, on the contrary, [protection] against everything that interferes with enjoying it."

After citing various factors that hinder people from accessing the food they need to live, Luther concludes: "How much trouble there is now in the world... on account of daily exploitation... on the part of those who wantonly oppress the poor and deprive them of their daily bread!"

Luther provides a clear theological basis for the right to food for all, as well as a mandate for advocacy to change those trade and other policies that hinder people from growing and securing the food they need to survive.



"The field of the poor may yield much food, but it is swept away through injustice."

Proverbs 13:23

Global trade in food: a bad deal for the poor

As the world gets richer, so should the poor. But they aren't!

Since the 1980s, the focus on export agriculture and opening markets have increased the profit margins of large corporations, supermarkets, transport companies and advertisers, as well as helped agribusinesses consolidate their control over the food system.

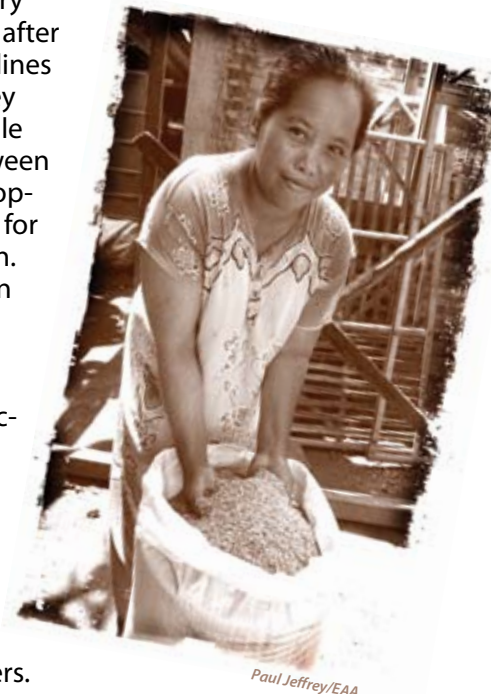
At the same time, millions of small farmers have become increasingly disempowered and impoverished. As borders have opened up, prices paid to small producers have fallen and real incomes declined. With big corporations in control, small farmers are unable to obtain fair and stable prices for their produce. Many are no longer able to feed their families, much less produce extra food for sale.

The current global market works only for a few. The model does not work for the rural poor majority in the South.

Women doubly discriminated

All over the world, women still carry the main responsibility of looking after households. They are on the frontlines in trying to feed their families. They also play a critical role in small-scale agriculture. Women produce between 60-80% of the food in most developing countries, and are responsible for half of the world's food production. Despite this, their crucial role often goes unrecognized.

Most societies still deny women equal access to productive resources such as land and credit that are necessary for anyone hoping to compete in a "survival of the fittest" global agricultural market. As hired farm workers, women often suffer from discrimination, with even lower pay and less job security than male farm workers.



Paul Jeffrey/EAA

How can my church take action?

- Use or adapt the downloadable worship service in the full booklet (www.tradeweek.org/guide) in your church on one of the Sundays of the Week of Action
- Hold a fast and break it with Holy Communion or with an agape meal made from fairly traded and locally produced food
- Hold an unfair musical chairs or unfair soccer game to illustrate unfair trade (instructions at www.pcusa.org/trade/downloads/unfair-games.pdf)
- Organize a petition, collecting signatures on paper plates, or mobilize people to call decision-makers

The first thing to do is to get a group together in your church to think of ways to get involved. Perhaps you already have such a group or perhaps you could start one. Talk to your minister or priest about the group and also about holding a service during the Week of Action.

Things to consider

- How to get press coverage for your actions? (see tips in the full booklet)
 - Are there ways to involve local celebrities?
 - Can you involve more churches and other groups?

Ideas for encouraging your church to take action

- Tell them stories of the lives of real people impacted by trade. There are some on pages 4-5 and more at www.tradeweek.org.
- Make links with the Bible. Use the "The Bible says..." texts on pages 1 and 2 in this version and from the longer booklet at www.tradeweek.org/guide.



Issahden Muhammed Alhassan (Ghana): "The children suffer most"

Issahden Muhammed Alhassan, a rice farmer in the Northern village of Dalun, Ghana, has watched the price he receives for each bag of rice drop by half since 2000. A visit to the local market shows why. Piled up on market stands are rice bags from the USA, Thailand and Vietnam – one has to search for the darker rice that comes from the local farms. Imports tripled between 2000-2003, devastating local production. When the Ghanaian government tried in 2003 to raise the taxes on imported rice just 5% to protect their farmers, the International Monetary Fund had serious talks with the government which led to the Ghanaian government lowering its tax to the original level just one month after the law was passed.



Armin Paasch/EAA

This was only one example of the pressure imposed by the IMF on the government. Since 1983, the government has had to privatize services, open its markets and increasingly reduce its support for agriculture in order to receive IMF loans.

Farmers and their families suffer most from the current pricing pressure. "We are often in the red and can hardly feed our families," Alhassan says. "When the crops are used up in spring and we are waiting for the next crop, we have to reduce our meals. The children suffer most".



Armin Paasch/EAA

Leissa Carey (Jamaica): "We'd go to bed eating salt and water"

Leissa Carey was 14, the youngest of 12 children growing up outside Kingston, Jamaica, when her mother lost her job as a sugar cane cutter. With very little money coming in, there was barely enough money to feed the family, let alone pay Leissa's school fees. So, with no job prospects around Kingston, Leissa moved to Montego Bay on the north coast and started work at a brothel.

"There was just not enough food, and we'd go to bed eating salt and water", she recalls. "It is not a nice job, but you don't want to just sit down and die of hunger."

Since Jamaica's independence in 1962, economic development has been a problem made worse by opening its borders to the global market, a policy imposed on and pursued by the government since 1980. Staple food industries that employed poor women, such as sugar and banana cultivation, are in long-term decline, and attempts to diversify away from these cash crops into garment assembly also failed because of country's inability to protect its infant industry. Rising unemployment of women is devastating for a society where two of every five households are headed by women, many of whom have sole responsibility for supporting and raising the children.

For more on these and other people affected by trade injustice, visit www.tradeweek.org



Eduardo Benitez (Honduras): "We small producers lost"

In the early 1990s, the Honduran government decided to import cheap rice from the US. Almost overnight, rice production in Honduras fell 86 percent. The number of rice producers fell from 25,000 to fewer than 2,000. Employment from rice dropped from 150,000 to fewer than 11,200 jobs. And in spite of the massive imports, the price of rice in Honduran markets went up 12 percent.

According to Eduardo Benitez, a farmer in Guayamán, the changes were designed to profit the powerful by driving peasant farmers out of business. "The millers and the politicians benefited... they made a big profit and we small producers lost."

In recent years, Benitez and other farmers have taken their struggle to the streets, protesting in Honduras and neighboring El Salvador the process of negotiations that led to the Central American Free Trade Agreement. Over the coming years CAFTA will remove the limited trade barriers that still exist to protect Honduran farmers and millers.

Free trade has increased emigration to the north. "Working in the countryside is difficult," says Benitez. "Young people ask why they should kill themselves working for nothing. So they escape to the north. It's hard to convince them to stay."




Paul Jeffrey/EAA

Bujamma Reddy (India): Debt led to her husband's suicide

Bujamma Reddy's husband, Lachi, 32, committed suicide on February 2, 2005. Despite trying to make a living from farming, he was deeply in debt. After swallowing a bottle of pesticide, Lachi went to his wife and told her he could not care for his family. While talking, he collapsed. In 2004 alone, 2,115 farmers like Lachi from India's Andhra Pradesh region took their own lives.

India had been encouraged by the IMF, World Bank and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to privatize its agricultural sector and openly participate in the global market. However, removing government support and protection led to increasing levels of debt for poor farmers. Compounded by fluctuating market prices for crops and rising prices for seeds, pesticides, fertilizers and water, agriculture in the region has been in crisis ever since.

 *The stories of rice farmers come from research by the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance on the right to food in Honduras, Ghana and Indonesia. For three billion people worldwide, rice is a staple food. The incomes of two billion people depend on rice production, 90 percent of whom are smallholders. The stories from India and Jamaica were collected by Christian Aid.*



Christian Aid/John McGhie

food crisis

6

Global food crisis

Recent and long-term crisis

Since the beginning of 2008, food shortages in places around the world have increased dramatically. This crisis is just the most recent manifestation of an ongoing crisis, brought on in great part because of a sharp increase in global food prices. Fred Magdoff of the University of Vermont estimates that the number of food insecure and malnourished people in the world approaches three billion, about half the world's people. Of those, approximately one billion people are suffering with or dying from chronic hunger. In more stark terms, they are starving to death. Every day, 18,000 children die as a direct or indirect result of malnutrition. Even in the US, the Department of Agriculture estimates that around 35 million people live in food-insecure households. In some countries where the problem is acute, riots have occurred as people desperately seek food.

These statistics illustrate three important realities. First, this problem has been with us for a while. Second, it is not exclusive to heavily impoverished countries. Third, the problem is not a lack of food; rather, it is a cruel maldistribution of the abundance that God has provided for all. In fact, per person agricultural production has increased steadily since the shortages of the 1970s. So no one should go hungry!

Sources of the crisis

Certain factors have contributed to the recent intensification of hunger and malnutrition. A spate of natural disasters in food-producing regions of the US, such as the floods in Iowa, has curtailed production. The global rush to divert corn and other crops into biofuels has been spurred by US and European government incentives and is putting a squeeze on arable land. But the long-term crisis is largely caused by the type of global food and trading systems we have created.

Over the past few decades, countries have been encouraged or coerced to shift to export-based agriculture rather than depend on local farmers for food security as they had for centuries. As a consequence, many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America have

gone from being self-sufficient or net exporters to become net importers of food traded on world markets. As such, they are much more vulnerable to rising global food prices and hunger.

Food as commodity

The right to nourishing food has long been accepted universally as a human right. Yet in the globalized economy, food is simply treated as another commodity, like cars, shoes, and other things to be traded and purchased, *if* one has the money. With soaring food prices, many people living in poverty are denied their right to food because they can no longer afford it.



For people of faith and good will, such a system is morally unacceptable. In the Abrahamic faith traditions, society is obligated to provide for the basic needs of the poor. For example, farmers are commanded in the Mosaic code to leave the edges of their farms unharvested so poor folk and foreigners may use that food for their needs.

The global food crisis calls on people of faith to raise these issues during the Trade Week of Action and to make major shifts in the way we treat this source of life. Food is a human right!

solutions

From food crisis to food sovereignty

Working towards solutions

Rising food prices have brought worldwide attention to hunger and the underlying maldistribution of food. Control of one's local and national food supply has become the often desperate cry of those now starving to death and the rest of us threatened with potential shortages in the future. The ability to secure and protect one's food supply is the core principle of food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is being called for around the world and it is the direction we must move to resolve the global food crisis.

What is food sovereignty?

Food sovereignty means the right of a country to determine its production and consumption of food, and to exempt agriculture from global trade regimes such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other free trade agreements. It also means consolidation of a smallholder-centered agriculture through protection of the domestic market from low-priced imports; fair prices for farmers and fisherfolk; abolition of direct and indirect export subsidies; and the phasing out of domestic subsidies that promote unsustainable agriculture. The goal is for all people to be assured of healthy, culturally appropriate food at affordable prices at all times, and for farmers to be able to make good livelihoods through agriculture.

Along with water, food is a basic and God-given right. Food sovereignty applies to our own communities and to nations everywhere, and here are ways to build food sovereignty locally and globally.

Start where you live

- **Grow** vegetables and fruits in your yard, on nearby land, or in a community garden
- **Support** local farming and strengthen the local economy by purchasing locally grown and processed food through farmers markets, community supported agriculture (CSA), and independent grocery stores
- **Create** or strengthen food policy councils and multi-stakeholder food, faith, health, hunger, business, planning and economic justice coalitions that organize to pass supportive public policies
- **Push** for ownership of land by family farmers, and for the development of locally-controlled agricultural infrastructure (e.g. food processing and distribution)

Accompany distant neighbors where the need is greatest:

- **Elect** candidates who will reevaluate harmful trade agreements like NAFTA, and reverse the damaging monopolization in the food industry
- **Advocate** for local, state and federal legislation that provides adequate domestic and international emergency food assistance
- **Push** for food aid programs that when appropriate provide cash to purchase food in or near the country suffering from shortages or famine
- **Support** trade agreements and multilateral (e.g. World Bank, IMF, UN) policies which increase smallholder farm production and crop storage, and reduce poverty
- **Advocate** to regulate and limit the impact of purely speculative investments which push food prices higher
- **Encourage** a reassessment of biofuels along with their subsidies and tariffs
- **Give** to your faith community's anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs



David Abazs

"The way the world grows its food will have to change radically to better serve the poor and hungry if the world is to cope with a growing population and climate change while avoiding social breakdown and environmental collapse."
(IAASTD, 2008)



Action ideas

Church service

Organize a church service on the Sunday at the beginning and/or end of the Week of Action. Focus on trade justice and the right to food. Take a campaign action during the service, like inviting the congregation to participate in a food crisis fast and *agape* meal, or to sign the petition/letter/postcard.

A liturgy has been prepared for use during the Week of Action or at other times when your church wants to focus on trade justice. The service is in the full booklet at www.tradeweek.org/guide and can be photocopied for participants. You can also download other formats to modify as necessary and assist leaders by including the instructions within the text.

Just Food meal

One in ten people in the world today are hungry because of the systems and structures that govern food production, sale, purchase and sharing.

To demonstrate the injustice of how global trade impacts on access to food, invite guests (including local politicians, celebrities AND the press) to a Just Food meal. Some will receive heaped plates while others are given a small bowl of rice. Who gets what could be determined by drawing straws, or tickets out of a hat. "Street theater" during the meal will help to make the point.

Street theater + information table

Stage a street theater performance to get your message across. Some tips:

- keep it very brief, and repeat
- use props to symbolize concepts: axes for what could be chopped, bars for imprisoned things/people, a heavy sack for burdens
- dress people up as recognizable symbols: Robin Hood, the grim reaper, rich trader/country/multinational corporation/World Trade Organization
- be where people walk and wait
- let people know in advance what you're doing by circulating flyers
- hand out printed information, a petition or postcard to sign
- if you have a table, make sure it is always attended and welcoming

Exhibitions and displays

A picture is worth a thousand words! Organize a display with lots of big photos and cartoons, a graph or two, catchy slogans and as little detailed writing as possible to capture attention and prompt people to pick up your literature and/or take a suggested action. Ask for permission to put up a display in a public place or as part of a larger exhibition. Use the photos and stories available at www.tradeweek.org.

Festival

Organize a festival of events including music, drama, seminars and so on.

Campaign in company!

Taking action with others – at the local, national and regional levels – is more effective than going it alone, especially if you involve a wide range of different groups who can bring various strengths to your campaign – experience in mobilizing, education, policy research or media work, for example.

Other benefits of a campaign alliance include more access to up-to-date information, avoiding duplication, and greater credibility. Obviously too, the more active support a campaign drums up, the harder it is for the people and institutions you are lobbying to ignore you.

When campaigning with other groups, agree on a common strategy and methodology. How will decisions be taken? Who is the lead person/agency? It takes time to gain trust and decide on the roles and responsibilities of each group; different advocacy traditions can also slow you down on the wording of messages. So approach other groups as early as possible to discuss with them what they want to do.

For the Week of Action, consider contacting other faith-based groups and churches, farmers, women's groups, consumer groups, community and social justice groups, labor unions, environmental groups, student organizations, social movements, and immigrant communities.

Additional worship resources and ideas can be found at www.tradeweek.org

Scripture quotations from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

Common myths about trade, farming and food

Let's look at some of the "myths" that underpin the belief that free trade will bring prosperity for all.

Economic growth automatically means growth for all; the benefits "trickle down" to the poor.

Well, no! The impact of economic growth on the cash income of poor people is often marginal. Where does \$100 of growth go in the current global economy? The richest 20% get more than \$83, and the poorest 20% see less than \$1.40 of it. Hunger and malnutrition may actually increase as a result of economic growth if poor people lose access to their land and the other resources they need to grow their own food. Badly managed growth can also use up irreplaceable resources and upset the fragile balance of an ecosystem. Economic growth needs to be part of a coherent development policy that targets the poor.

Developing countries need access to the markets of the US, Japan, and Europe to sell food.

Actually, 90% of agricultural products are intended for local and national markets. The international market for food is highly competitive, with high standards on

packaging and quality control, and is already over-supplied. Only a few industrialized farmers in the emerging "middle powers", like Brazil, have any chance of breaking into this market. The vast majority of farmers in developing countries have nothing to gain from open markets. They actually have much to lose when subsidized food from rich countries is dumped in their countries, forcing them out of their local markets. Poor farmers need access to local markets far more than they need access to Northern markets.

Trade liberalization is the path to development.

Not true! In fact, no country in the world has ever developed economically solely through opening their country to global trade. Countries that are rich now offered protection and assistance to their vulnerable producers and traders when they were beginning to grow, and continue to do so today. In fact, many successful economies today use a mix-and-match approach, i.e. they push to open up sectors where they are strong while continuing to protect others.

More information

Agribusiness Accountability Initiative – www.agribusinessaccountability.org

Institute of Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP) – www.iatp.org

International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN) - www.igtn.org

Jubilee debt relief campaigns - www.jubileeusa.org and www.jubileesouth.org

Presbyterian Hunger Program – www.pcusa.org/hunger PHP works to end hunger and its causes, for economic and food justice, for lifestyle integrity, and for trade policies that protect the most vulnerable people.

Trade Week of Action – www.tradeweek.org The website for the Week of Action has more background resources, stories, action ideas, prayers, songs, photos, t-shirts, bulletin covers, clipart, and other worship resources.

United Church of Christ – www.ucc.org/justice/globalization

Via Campesina – www.viacampesina.org *Via Campesina* is an international movement of farmer and rural people's organizations calling for food sovereignty, sustainable agriculture, land rights and economic justice.

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Design and illustration: Natalie Ott Shortened 2008 edition: Andrew Kang Bartlett

Originally published in 2007. Revised edition 2008 Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance, Presbyterian Church (USA) and United Church of Christ

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Download booklet at www.tradeweek.org/guide. To order call 1-800-524-2612 or go to www.pcusa.org/marketplace. Use PDS #25432-08-365.

THE FIELD OF THE FOOD
MAY YIELD MUCH FOOD
BUT IT IS SWEEP AWAY
THROUGH INJUSTICE

PROVERBS
13:23

But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream



Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
Presbyterian Hunger Program

United Church of Christ (USA)
Justice and Witness Ministries

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
World Hunger Program

Church of the Brethren
Global Food Crisis

Reformed Church in America
Reformed Church World Service



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