

Chronic food insecurity threatens many low-income countries. What can be done?

After more than fifteen years of heartening declines, global food insecurity and malnutrition are again on the rise. According to the most recent data from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), more than 760 million people had insufficient food resources to meet their daily needs in 2021—[which means 150 million more hungry people in the world than in 2019.](#)

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other ‘disruptive’ innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.

[SIGN UP](#)

We often hear that the world does have sufficient food resources to provision everyone and that the challenges to doing it involve distribution and allocation. But food insecurity is also fundamentally tied to place and to poverty, with reinforcing relationships among low agricultural productivity, low rural incomes, and hunger. Because so many of the world’s poor are farmers, local production shortfalls and low local agricultural productivity translate directly into hunger. Low productivity means that farm households have insufficient incomes to buy the food they need, even if global surpluses could be efficiently redeployed to reach them. Improving global food security will require raising agricultural production closer to sites of crises, closer to households in areas where the hungry reside.

Sustained investments and attention to agricultural productivity in low-income countries is essential to addressing the current crisis and preparing for crises to come. New seeds, strengthened extension services, technology adoption—these are all straightforward ways to combat hunger and social instability in low-income countries.

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here**](#)