



Special Issue on the Global Food Crisis

How CWS partners feed
their communities

- **Burma Cyclone relief efforts**
- **Fair Trade Focus**
- **How YOU can take action against poverty**

PLUS



Hunger hurts: In South Sudan, as everywhere else, the struggle for food and income is becoming harder. Global food prices are soaring, forcing at least 100 million people further into poverty. Concerted action is urgently needed. See page 4-5 for how CWS partners are feeding their communities and how you can help.



International Year of the Potato

2008 is the UN's International Year of the Potato, focusing attention on the potato's potential in food security and poverty reduction. As food prices soar, driven by fierce competition for

reduced international supplies of wheat, maize and rice, and other agricultural commodities, the potato is being promoted as a hope for the future.

@world: Food for all

The cost of food has become a popular talking point as we discover that even in food rich New Zealand we are not insulated from the impact of the rapid rise in international food prices. These sudden increases in everyday basics alongside oil price hikes are affecting our personal budgets, but for poor communities their impact is life threatening.

Food is essential for our very survival and should be a human right everyone enjoys. Instead, poor communities are faced with the frightening question of how they can feed themselves. In developing countries people spend 60-80% of their income on food. A 50% increase in food prices spells disaster. People will starve. Food security, where every person can be assured that they have the safe, healthy and appropriate food that they need each day, is a major global concern.

In Asia, Africa, the Pacific and Central America, our partners focus on enabling poor communities to grow their own food, selling the surplus locally and making them less vulnerable to the market.

At last the wisdom of this approach is being recognised by the international institutions which for years have promoted economic growth without ensuring long term food security for the world's poorest people. Their programmes have failed to eliminate hunger. If the world is to meet every person's right to food, supporting effective programmes that help prevent hunger and advocate for fairer distribution of food is more urgent than ever. Your donations help our partners meet the long term food needs of their communities.

Jonathan Fletcher
National Director

Did you know?

- The potato produces more nutritious food more quickly, on less land, and in harsher climates than any other major crop - up to 85% of the plant is edible human food, compared to around 50% in cereals.
- The potato is the world's number one non-grain food commodity. Unlike major cereals it is not a globally traded commodity. Potato prices tend to be determined by local production costs and not international markets. It is, therefore, a crop that can help low-income farmers and vulnerable consumers ride out the current turmoil in world food supply and demand.
- Potatoes are good for you, rich in carbohydrates, protein, vitamin C and potassium.
- 320 million tonnes of potatoes were produced in 2007.
- China is the world's largest producer and together China and India produce 1/3 of the world's potatoes.
- The potato has been consumed in the Andes for about 8000 years, was taken to Europe in the 16th century and in developing countries its consumption has been steadily rising since the early 1990s.
- Europeans eat 96kg of potato per person each year compared with 58kg in North America, 26kg in Asia/Oceania, 23kg in Latin America and 14kg in Africa.

In Memory

CWS is deeply saddened by the recent death of Sipiwe Dewa, a long time friend and colleague. Sipiwe, who visited New Zealand in 2000, was the initiator and driving force behind the Rainwater Harvesting Programme of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, which CWS has supported for many years. In the arid southern region of Zimbabwe some 2500 water tanks have been built at the homes of people who would otherwise have to walk many kilometres to collect water from boreholes. The access to water has enabled women to expand home gardens, improving family nutrition and livelihood opportunities.



In the face of mounting difficulties caused by the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy and battling ill health, Sipiwe kept working with communities to provide them with water. The Rainwater Harvesting Programme, which CWS continues to support, will be a lasting memorial to all she achieved.



Nature's Devastation

In May both Burma (Myanmar) and China were hit by natural disasters that caused massive loss of human life and widespread destruction, with poverty worsening the impact in both areas. Through ACT (Action By Churches Together) International, CWS is supporting the immediate relief efforts of local ACT members. By working with organisations already on the ground, help can reach communities more quickly and effectively than waiting for outside assistance. Their efforts will require ongoing funding as the people move from survival to long term recovery and rebuilding.

Cyclone Nargis

"There is no one left in the village now, no one can live there," explains Myo Lin*. "There is no food, no water, the smell of the bodies and the water is terrible. We had to leave." Half of the 700 people who lived in his village died or disappeared. "I don't know what happened to my wife and daughter," he says comforting his 7 year old son. "They must have been swept away by the force of the water at some point, but I will never know. We have lost them, we are on our own now."

Myo Lin and the survivors from his village are being cared for by an ACT supported local organisation and have been given clothes, shelter, clean water, medical supplies and food. While reports on the difficulties of sending in aid dominated much of the global media coverage of the cyclone that struck Burma over 2 and 3 May, ACT International representatives in the country said relief was moving at the micro level. They were able to quickly mobilise supplies already in the country to give assistance to more than 100,000 people.

The damage wrought by Cyclone Nargis on southern Burma is catastrophic. The death toll is expected to be well over 100,000 and the UN has estimated that 2.5 million people will be reliant on assistance for some time.

An initial US\$5.1 million appeal has been launched and includes the repair of 5,000 water points to provide up to 1.3 million people with safe water. "The wells are polluted by seawater so for the time being people survive by drinking juice from coconuts," said an ACT International representative. There is concern that contaminated drinking water, poor sanitation and nutrition, and unhealthy living conditions following the cyclone will lead to disease outbreaks that will further raise the death toll. Another major concern is long term food security. "People are surviving on seed grain, which was meant to be planted for the next crops," says the ACT representative. "If communities do not get rice seeds in the ground within the next month, there may not be rice crops for years to come. It is critical that we ensure that this major disaster does not turn into an ongoing catastrophe."

About Burma/Myanmar

Capital: Nay Pyi Taw

Area: 657550 sq.km (slightly larger than France)

Government: Military Junta since a coup against the democratically elected government in 1962. Opposition movement strictly controlled.

Population: estimated at 49 million

Name: In June 1989 the Military Junta officially changed the English name of the country from Burma to Myanmar. Opposition groups continue to use Burma as they do not recognise the legitimacy of the military government nor its authority to rename the country. The UN and many Asian nations use Myanmar. Most western countries use Burma.



ACT International

The China Earthquake

On May 12 an earthquake of magnitude 7.9 struck the Sichuan region in central China. The death toll could reach 80,000. Nearly 250,000 people were injured and 4.8 million left homeless. In some areas, 80% of all buildings collapsed. The scale of the disaster has led to the Chinese government requesting international assistance. CWS is supporting the Amity Foundation, a partner through ACT International, providing food and shelter to thousands of families in the immediate aftermath. Following the initial crisis phase, Amity will assist in the rebuilding of homes, schools and health clinics and repairs to water and irrigation systems.

Other Emergencies

While Burma and China have captured world headlines, many other disasters continue unabated. CWS currently has appeals and some government funding for humanitarian assistance in Zimbabwe (where political tensions and economic collapse continue in the build up to new Presidential elections in late June), Darfur, Palestine, Kenyan refugees in Uganda and cyclone survivors in Bangladesh. Your support of emergency appeals and the general work of CWS enables us to respond quickly when these needs arise.



Hunger Hurts

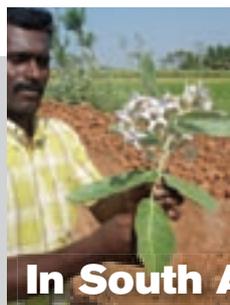
“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food...”

Article 25, 1 Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Hope for a farmer begins with a seed to plant or an animal to raise but after decades of development policies aimed at increasing economic growth rather than putting food on the table, vegetables, cereals, meat and hope will be in shorter supply this year. The hike in food prices has fallen hardest on the poorest people who may spend up to 60-80% of their normal earnings on food. In desperation the citizens of developing countries are taking to the streets. In Sri Lanka people speak of food prices as “a famine, a disaster for the poor created by wrong policies and failed strategies in food production and food distribution.” For the 2.8 billion people in the world who live on

less than US \$2 a day the escalating price rises pose a grim scenario for the future. Many of the world’s hungry are not short of food because of a disaster or crop failure but because of chronic, long-term poverty that means they cannot afford the food that is available in their local markets.

For years the world has largely ignored the plight of hungry people. Governments have not met the agreed goal of 0.7% spending on aid, which would help meet the UN Millennium Development Goal of halving hunger by 2015. With the current depletion of food reserves and rapidly increasing prices on global markets, hunger is finally the subject of debate at the highest levels.



In South Asia



In Sudan

CWS partners feeding their communities.

CWS’s partners in India and Sri Lanka are committed to helping people feed themselves. One strategy is training in low cost organic farming. In South India, the ixora plant is now being grown as an effective natural pesticide. Village seed banks have been established to distribute productive varieties at low cost. The use of organic seeds means farmers are able to save seeds instead of having to purchase sterile seeds yearly. Organic farming requires less water so is more sustainable and durable. The financial investments are lower and the yield is higher than chemical based farming. “The field is like a child,” says one farmer, “conventional farming is like putting chemicals on a child.”

Food is essential to the redevelopment of post war South Sudan. Decades of violence have displaced millions and destroyed infrastructure and livelihoods. CWS partner, the Sudan Council of Churches, runs residential training sessions from its Maridi base to equip local people with the skills to rebuild. These include economic programmes, peace building, life skills, and HIV prevention. To feed the participants, the SCC has established vegetable gardens producing cabbages, kale, tomatoes, onions, carrots, eggplant, passionfruit, papaya and mangoes. The plots are also demonstration farms for agricultural training. Local women’s groups are being helped to raise chickens and other livestock to improve family food supplies and increase income by selling the surplus.

While there are many contributing factors to the crisis, policies insisting on export crops like coffee or flowers, bio fuels and animal feed production instead of local food supply are partly to blame. Rich countries and institutions like the World Bank and IMF have imposed conditions on aid that have undercut local food supply. A few decades ago countries like Haiti and the Philippines were self-sufficient in rice but they are now heavily dependent on imported rice that people can no longer afford.

Up until the 1970s and even the early 1980s developing countries worked hard to secure an adequate food supply. Resources were designated to improve agricultural production and increase returns to the farmers. Then under trade liberalisation policies poorer countries were pressured into opening up their markets to imports and transnational corporations, closing down marketing boards and stopping agricultural support programmes.

Developing countries have so far failed to win any special protections for staple foods in World Trade Organisation negotiations on agriculture. Those countries with stronger production are in a better position. China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, India and Cambodia have banned or severely restricted rice exports in order to ensure supply for the local market. For those now dependent on imported rice, the outlook is not good. CWS partners along with many others have long warned that food for the world's poorest people cannot be guaranteed by the market alone.

One country that stands out for doing something different is Uganda. Since 2004 its rice production has risen 2 1/2 times and the consumption of imported rice has fallen, by half from 2004 to 2005, and by half again from 2005 to 2007. Uganda

ignored the standard advice and favoured programmes to improve production, such as the adoption of better growing seed varieties, and by putting a 75% duty on imported rice. By farming smarter the government also saved their foreign currency for the things that they cannot produce.

The increased attention on global food production is a welcome opportunity to discuss new policies that support and protect small farmers and fisher folk in producing food for their families and local markets rather than an abstract global market. The World Bank has admitted that domestic food production should obtain higher priority and staff are now discussing small mixed crop organic farming as a means to secure food supply for local people. This is the approach CWS partners have been advocating for years. With CWS funding poor farmers learn how to grow food more efficiently without reliance on fertilizer and other inputs that they can't afford. Small scale farming needs to be supported as a safety measure for the world's poorest people. It may not be enough to feed the whole world but for those supported by CWS partners it does mean that they will not starve.

How to Help

People all over the world are affected by soaring food prices. For people in developing countries it will become a matter of life and death. Show your concern by giving your support to CWS partners. Your donations assist their food and agriculture programmes and the global campaigns against the economic policies that deny countries the right to feed their own people. Please donate now. Return your coupon today.

The Global Food Crisis in Numbers

Even before the food crisis, hunger plagued the lives of millions. According to the UN:

- 1 child dies from hunger every 5 seconds:
- The number of chronically hungry people is growing 4 million per year
- One in 4 children in developing countries is underweight.

This will worsen now international food prices have reached their highest level in nearly 30 years:

- Global food prices have increased by 47% in the last year, led by increases in cereals (62%), dairy (69%) and vegetable oils (85%)
- Rice, the staple food of half the world, has risen in price by 96%.
- The World Bank estimates rising food prices will potentially push 100 million people deeper into poverty
- Poor farmers will not benefit – they cannot afford the rising cost of inputs. In Kenya, fertilizer rose from US\$245 a ton to US\$1,110 in just 4 months.

Some of the causes of the current food crisis

- » A drastic reduction in food production in many countries
- » Speculation on world food markets
- » Expansion of the use of bio/agrofuels
- » Climate change affecting weather patterns
- » Rising oil prices that push up the cost of fertilizer and fuel
- » Increasing reliance on imported foods as a consequence of trade liberalization policies
- » IMF and World Bank insistence that borrowing countries reduce tariffs on imported food products and remove government supports like subsidies and marketing assistance
- » Volatility of market conditions affecting food production
- » Increasing emphasis on large industrial scale farming



In Tonga

With the aim of improving family health, nutrition and self reliance, CWS partner, the Tonga Community Development Trust is working with 225 women's groups on the remote outer islands to develop sustainable home gardens and forest farming. Demonstration gardens teach the latest in Bucket Drip Irrigation Systems and show which fruit and vegetable varieties are best suited to the local area. Women are also learning composting to produce their own fertilizer and community nurseries supply them with their seedlings. This programme helps families ensure secure access to food and medicinal plants so people can look after themselves.



In Cambodia

Mr Kim Yi is a beneficiary of CWS partner, Church World Service in Cambodia. His land was cleared of mines and he has received long bean, morning glory and cabbage seeds along with 3 ducks and a cow. Already he has raised 10 ducks and planted bananas, sugar cane and gourds. He now has enough to eke out enough to eke out a living for his family and ensure they have enough food to eat.



Fusona

Young farmers

Children in Timor Leste are getting the chance to raise their own animals to support household livelihoods and improve family nutrition. CWS partner Fusona has worked with a farmers' association in Same to establish children's groups. Each group consists of

5 children who are given 10 ducks or 5 piglets. With the help of their parents, the children must feed and take care of the animals. As well as helping their families, it gives the children a taste of responsibility and valuable skills for the future.

Eco-clubs grow love of nature

"Nature is our friend," say the young children involved in SAND's Eco-clubs in Tamil Nadu, South India. CWS partner, SAND, now has 50 clubs in 17 primary schools, teaching children and their parents about the environment and helping the community find solutions to local problems. One child explains that "prior to SAND working with us, we sometimes used plastic cups for drinking chai and then threw them away, now we don't." Most had taken the message "using plastics is bad" to heart and had helped set up recycling systems at home. Their families now refuse throwaway plastic cups if buying chai.

Other key messages are the impact of pollution, importance of safe drinking water and keeping rivers clean, climate change and the uses of medicinal plants. The



children are growing aloe vera, tulsi (good for mucus and colds), gooseberry (high in Vitamin C), pomegranate, neem, date, rose papaya, tomatoes and onion. SAND hopes these plants will be grown in the villages as well, helping to provide medicines in the poor and under-resourced area. The overwhelming success has been the new enthusiasm children have for their land and

Protecting the soil

For CWS's Nicaraguan partner, CEPAD, the success of their agricultural programme is best summed up by Community Agricultural Promoter Román Polanco Sánchez. "We've learned a lot of things; we used to burn the weeds and now we leave the clippings to serve as organic fertilizer. We used to destroy the earth, but with all these things and the way we've been planting, the earth has changed – it doesn't erode anymore."

With nearly 80% of Nicaraguan families living in poverty and environmental degradation drying up the rivers people rely on for water, this programme is critical to improving livelihoods and protecting the land's productivity. Small scale farmers are taught soil and water conservation, organic pest control, fertilizer production and crop diversification. Hundreds of families are then given the agricultural materials, tools and supervision to put the training into practice and increase production.

FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT
3rd - 18th May

May 3-18 saw another successful focus on Fair Trade. Over 200 churches took part in A Fair Cuppa with many other supporters joining fun events during the fortnight including special services, coffee sack races, concerts and public stalls. Hopefully stores will respond to the pressure to stock more Fairtrade goods.

Fairtrade Sunday @ Knox Church Dunedin

On May 4 Knox celebrated Fair Trade Fortnight with a special service and tasty treats. The Social Justice Work Group baked cakes and biscuits using Fairtrade chocolate, cinnamon, sugar, and cocoa for a congregational morning tea served with Fairtrade tea and coffee. During the service children were encouraged to explore their sense of taste by sampling Fairtrade chocolate at the sanctuary steps. They learned that growers of cacao beans, from which chocolate is produced, were generally poor rather than rich. How fair is that in such a profitable industry?

Rev Dr Sarah Mitchell spoke on how the well-being of humanity is not gauged by the stock market or the world's rich list; rather it is measured by how the most vulnerable are managing. Our everyday decisions, no matter how small, collectively can have a huge impact on how the world might change its bias away from the 'market rules' ideology towards helping the poor and vulnerable.

Thank you to all churches that held similar events



Sunday School teacher Natalie Miller [right] shares cakes of Fair Trade chocolate with the children while the choir and congregation sing Shirley Murray's Fair Trade Hymn (2003) as a prayer of confession.

Knox Church Dunedin

Keep fair trade going

Building on the success of Fair Trade Fortnight, CWS is asking churches to declare themselves Fair Trade Churches and enjoy fair trade tea and coffee throughout the year. In a CWS/Trade Aid initiative, churches make a formal commitment to purchase and promote fair trade goods. "This is an action churches can take to ensure an adequate income for small producers and workers who depend on crops like tea and coffee for their families' livelihoods," explains Campaign Coordinator Gillian Southey. "Fair Trade helps stop poverty by benefiting small

producers and those who work with them, protecting traditional lifestyles and safeguarding the environment." Contact CWS for a kit or download further information from www.cws.org.nz



Certified 'Fair Trade' Church!

Take Action Against Poverty

Thank you for your donations. It is only with your support that CWS can continue funding our development partners around the world. We hope these stories will inspire you to find creative ways to help. See page 8 for information about our Regular Giving programme.

Paying for water

A group at Melville Methodist Church in Ohaupo had a special focus in Lent on water conservation. During Lent people were invited to think about the uses of water and how it could be conserved. Each person had a collection jar, putting in 30c for each tap in the house, 3c for each dish used, or 10c for every time they used water during the day. They say they had, "a great time of study and encouragement and at the end we decided to do something helpful with the money collected". The proceeds were donated to CWS Just Gifts programme for a goat livelihood scheme in Uganda.

Exploiting her skills to give more generously

For some years now Jenny Chisholm's skills in jelly making have been benefiting CWS partners. "It is really great to feel that by donating my time and skill I can give sums that I couldn't afford out of my income," she says.

Jenny makes a variety of marmalades and jelly preserves. The fruit for the jellies comes from friends' gardens and the citrus from local markets. Husband Tony contributes by cleaning the jars and "his strong arm and patience are a help when



I have grapefruit to be cut and squeezed," explains Jenny. The jams are sold at Wadestown Presbyterian Church and to friends and neighbours.

Jenny is happy to give her labour and experience for free. Learning from her mother, "who I remember being disappointed that the fruit cake she'd made for a church stall was sold for less than she'd paid for the ingredients", Jenny ensures she sells for profit, donating the proceeds to CWS.

"CWS is my chosen vehicle for helping people in distress overseas. Information about the projects is readily available and I believe that CWS funds are used for their advertised purpose with a minimum needed for administration."

Parish Links making a difference

Chartwell Cooperating Parish in Hamilton has again made a significant donation to the CWS Christmas Gift Appeal. One of the most supportive churches in the country, Chartwell has a tradition of active and committed Parish Links. Current CWS Link Trevor Bennett would be reluctant to take any credit but his efforts during Advent to keep the congregation aware of CWS, its work and the appeal clearly helped. "We always use CWS printed material as hand-outs to the congregation on each of the Sundays in Advent, enclose material with the December Parish magazine, and use display material," says Trevor. "We have a street appeal outside a supermarket one Saturday and good support from our congregation meant that we could extend our hours last year." While Trevor is busy with other Parish responsibilities he enjoys the work of promoting CWS. "I can think of few tasks which can give better expression to one's faith and I have always found the CWS office and staff most helpful." Supporting CWS is a way to share with others in need, "surely basic to what it means to be Christian," says Trevor. Not only is CWS commended by the denominational leaders of the three participating Churches in the cooperating parish, but it appeals because "decisions as to how aid is used are made by the people who are directly affected and no strings are attached." Contact CWS if you would like to join the Parish Link Team.



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Card number

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Signature _____

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Winter 08

CWS, the development, justice and aid agency of New Zealand churches, acts to end poverty and injustice throughout the world. We fund groups working for better lives and livelihoods in their local communities, support humanitarian relief in times of disaster, campaign against the causes of global poverty and educate within Aotearoa New Zealand. CWS responds to people's needs regardless of race or religion.

Christian World Service

National Office

PO Box 22652
 High Street
 Christchurch 8142
 Phone: 03 366 9274 0800 74 73 72
 cws@cws.org.nz www.cws.org.nz

Northern Fieldworker (Upper North Island):

Phone: 09 571 9150 cwsnorthern@cws.org.nz

Central Fieldworker (Lower North Island):

Ph 04 384 3587 cwscentral@cws.org.nz

