



Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger:

A GLOBAL EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE FOR CHILDREN

Our vision is a world without hunger and malnutrition -- a world in which each and every person can be assured of having the food they need to be healthy and well-nourished. Our vision is a world that provides for and protects the welfare and human dignity of all of its people. A world in which all children can grow, learn and flourish, developing into healthy, active, caring members of society.

(FMFH Partners Vision Statement)

On 16 October 2000, World Food Day, FAO and a coalition of United Nations agencies and other international organizations launched a unique global education initiative: "Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger" (FMFH). Recognizing that young people, with their imagination, ideals and energy, can play an important role in achieving a world free from hunger, the FMFH initiative has been developed to inform and educate schoolchildren about the persistent problems of hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity in the world. The initiative calls upon teachers to instil in their students a sense of caring and

commitment to joining in the fight against hunger.

Developed to provide opportunities for involving schools in activities to help create a world free from hunger, the initiative is based on the premise that children and young people can be:

- introduced to both global and local issues of hunger and malnutrition through common, easily adapted materials;
- given tools to work together to help solve problems of food insecurity;
- better motivated if they are taught using lessons from different parts of the world, from different cultures and circumstances; and
- nurtured in the ways of responsible global citizenship.

To this end, it sets out to provide teachers with quality materials that:

- meet curriculum requirements;
- are culturally acceptable and easily adaptable; and
- stimulate students to explore root causes of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition.

Today, approximately 840 million

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people in the world do not have enough to eat to meet their basic energy requirements; 2 billion people cannot consume the quantity and variety of foods necessary to meet their vitamin and mineral needs. Even in the United States of America, where problems of over-nutrition predominate, approximately 31 million people, including 12 million children, do not have regular access to enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs. Hunger and malnutrition prevent the normal growth and development of children, and limit the learning capacity and productivity of both children and adults.

The 1996 World Food Summit and its follow-up in 2002 (*WFS:fyl – World Food Summit: five years later*) reconfirmed the need for generating political will in order to accelerate progress in reducing the number of hungry and malnourished people in the world. An important part of developing and strengthening commitment to eliminate hunger and malnutrition is ensuring that children and young people around the world understand the causes and consequences of hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity and are motivated to improve these unacceptable conditions. Encouraging young people to become aware of these problems, and their solutions, will help generate and sustain the political will necessary to create a world free from hunger.

The FMFH classroom materials

Lesson plans

The FMFH materials are intended for use by teachers who would like to explore the problems of hunger and malnutrition with their students and provide a starting point for classroom discussions and activities on these themes. Given the wide variety of problems, cultures and environments around the world, the lesson plans have been prepared as a framework for teachers, so that the content can be adapted and tailored to fit students' needs, classroom facilities and local situations. The lessons were

BOX 1

Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger partners and collaborators

FOUNDING PARTNERS

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- United States National Committee for World Food Day
- World Bank
- Future Harvest
- International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
- International Education and Resource Network (iEARN)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- National Peace Corps Association (NPCA)
- Newsweek Education Program (NEP)

COLLABORATORS

- Arab Center for Nutrition (formerly Arab Nutrition Society)
- Asia-Pacific Network for Food and Nutrition
- European Food Information Council
- Federación Latinoamericana de Asociaciones Académicas de Nutrición y Dietética
- Colegio de Profesores de Chile
- Fundación de Vida Rural de la Pontificia, Universidad Católica de Chile
- Global Nomads Group
- International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
- Kenya Coalition for Action in Nutrition
- Secretariat of the Pacific Community
- Società Italiana di Nutrizione Umana
- South Eastern Europe Health Promotion Network (SEE Health)
- Southern Africa Teachers' Organisation
- World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts

developed by the Feeding Minds Partners, with review and input from regional staff and teachers and from the FMFH collaborators (see Box 1).

The materials comprise three easy-to-introduce lessons for each of three broad school levels – primary, intermediate and secondary. Each lesson covers, in varying degrees of complexity, the topics “What are hunger and malnutrition?” “Who are the malnourished?” “Why is there hunger?” and “What can we do to help end hunger and malnutrition?” The content has been directed towards the middle of the developmental skills range for each level; teachers examine the materials and select those that best match their students' level of cognitive development, making modifications as necessary.

The lessons are designed to be used in three class sessions of approximately 45 minutes' duration, although they can be covered in greater or less detail, depending on the time available and the

needs of the class. The complete lessons are available on the FMFH Web site (www.feedingminds.org), on CD-ROM and in print. A simple, standard, didactic format has been adopted for all the lessons, setting out:

- background information for the teacher;
- the primary objectives of the lesson;
- the basic concepts to be acquired;
- the content to be covered;
- student handout materials;
- suggested activities and discussion points;
- a summary of the main points of the lesson.

The content of the individual lessons is outlined in the paragraphs below.

Lesson one

“What are hunger and malnutrition and who are the hungry?” This lesson introduces students to the main functions of food and the importance of food for good health, growth and development. It

presents the scope and global magnitude of hunger, and provides an overview of those groups in the world that are most vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. By the end of the lesson, students should understand basic concepts of good nutrition and healthy diets and should know in which countries and population groups hunger and malnutrition are more prevalent.

Lesson two

“Why are people hungry and malnourished?” The second lesson illustrates how hunger and malnutrition are caused and perpetuated by a number of factors, and introduces the concept of food security. By the end of the lesson, students should know the steps in the food system and what it means to be food secure, and should understand the basic factors affecting food security and major obstacles to ensuring it.

Lesson three

“What can we do to help end hunger?” This lesson provides the basis for understanding what can be done, individually and collectively, to reduce hunger in the world and shows students that they have an important role to play in fighting hunger for themselves, their families, their communities and for the world. After completing the lesson, students should feel a sense of commitment to learning more about the causes of hunger and malnutrition and taking action in whatever ways they can to help find solutions to these problems.

Multilingual versions

The “Feeding Minds” lessons and materials now exist in ten languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Greek, Indonesian, Italian, Kiswahili, Portuguese and Spanish. Versions in Farsi, Nepali and Russian are in production, and additional requests for national languages are being received as the lessons gain wider dissemination. Many countries are taking the initiative to adapt and translate the materials using local resources.

BOX 2

FMFH Global Teach-in 2001

As part of the launch of Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger in 2001, a Global Teach-in took place in more than 30 countries during the week of 14 to 20 October, to link in with World Food Day on 16 October. Classes were taught by prominent people around the world, including:

Ms Nane Annan in NYC School; *Congressperson Tony Hall* in Ohio; *Per Pinstrup-Andersen* as part of World Food Prize Ceremonies; *Dr Reuben L. Villareal*, Director, SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture, Los Baños, the Philippines; *Dr Francis Lucas*, Chairman, Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, Metro Manila, the Philippines; *Dr Fernando Monckeberg*, Chile, President, Federación Latinoamericana de Asociaciones Académicos de Nutrición y Dietética (FLASANYD) to the Directors of Nutrition Schools of Latin American Countries; *Mr Fitz Jackson*, Minister of Education, Jamaica; *Ms Grace Akello*, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Kampala; and *Ismail Serageldin*, Developer of the New Alexandria Library, Cairo.

Interactive forum

An important aspect of the FMFH initiative is that it encourages the exchange of information and experiences around the world by providing a medium through which teachers and students can learn from each other. An interactive discussion forum has been established on the FMFH Web site; students, teachers and others can communicate directly with each other, sharing their ideas, knowledge, issues and problems. It is hoped that this exchange will lead to a better understanding and appreciation of different cultures and situations around the world. The Web site also provides a showcase for innovative activities and events related to the FMFH materials; teachers and students are invited to submit their own lessons and activities generated in the classroom to share with others in their own country and around the world.

Efforts are continuously being made to develop further the FMFH materials and Web site, promote wider dissemination and use of the materials and to encourage their use in an expanding number of countries. The Web site is updated regularly and additional lessons, resources and links are developed and posted for teachers and students who wish to explore topics in greater depth. Comments from teachers, students and other users are actively sought through an

evaluation form on the Web site and in the print materials. Additions and modifications will be made in response to the expressed needs and suggestions.

Intercountry workshops

FAO and UNESCO are supporting a series of intercountry workshops with participants from the health, education and agriculture sectors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government representatives of the host countries. The workshops provide a forum for discussing the relevance and usefulness of the materials for participating countries, reviewing their application and the experiences in the various countries, examining possible ways to promote the initiative, and identifying possibilities for intercountry collaboration. In 2002, workshops were held in Mali (for Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali, the Niger and Senegal), in India (for Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines and Sri Lanka) and in Italy (for 17 Mediterranean countries). A special FMFH workshop was held at the UNESCO Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) 50th Anniversary International Congress on Quality Education (New Zealand). Participants included high-level decision-makers from Ministries of Education, senior officials from National Commissions for UNESCO and ASPnet National

Coordinators from all parts of the world. A workshop for six countries in Latin America is scheduled for late 2003, and additional workshops are foreseen for 2004.

The workshops have been highly successful in generating activities to raise awareness of the importance of educating children and young people about hunger and malnutrition and in involving schools in the FMFH initiative. Many of the participating countries have developed action plans for introducing the materials; some are seeking support for implementation, including local adaptations, teacher training and national workshops, from both the public and private sectors, and from the FMFH partners; others have formed national Feeding Minds committees and organized awareness-raising events, for example school drawing and essay competitions, that have enhanced their World Food Day observances.

Country activities

Several major Internet-based educational providers are linked to the FMFH Web site (see Box 3), thus increasing its accessibility to educators around the world. The Web site has recorded visits from 143 countries, and the FMFH mailbox (fmfh@fao.org) regularly receives reports, requests, comments and evaluations from educators, nutritionists, students, NGOs and other users from all over the world. Primary, middle and secondary schools in both developing and developed countries, as well as universities, ministries of education and agriculture, faith-based groups and youth groups are using the model lessons and resource materials. Schools are encouraged to report on their activities and to send materials they produce for sharing with others around the world through the "Country Activities" area of the FMFH Web site.

Worldwide, numerous country activities have been initiated. The examples described below provide an indication of the breadth and scope of some of these

activities.

In Greece, two groups are actively promoting the FMFH initiative. The Hellenic Committee for Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger was instrumental in translating, printing and distributing the Greek version to schools, and organized the symposium "Myth Against Hunger" in Athens on World Food Day 2002. The NGO SEE Health (South Eastern Europe Health Promotion Network), under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, implemented a pilot project using the Greek version of the Feeding Minds lessons in 14 selected elementary, middle and high schools in Athens and Lesbos, involving more than 2 000 students.

In India, the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) conducted a pilot study using the FMFH materials in Hyderabad. Working through the NGO Confederation of Voluntary Associations (COVA), five schools were selected to use and evaluate the FMFH lessons, to provide input for adapting the materials to meet the needs of local schoolchildren and to identify common teaching aids for use by teachers in all schools.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) made the FMFH lessons available to all high schools in Canada, and organized a mailing to 10 000 individuals and groups across the country encouraging the use of the materials. The

CFGB is also working with a national curriculum review committee to examine the potential for using FMFH materials as a resource for raising agriculture and food security issues in new classroom syllabi.

Mali has carried out a pilot project and evaluation in six primary and intermediate UNESCO/ASPnet schools in Bamako, and has shown interest in implementing the initiative on a wider basis. Nepal has initiated a project to produce Nepali versions of the materials, conduct a national seminar and train teachers in the use of the lessons, and an NGO in Iran is supporting the production and use of the lessons in Farsi.

Educators and nutritionists from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru have requested and are using the materials. Lebanon has requested copies in English, French and Arabic for wide distribution to schools, and Zimbabwe has requested copies for distribution to all primary schools.

Requests for the materials for classroom use have been received from teachers and school systems throughout the United States. The materials have been used in a variety of ways by college professors in their World Food Day observances, including giving special academic credit for developing a college-level version of the lessons, and a number of World Food Day sponsors have

BOX 3

Major educational providers linking to the FMFH Web site

- **TUFTS University Nutrition Navigator.** In July 2002, Tufts evaluated and awarded the FMFH Web site the highest possible rating, "Among The Best!". <http://navigator.tufts.edu>
- **Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM).** In May 2003, this United States Department of Education initiative consisting of a database of over 25 000 educational resources, lesson plans and curriculum units, catalogued FMFH, enabling educators and other users to go directly to the materials. <http://www.geminio.org>
- **EDUCASOURCE.** In December 2002, the French educational Internet service provided by the French National Centre of Educational Documentation (Centre national de documentation pédagogique) and supported by the French Ministry of Education added FMFH to its resource list under the title "Nourrir les esprits. Combattre la faim: un monde libéré de la faim". <http://www.educasource.education.fr>
- **Butterfly 208/Papillon 208.** Since January 2003, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has featured FMFH as an additional online resource under the "Teacher's Corner" section of their education and information Web site for youth on international development. <http://www.bp208.ca>



included FMFH as a resource in their own hunger materials. The FMFH materials have been used by Pennsylvania State University in its training programme for nearly 500 classroom teachers. The initiative has been publicized in major educational magazines (e.g. *Creative Classroom*) and newspapers, and the United States Department of Agriculture "Agriculture in the Classroom" programme has publicized the materials to all schools nationwide. The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC), as a special President's Project, has adopted FMFH for hundreds of its clubs across the country and the Presbyterian Hunger Program has distributed the materials to their nationwide Hunger Action Enabler Network.

Italy, through the Ministry of Education, the Italian Committee for Feeding Minds, the NGO New Trends and support from regional governments, has initiated and promoted numerous activities within the country. During the school year 2002–2003, the Ministry of Education supported an FMFH pilot programme in 12 primary and intermediate schools in Rome; participating schools produced class work on hunger (available on the FMFH Web site), raised and donated funds to selected local and international charities, and held World Food Day celebrations on the topics of hunger and malnutrition. The NGO New Trends, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the regional government, organized a World Food

Day/FMFH drawing, poster and slogan competition on the topic of world hunger for schools in the Lazio region. Over 300 schools, from pre-school through high school, took part in the competition, which culminated in an official celebration in Rome in November 2002 involving 4 500 participating teachers and students, families, celebrities and local authorities, as well as representatives of FAO.

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) has actively promoted FMFH to its national associations around the world. The FMFH materials were presented and distributed to 40 participating countries at the 31st WAGGGS World Conference in the Philippines in 2002, the WAGGGS youth groups in Italy used the FMFH lessons to create activities on the topic of nutrition, and selected FMFH as a theme for its 2003 fundraising event "Walk for the World".

Partnership and commitment

The Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger initiative presents a unique opportunity for FAO to work with a broad coalition of partners to foster greater awareness and understanding among young people of the problems of hunger and malnutrition in the world. The initiative has been conceived and developed as a joint effort, with the objective of joining forces in

order to maximize efforts made by each of the partners to reduce hunger and malnutrition through education. The partners believe that by bringing together their individual efforts and expertise, a world free from hunger can be achieved more quickly and successfully than by working alone.

This is proving to be a fruitful collaboration, as the FMFH founding partners and collaborators continue to work together to enhance and expand the materials and to promote their wider use. The positive reactions of educators, governments, students and youth groups around the world to the Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger initiative have confirmed the belief of FAO and its partners that information and resource materials of this nature can make a meaningful contribution to the education of children and young people in all countries. A clear need has been expressed for educational materials addressing both nutrition and more broadly based hunger issues, and FAO is committed to working to meet that need.



feeding minds.
fighting hunger

a
WORLD
FREE FROM
hunger

Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger: a global educational initiative for children

On 16 October 2000, World Food Day, the initiative “Feeding Minds, Fighting Hunger” (FMFH) was launched by FAO in collaboration with other international organizations. The aim is to educate schoolchildren about malnutrition and food insecurity and to instil a sense of caring and commitment to joining in the fight against hunger. Model lessons and resource materials have been prepared to provide a framework for teachers, which can be adapted to fit students’ needs, classroom facilities and local situations. An electronic discussion forum on the FMFH Web site provides a facility for the exchange of information and experiences; students and teachers communicate with each other to share ideas, knowledge, issues and problems. The Web site also serves as a showcase for innovative activities.

Primary, middle and secondary schools in both developing and developed countries, as well as universities, ministries of education and agriculture, faith-based groups and youth groups are using the lessons and resource materials. The positive response to the initiative demonstrates the clear need for educational materials addressing both nutrition and broad hunger issues. It is hoped that the exchanges brought about by the initiative will lead to a better understanding and appreciation of different situations around the world.

Nourrir les esprits, combattre la faim – initiative mondiale axée sur l’éducation des enfants

Le 16 octobre 2000, à l’occasion de la Journée mondiale de l’alimentation, la FAO a lancé l’initiative «Nourrir les esprits, combattre la faim» en collaboration avec d’autres organisations internationales. L’objectif est de faire prendre conscience aux écoliers des problèmes liés à la malnutrition et à l’insécurité alimentaire, de leur faire comprendre l’importance de la lutte contre la faim et de les amener à s’impliquer. Des leçons types et du matériel didactique ont été élaborés afin que les enseignants disposent d’un cadre de travail, qu’ils peuvent ensuite adapter aux besoins de leurs élèves, aux équipements dont ils disposent et à leurs conditions de travail. Le forum électronique de débats offert par le site Web du projet *Nourrir les esprits, combattre la faim* permet d’échanger des informations et de confronter les expériences. Les élèves et les enseignants communiquent entre eux, partagent leurs idées et leurs connaissances et débattent des enjeux et des problèmes. Le site Web sert également de vitrine à des activités novatrices.

Les leçons et le matériel de référence sont utilisés non seulement dans les écoles primaires et secondaires des pays tant développés qu’en développement, mais également par les universités, les ministères de l’éducation et de l’agriculture, les groupes religieux et les groupes de jeunes. La réaction positive suscitée par le projet montre le besoin criant en matériel pédagogique traitant de la nutrition et de questions plus générales liées à la faim. On s’attend à ce que les échanges nés de cette initiative jettent les bases d’une meilleure compréhension et permettent de mieux appréhender la diversité des situations à l’échelle mondiale.

Alimentar la mente para combatir el hambre: una iniciativa mundial de educación destinada a los niños

El 16 de octubre de 2000, Día Mundial de la Alimentación, la FAO, en colaboración con otras organizaciones internacionales, lanzó la iniciativa «Alimentar la mente para combatir el hambre». El objetivo de esta iniciativa es educar a los escolares sobre la malnutrición y la inseguridad alimentaria, e infundirles un espíritu de asistencia y compromiso para que se unan a la lucha contra el hambre. Se han preparado lecciones modelo y materiales de fondo con objeto de proporcionar un marco de referencia a los profesores, el cual puede adaptarse en función de las necesidades de los estudiantes, las

aulas disponibles y las condiciones locales. El foro electrónico del sitio Web de esta iniciativa proporciona un servicio de intercambio de información y experiencias; estudiantes y profesores se comunican entre sí con objeto de intercambiar ideas, conocimientos, cuestiones y problemas. El sitio Web sirve también para dar a conocer las actividades innovadoras.

Escuelas primarias, medias y secundarias tanto de países en desarrollo como desarrollados, así como universidades, ministerios de educación y agricultura, grupos religiosos y de adolescentes, están utilizando las lecciones y materiales de fondo proporcionados. La respuesta positiva a la iniciativa demuestra claramente la necesidad de materiales de educación en los que se aborden tanto las cuestiones de nutrición como otros temas más generales relacionados con el hambre. Se espera que los intercambios que se han suscitado gracias a la iniciativa lleven a un mayor entendimiento y valorización de las diferentes situaciones que se presentan en todo el mundo.