

PRICE SHOCKS

The
Affordability
Crisis Moving
Nutritious
Diets Out of
Reach

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Cover photo: Mother and son share a joyful moment, smiling at each other while holding their harvest in the garden, Haiti.

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World Vision is a Christian relief, development, and advocacy organisation dedicated to helping the most vulnerable children, families, and communities overcome poverty and injustice. We work with the world's most vulnerable people from all backgrounds, even in the most dangerous places, and serve all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.

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FOREWORD

Food prices tell a story that goes far beyond markets. In communities across the world, the price of food shapes whether children eat nutritious meals, whether they can concentrate in the classroom, whether families can afford healthcare, and whether parents are able to provide the stability every child needs to thrive.

During my visits to fragile and crisis-affected contexts, I have met parents making impossible calculations every day: deciding which meal to skip, which household expense to postpone, and how to stretch incomes that no longer keep pace with the rising cost of food. These are not isolated struggles. They reflect a growing global reality in which nutritious diets are becoming increasingly unaffordable for millions of families.

The findings in World Vision's fifth annual food basket survey reveal the scale of that challenge. Across 62 countries, the cost of a basic nutritious food basket continues to outpace what many households can reasonably earn. In some contexts, families can purchase it with a few hours' worth of labour. In others, the same basket requires days or even weeks of work. In the Central African Republic, it represents approximately a month of labour. Among the 47 countries where comparison data is available, food basket costs increased in 33, often by margins that far exceed any reductions seen elsewhere.

These figures should concern all of us. They remind us that global averages can mask profound inequalities. A modest improvement in hunger indicators means little to a parent who cannot afford food for tomorrow or to a child whose development is compromised because nutritious meals remain beyond reach.

Every statistic in this report represents a child facing the consequences of food becoming increasingly more expensive. A child whose growth is threatened by poor nutrition. A child who may leave school because household resources are

exhausted. A child whose future opportunities are narrowed not by a lack of potential, but by a lack of access to the food needed to grow, learn, and develop.

From conflicts that disrupt food production and markets, to climate shocks that destroy livelihoods, to economic instability that erodes household purchasing power, the drivers of food insecurity are increasingly interconnected. Yet the consequences are felt most acutely by children. As we have seen repeatedly in humanitarian crises around the world, when food becomes unaffordable, families are forced into coping mechanisms that can have lasting impacts on children's health, education, and protection.

This is why food affordability is a child rights issue. It is a question of human dignity. And it is a test of our collective commitment to ensuring that every child has the opportunity not merely to survive, but to flourish.

World Vision continues to respond through integrated programmes that combine food assistance, cash and voucher support, nutrition services, school meals, livelihoods strengthening, and resilience-building interventions. We have seen firsthand that when families are supported not only to meet immediate needs but also to build resilience against future shocks, children are better protected and communities are better equipped to withstand crises.

The affordability gap highlighted in this report cannot be closed by humanitarian action alone. It will require donors, governments, businesses, and international institutions working together to strengthen social protection systems, invest in resilient food systems, and address the underlying vulnerabilities that continue to drive hunger and malnutrition. As humanitarian resources come under increasing pressure, investing in resilience alongside life-saving assistance is one of the most effective ways to protect children, safeguard

development gains, and reduce future humanitarian need.

No child should be denied the chance to grow healthy, learn in school, and realise their God-given potential simply because nutritious food has

become unaffordable. The findings in this report challenge us not only to recognise the problem, but to act with urgency and resolve.

Paul Kinuthia

*Senior Director, Food, Cash and Markets
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Children are served a meal of lentils, rice and salad in a Beirut Community Kitchen, Lebanon. These children were served a meal like this several times a week by the local organisation that runs the kitchen and school, but because of rising costs they are only made a meal once a week.

INTRODUCTION

For millions of families, the cost of food is measured not only at the market, but in the choices they are forced to make at home: whether to serve smaller portions, skip a meal, buy cheaper and less nutritious food, or cut spending on healthcare, education, and housing. These choices can significantly shape a child's health, learning, and future. **Healthy diets remain unaffordable for about one in three people globally, with the burden especially severe in Africa, where 66.6% of the population could not afford a healthy diet in 2025. At the same time, only 30.8% of children aged 6–23 months worldwide consume a diet lacking variety.**¹

World Vision's fifth annual food basket survey examines how far families' earnings stretch across 62 participating countries by comparing the cost of a standard basket of food with average wages. Through year-on-year and cross-country comparisons, the report identifies the populations most vulnerable to cost-of-living pressures and related food insecurity. These findings support World Vision's global commitment to evidence-based advocacy and action through the ENOUGH campaign, helping ensure that children's voices are heard and families are empowered to shape the solutions needed to end child hunger and malnutrition.

For children, the cost-of-living pressures are felt long before they appear in national statistics: They experience less diverse diets, missed meals, interrupted schooling, increased protection risks, and their families' inability to absorb repeated shocks. Conflict, displacement, economic crises, and climate change further compound these pressures and disrupt livelihoods, markets, and supply chains, making nutritious food harder for children and families to access. According to the United Nations' State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) 2026, global hunger has eased for a third consecutive year, showing that progress is possible. That progress, however, is uneven across regions, and the world remains off track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030,² as well as all seven global nutrition targets.

SOFI also highlights affordability as a critical condition for accessing a healthy diet, which it defines around adequacy, balance, diversity, and moderation, and notes that general food prices and the cost of a healthy diet are related but distinct measures.

Against this backdrop, World Vision's food price monitoring provides complementary evidence on the affordability pressures households face. The food basket items analysed in this report track changes in the prices of essential foods and offers localised and timely signals of changing economic access to food. These signals can help identify when rising food costs may place greater pressure on household budgets and, in turn, affect families' ability to access nutritious foods and maintain adequate diets.

At the same time, malnutrition is not limited to hunger or undernutrition. It takes multiple forms. The World Health Organization defines malnutrition as including deficiencies and excesses in nutrient intake, including undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, overweight, obesity, and noncommunicable diseases.³ SOFI 2026 notes that progress towards global nutrition targets remains too slow, while adult obesity continues to rise. Poor-quality diets and inadequate access to nutritious food can contribute to different forms of malnutrition, including overweight and obesity, and, in turn, increase the risk of noncommunicable diseases. SOFI 2026 also highlights the importance of dietary diversity among children as a critical measure of diet quality. This reflects a broader challenge within food systems: While some families struggle to access enough food, others may rely on cheaper, less nutritious diets that increase health risks.



These global trends underscore the importance of looking beyond hunger and nutrition outcomes to the affordability pressures that shape children and families' ability to access food. Food prices, when considered alongside household incomes, provide an important indication of how much families can afford to spend on food and when rising costs may put nutritious diets further out of reach.

According to World Vision research, it takes the following time working to earn enough money to buy a food basket of 10 common items:

1.8 hours in Hong Kong compared to 10.1 days in Myanmar
1.2 hours in Ireland compared to 6 days in Lesotho
2.7 hours in France compared to 14.5 days in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
4.5 hours in Romania compared to 8.5 days in Zambia
1.7 hours in Canada compared to 13.4 days in Mozambique
3 hours in South Korea compared to 9.5 days in Haiti
1.2 hours in the USA compared to 13 days in Chad
1.9 hours in Sweden compared to 30.1 days in the Central African Republic
2.2 hours in New Zealand compared to 11.3 days in Somalia
1.7 hours in Finland compared to 20.4 days in Malawi

The data shows a stark divide in food affordability across the countries included in the study for the number of hours of work required to purchase a basic food basket. While workers in high-income countries such as Ireland, the United States, and the United Kingdom can afford a basket in just over one hour of work, workers in the least affordable countries need several days or weeks. In the Central African Republic (CAR), 30 days, or almost 241 hours, of labour are required to purchase the same basket.

The eleven countries with the highest food prices in this year's study have food basket prices of over one week of work. These countries are CAR, Sudan, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mozambique, Chad, Somalia, Myanmar, Haiti, Zambia, and Uganda. Of these 11 countries, all but two belong to Sub-Saharan Africa, a region that is home to almost half of the world's most fragile and conflict-affected states.⁴

The 10 countries where the standard food basket is most affordable are high-income nations where workers require less than 2.5 hours of work: Ireland, United States, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Canada, Finland, Hong Kong, Netherlands, Sweden, and New Zealand. These countries generally benefit from high incomes and well-developed social protection systems, which help households manage food costs and economic shocks.

Implications of the food affordability crisis for children

When food prices rise and healthy diets become out of reach, children are among the hardest hit. **In 2025, an estimated 35.5 million children were acutely malnourished worldwide, including nearly 10 million with severe acute malnutrition.**⁵ Children already experiencing poverty, discrimination, displacement, or crisis face the greatest risks.⁶ Malnutrition can damage children's physical and cognitive development, weaken their immunity, and increase their risk of death. These effects can continue throughout childhood and into adult life and are not always easily reversed later in life. Once malnutrition affects a child's growth, brain development, or learning, recovery can be difficult, costly, and sometimes incomplete. Price shocks therefore threaten more than just the right to food: They can also undermine children's rights to education, protection, and an adequate standard of living.⁷

No child should go hungry. Yet because food systems are fragile, wages are too low, emergency responses are underfunded, and recurring shocks chip away at resilience, many families are being pushed beyond their ability to cope. Governments, donors, businesses, and international institutions must treat preserving food affordability as an urgent measure of

justice and survival. Action must be taken to:

- protect children during shocks (including by expanding and strengthening school meals and other forms of social protection)
- invest in resilient local food systems and social protection
- reverse cuts to humanitarian and development funding
- address the conflict, climate, and economic pressures — including trade, debt, financial systems, and the concentration of power across food markets — that keep nutritious food out of reach.

As the findings of this report demonstrate, the cost of inaction is measured not only in prices, but in children's health, learning, safety, and future opportunities.



Mrs Pouk and her 4-year-old, Souk, are one of 50 families who received ducks and chickens from World Vision Nutritious Food Secured Project in Soukhouma district, Champasack Province, Laos.

METHODOLOGY

Since 2021, World Vision has conducted an annual food price survey to track inequalities, monitoring year-on-year changes in the cost of a standard food basket across countries and comparing what it takes workers in different countries to afford it.

Food price data for this year's survey was collected quarterly by World Vision staff and volunteers between November 2025 and May 2026. Staff and volunteers gathered food price data from local markets, shops, and supermarkets for a basket of 10 common food items: 1 kg of sweet bananas, 1 kg of white uncooked rice, 1 kg of wheat flour, 1 kg of raw sugar, 1 kg of maize corn cobs, a dozen eggs, 1 litre of cooking oil, 1 raw chicken, 1 kg of tomatoes, 1 litre of fresh locally sourced milk. The total cost of each country's food basket was converted to U.S. dollars using currency exchange rates from the dates the data was collected and then converted to PPP (purchasing power parity) exchange rates. These prices were compared to gross national income (GNI) PPP per capita to determine the number of hours of work required to afford the basic food basket.

A total of 62 countries participated in the study. Sixty reported complete baskets, and 56 were included in the main hours-of-work analysis, because they had both complete basket data and available GNI data. Two countries — Japan and Mauritania — had incomplete baskets because maize corn cobs were

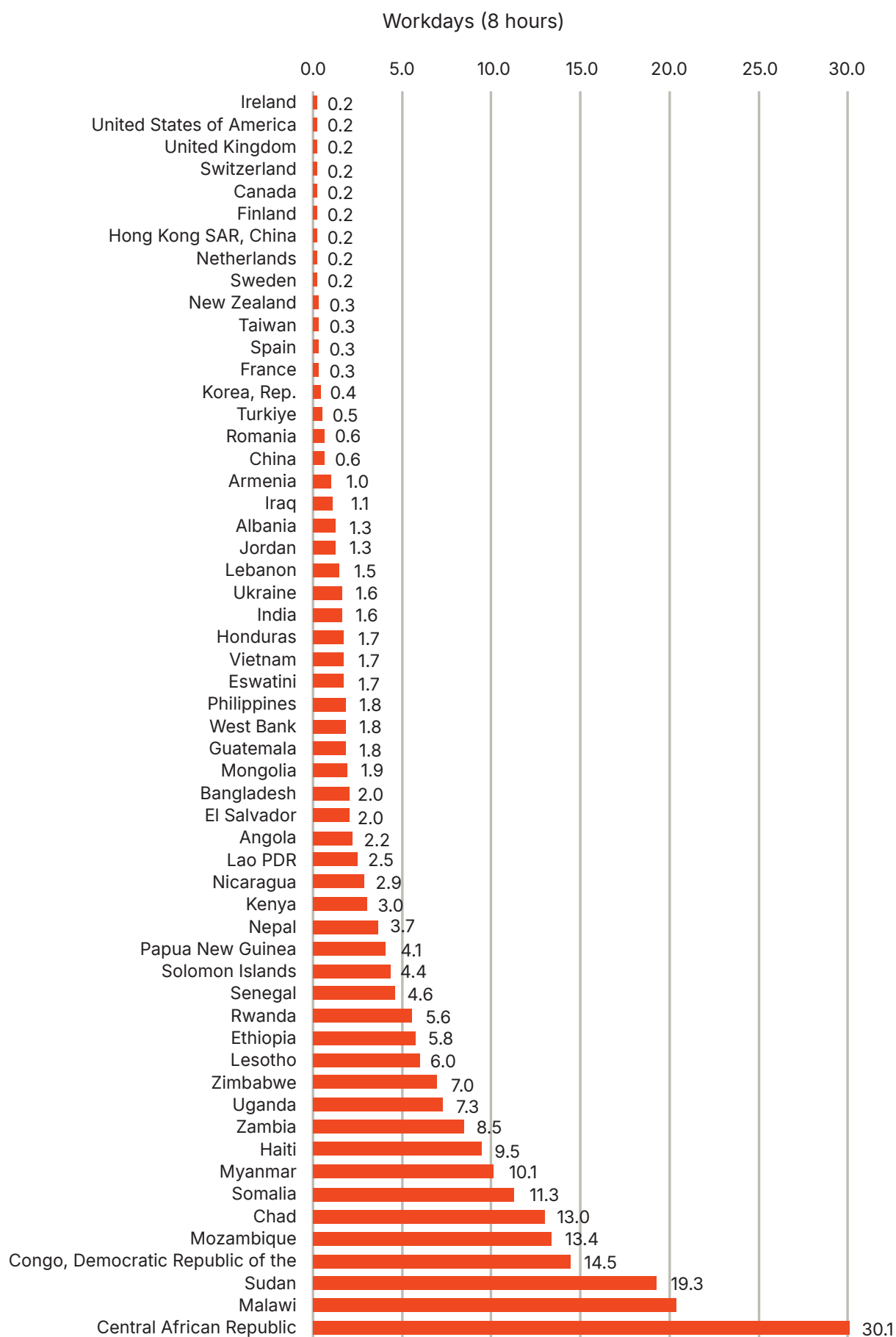
missing, and four countries — Afghanistan, South Sudan, Syria, and Venezuela — were excluded from the hours-of-work analysis due to missing GNI data.

To calculate GNI, a country needs functioning systems to gather and report economic data. Those systems are often weakest in the places facing the deepest crises. The four countries without GNI data are contexts affected by active conflict, institutional collapse, or severe access restrictions, all of which can make reliable economic and market data difficult to collect. Afghanistan has faced acute hunger since the new authorities came into power in 2021, with over half the population at crisis-level food insecurity (IPC Phase 3+).⁸ In Syria, more than a decade of conflict has weakened the economy, disrupted trade, increased poverty, and worsened living conditions across the country.⁹ South Sudan has never fully stabilised since independence and continues to face recurrent famine conditions.¹⁰ Venezuela's ongoing crisis has devastated markets and livelihoods, and more recently, a severe earthquake has compounded the humanitarian crisis.¹¹ In effect, the countries most likely to face catastrophic food insecurity are also the ones we cannot measure. This creates a bias: The study captures moderate-to-bad situations but misses the worst cases. The absence of data does not indicate absence of crisis. On the contrary, it's a signal that crisis has become too severe for measurement.



Nduku Mutisya and her sons proudly show the goats and sheep they purchased through savings from their Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) group in Kiang'e Village, Mutomo, Kitui South, Kenya.

Figure 1. Days of work to afford a food basket



Limitations

Like any cross-country survey, this analysis has limitations. These do not undermine the overall findings, but they are important for understanding how the results should be interpreted. Food prices can be difficult to compare because families do not all buy food in the same way. In some contexts, informal or parallel markets emerge in response to monetary policies, price controls, trade limitations, or mandated food prices, which can complicate the interpretation of survey results that rely on official exchange rates (sourced from Xe.com). As a result, this research may understate food costs in countries with large informal or parallel markets. It is also possible that informal vendors may offer lower prices by avoiding taxes, reducing regulatory costs, or operating outside the supply chain structures and labour costs associated with formal supermarkets.

World Vision reduces this risk by collecting price information from a mix of sources, including local vendors and supermarkets. Using PPP also helps make comparisons fairer by accounting for differences in local purchasing power. Even so, the results should be read as a strong indication of affordability pressures, not as a perfect measure of every household's experience. However, because GNI PPP per capita is an average, it can mask income inequality and may overstate the purchasing

power of the poorest and most marginalised households World Vision serves.

Some country data also required additional adjustments. For Taiwan and Lebanon, GNI PPP estimates were calculated using available World Bank GNI data and PPP coefficients from comparable economies, because direct GNI PPP data was not available. For Chad, where exact food price collection dates were unavailable, an average monthly USD PPP conversion rate was used. These adjustments allowed the countries to remain in the analysis, but their results should be interpreted with appropriate caution.

There are also practical differences in how food price data is collected. The quality, availability, and type of food items can vary between countries and markets. Prices may also differ between rural and urban areas, formal and informal markets, and seasons. In conflict-affected regions and remote areas, collecting complete and consistent data can be especially difficult.

Because it is not possible to collect identical products from identical locations in every country each year, some differences in measurement are unavoidable. For this reason, the survey should be read alongside local knowledge, humanitarian assessments, and other food security data. Together, these sources provide a fuller picture of the pressures children and families face.



Masangi is doing his market gardening, which has increased the income of his household thanks to the support of World Vision, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Figure 2. Cost of food basket per country

Items include: 1 kg sweet bananas, 1 kg rice, 1 kg wheat flour, 1 kg raw sugar, 1 kg maize corn, a dozen eggs, 1 litre cooking oil, 1 raw chicken, 1 kg tomatoes, 1 litre fresh milk.
Results assume an eight-hour workday.

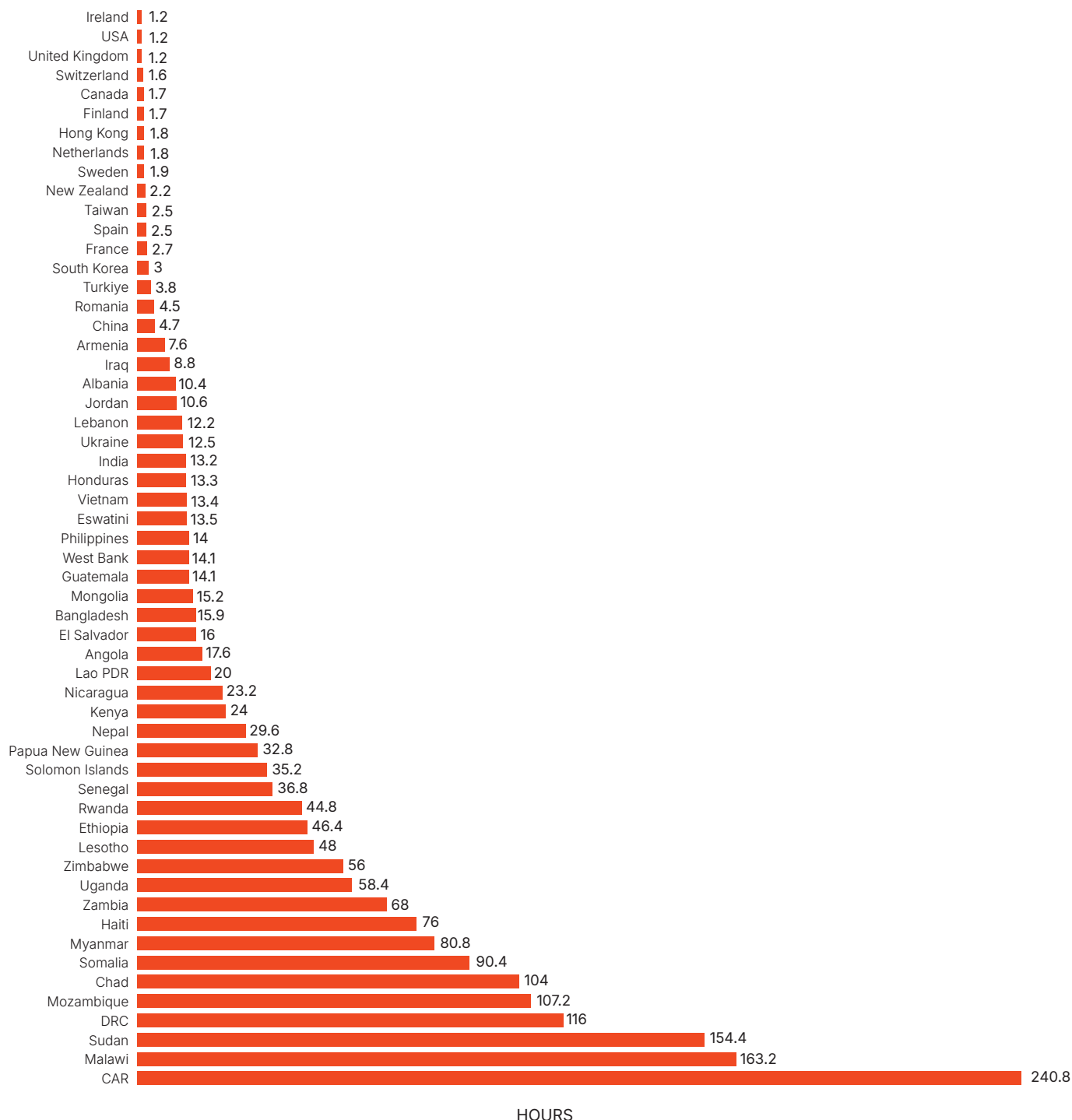
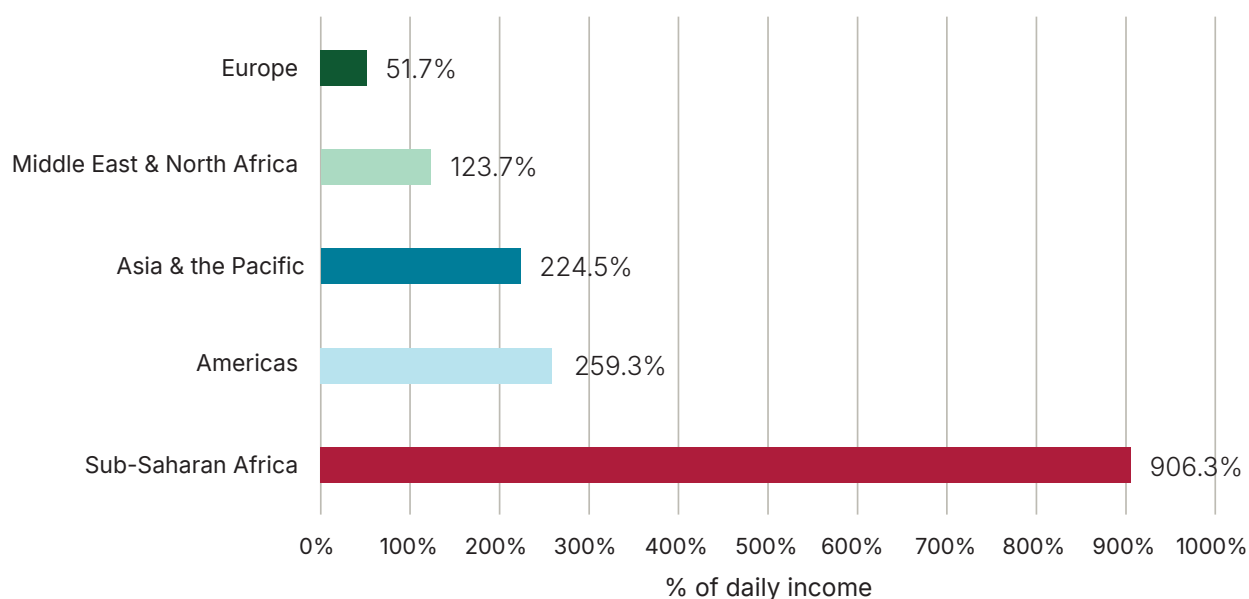


Figure 3. Percentage of daily income spent on food by region



The findings show that food affordability remains a clear measure of global inequality. Even where global hunger indicators point to modest improvement, World Vision's ground-level data shows that affordability gains may be fragile and that families in the world's most vulnerable contexts still face pressure to reduce food quality or quantity, take on debt, sell assets, or go hungry in the absence of affordable options. **Across 47 comparable countries, food costs increased in 33 countries and decreased in 14, with the average increase far exceeding the average decrease.** These comparisons are explored further in the year-on-year comparison in Figure. 4.

Because rising food costs can serve as an early warning sign of worsening food insecurity, recent improvements in the affordability of healthy diets should be interpreted with caution. The contrast between global indicators and country-level price data underscores why targeted, context-driven interventions remain essential, even as global averages improve.

Based on an eight-hour workday, the average time to afford a food basket across all 56 countries in 2026 is 34.3 hours, or about 4.3 workdays, down from 39.4 hours, or about 4.9 workdays, in 2024. This represents a reduction of 5.1 hours, or just over half a workday. This overall improvement does not tell the full story: Hunger has continued to worsen in some regions, especially in fragile settings

vulnerable to climate shocks. Also, some countries, including Burundi and Niger, where hunger is particularly acute, were not included in this year's analysis.

The income burdens in many countries remain alarming. In the countries shown below, a basic food basket costs between 10 and 30 times a worker's estimated daily income. For many households, meeting this cost can be impossible without resorting to negative coping mechanisms such as selling assets, taking on debt, reducing food quality or quantity, engaging in child labour and child marriage, or going hungry. This is not simply a question of high food prices. Affordability is shaped by a wider set of factors, including low incomes, weak social protection, fragile markets, conflict, and climate shocks. It is also affected by broader economic and policy conditions — from national debt and trade to global financial systems — that shape food prices, incomes, and household resilience.

Country	GNI PPP (USD)	Food basket as % daily income
CAR	\$1,390	3,011%
Malawi	\$1,880	2,041%
Sudan	\$2,140	1,932%
DRC	\$1,850	1,447%
Mozambique	\$1,540	1,341%
Chad	\$2,770	1,301%

FOOD PRICE INFLATION YEAR ON YEAR

Figure 4. Year-on-year comparison of 2024–2026

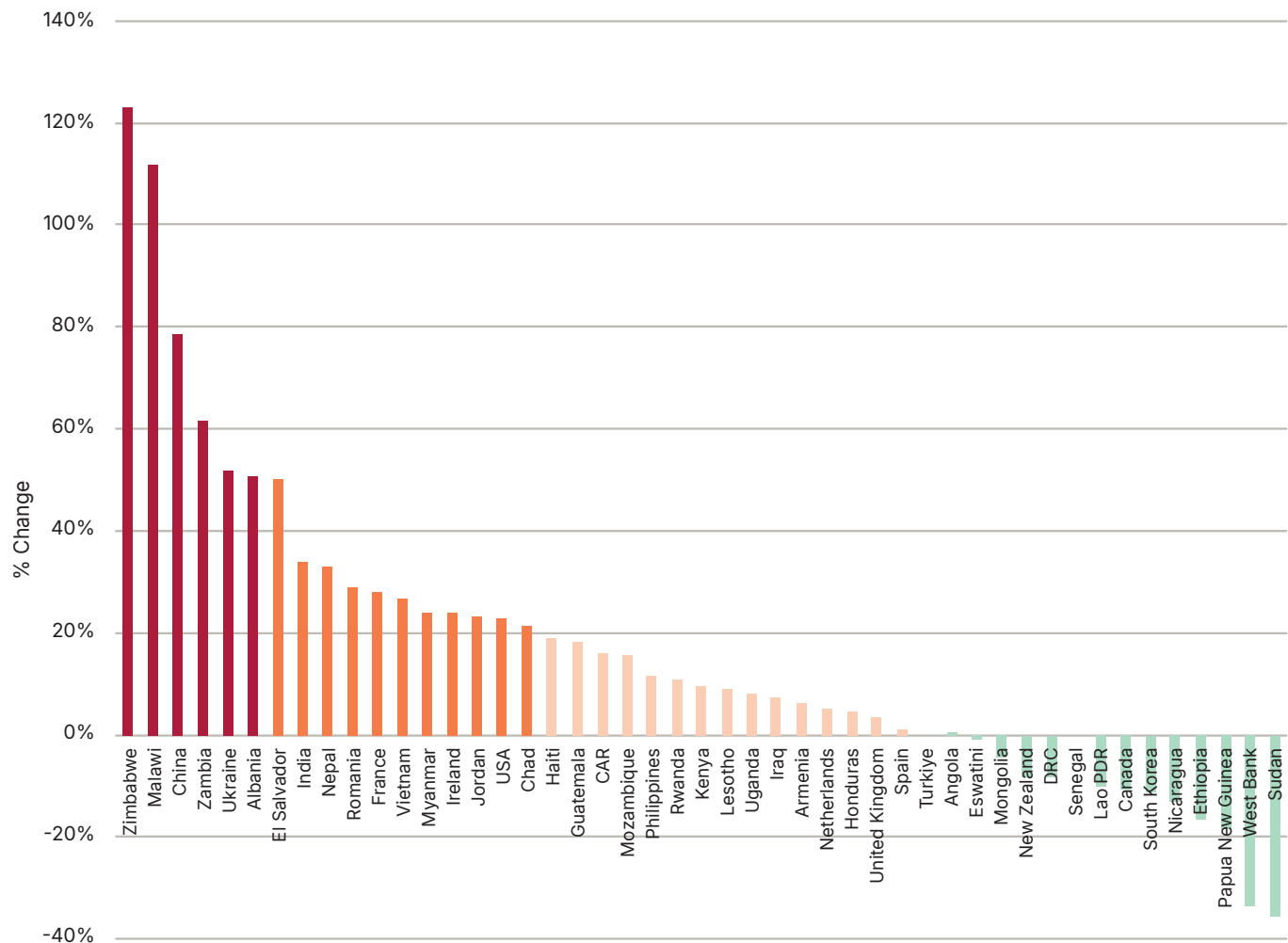


Figure 4 above is based on a comparison of PPP-adjusted food basket costs in USD across the 47 countries with comparable World Vision data between 2024 and 2026.

From 2024 to 2026, food became less affordable in most of the countries where year-on-year comparisons were possible. Food basket costs rose in 33 of the 47 comparable countries, while 14 countries saw decreases. The increases in cost were also much larger than the decreases. On average, food basket costs went up by 28.3%, while countries with falling prices saw an average decrease of 13.2%. This means that where prices rose, they rose sharply, making it harder for families to keep up.

Six countries saw food basket prices rise by more than 50%: Zimbabwe (+123%), Malawi (+112%), China (+79%), Zambia (+61%), Ukraine (+52%), and Albania (+51%). Zimbabwe and Malawi saw the steepest increases in this year’s survey, with food basket costs rising by 123% and 112%, respectively. In Zimbabwe, inflation reached 95.8% in July 2025, and the ZiG currency lost 43% of its value within months of being introduced in April 2024.¹² In Malawi, the World Bank describes the economy as being in a ‘deep protracted crisis’; GDP growth was shifted down from 4.2% to 2.0% between 2024 and 2025, while foreign exchange shortages and El Niño-related drought have pushed up prices and damaged agricultural output.¹³



The harvesting of crops, Syria.

In China, the cost of a food basket rose by 79% based on the survey, even though official data from the National Bureau of Statistics shows food inflation at only 0.4–0.5% in 2025. This gap may reflect the localised nature of World Vision's sample: The survey may have captured price pressures in vulnerable communities that are less visible in national averages.

In Zambia, the food basket price increased by 61%. Currency depreciation, cost-of-living pressures, and El Niño-induced drought and regional climate shocks have pressured food systems there and across Southern Africa, reducing staple crop production and increasing food insecurity across the region,¹⁴ even as some macroeconomic challenges stabilised.¹⁵

The example of Ukraine shows how the conflict there continues to affect food prices and incomes even when markets keep functioning. The ongoing war economy, energy crisis, and agricultural challenges continue to affect prices and incomes, with inflation reaching 7.2% in June 2026,¹⁶ and GDP falling by 0.6% in the first quarter of 2026.¹⁷

Sudan also shows why price data must be read with caution in conflict settings where price fluctuations and widespread instability can complicate findings. Sudan recorded a 36% decrease in the measured food basket cost. However, acute food insecurity in the country remains alarming, with famine present in several areas in 2025 and 2026.¹⁸

Despite the decrease in food prices, Sudan remains one of the least affordable countries in the 2026 dataset, requiring 19.3 days of work in 2026 to buy all the food basket items. Other emerging economies such as El Salvador, Albania, India, Nepal, and Romania — an advanced economy — saw 29–50% increases in the World Vision food basket price since 2024. These moderate to significant increases are consistent with broader global inflation dynamics. The World Bank indicates that global shocks, including supply disruptions as well as oil and commodity price shocks, have become important drivers of inflation across economies.¹⁹

COUNTRY SNAPSHOTS

HAITI

Food sellers struggle to feed their own families as prices rise in Haiti

Every day, Cherlande sits at her small market stall in Hinche, surrounded by the food she sells to earn a living. The business pays for her children's schooling, their clothes, and the food her family eats.

'I myself live from this small business too,' she says. 'I don't have any other work. I don't have income from anywhere else.'

As food prices rise, women like Cherlande face pressure on both sides of their lives. They sell food to support their families, but they must also buy food for their own households. Each price increase affects the cost of stocking their stalls and the cost of putting meals on the table.

Cherlande has watched the prices of everyday foods climb steadily over recent years. A cup of rice that once cost 20 or 25 Haitian gourdes now sells for 50 gourdes; a small packet of spaghetti has doubled in price, from 50 gourdes to 100; and a head of garlic that once cost around 5 gourdes now costs 25.

'These things have just been increasing,' she says, describing a rise that she has seen since around 2020.

When buying less becomes the only option

For Maximène, who also sells goods in the market, the rising cost of the products she buys has forced her to reduce how much she can purchase. The strategy is simple, but painful: 'If I used to take two, I take one.'

She buys less stock, trying to make enough from each day's sales to buy food for her family. 'That's what I'm doing to make us survive,' she says.

For both women, the consequences extend beyond their businesses and into their homes. Cherlande says her family still eats every day, but not in the way they once did. Her children might eat spaghetti before school and later collect a small amount of

rice from her stall to take home and cook. More expensive foods, particularly meat and other sources of protein, have become an occasional addition rather than an everyday part of their diets.

'You can't afford to eat meat every day,' Cherlande explains. Sometimes the family can make a little sauce with smoked herring, but this might happen only a couple of times a week.

Maximène describes similar compromises. 'We eat so we don't die,' she says. 'We don't make nice meals, the way we used to eat at home sometimes.'

Meat and vegetables, once more regular parts of the family's diet, are now harder to afford. Instead, the family makes what little they have stretch as far as possible. These household-level compromises reflect a wider crisis across Haiti, where years of violence, displacement, economic instability, and extreme weather have placed immense pressure on families and food systems. Since February 2024, escalating gang violence has brought Port-au-Prince to a standstill, disrupted key transport routes, cut off communities, and driven food prices sharply higher.

Helping families hold on and rebuild

Across Haiti, poverty remains widespread, affecting around 90% of the population. Today, 5.7 million Haitians are experiencing acute food insecurity, including nearly 130,000 children under the age of 5 who are acutely malnourished. In response, World Vision is addressing urgent needs while helping families build longer-term resilience. Over the past year, World Vision reached 567,000 of the most vulnerable people. More than 14,000 children received daily school meals, and over 225,000 people received life-saving assistance. In addition, 4,815 women accessed low-interest loans to help strengthen household incomes and livelihoods.

For women like Cherlande and Maximène, a livelihood is more than a source of income. It helps keep children in school and food on the table. But when prices rise faster than families can adapt, even women who sell food can find themselves struggling to afford enough nutritious food for their own households.



Cherlande sits at her small market stall in Hinche. The business pays for her children's schooling, their clothes and the food her family eats.

“One person’s hunger ripples outward until it touches everyone, which makes it urgent for us to stand, or to continue to stand, beside Haitian children and mothers affected and struggling to access food,” says Ralph Stephen Henri, advocacy manager at World Vision Haiti.

Haiti’s food crisis demands urgent, sustained action from decision makers and the international community. Governments, donors, and humanitarian partners must help restore safe humanitarian access, scale up support for food security and livelihoods, and invest in long-term solutions that protect children, strengthen local markets, and help families rebuild stability.

GUATEMALA

When higher prices mean less on the table

For Marisol, rising food prices are not an abstract statistic: They are felt at the family table. The 20-year-old lives in a rural community in Guatemala's Quetzaltenango department, with nine family members. Her father farms, her mother works in sales, and their regular meals include beans, herbs, and potatoes — among the healthiest foods they can access.

But in recent years, Marisol has watched the cost of food rise sharply. Tomatoes and other vegetables have become more expensive, with prices fluctuating. For a household of 10 people, rising prices mean smaller portions. The family still eats many of its usual foods, but less of them, and meat has become especially difficult to afford.

'We've consumed most of [the foods], it's just that there is a little less now,' Marisol explains. Meat is the most expensive, she says, and the price of chicken can fluctuate from week to week. 'Sometimes we eat meat every eight days, every 15 days or even once a month,' she says.

For families in rural communities like Marisol's, these choices are shaped by more than food prices alone. Many households face economic constraints that make it difficult to meet basic needs, while limited access to services and the effects of climate change can add further pressure to livelihoods and household finances.

When affordability shapes nutrition

Brenda, 24, sees the impact of food price volatility from another perspective. As a market vendor and a member of a household, she sees how changing prices affect both those selling food and those trying to buy it. She has watched the price of vegetables fluctuate, explaining that radishes that once cost two or three quetzales per bunch can now cost five or more. For families already carefully managing their budgets, the response is simple but consequential: When prices rise, they buy less.

..... 'There are times when the price is high, so you buy fewer things. When it's cheap you tend to buy a little more,' Brenda explains.

Her experience shows how price volatility affects the local food system: Farmers and vendors face higher

or unpredictable costs, while households buy less food or a narrower variety. For families on limited or irregular incomes, this can quickly mean less diverse diets.

In Guatemala, price pressure lands in an already fragile nutrition context. Climate-related shocks, limited agricultural resources, and economic disruption have strained food access for many communities. For households facing price shocks, the issue is not only whether there is enough food, but whether families can afford the protein, fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious foods children need to grow and develop.

Building resilience beyond the next meal

World Vision's response in Guatemala combines immediate assistance with longer-term efforts to strengthen household and community resilience. Between 2021 and 2025, World Vision provided cash transfers to more than 25,000 families across nine departments, 21 municipalities, and more than 480 communities.

This support helped families affected by multiple crises meet urgent needs, while also strengthening World Vision's capacity to respond to food and livelihood shocks. The organisation's longer-term work supports food security and livelihoods through climate-smart agriculture, sustainable water management, nutrition support, and savings groups that help families build income and financial security.

Through its ENOUGH campaign, World Vision is also working to ensure children's voices are heard in decisions about food and nutrition. In 2025, children in Guatemala led research into school meals and called for nutritious meals that support children's health, learning, and dignity.

Now is the time to stand with families facing rising food prices, so children can eat well, grow strong, and have a fair chance at a healthy future.



Brenda, as both a market vendor and a member of a household, sees how changing prices affect both those selling food and those trying to buy it.

MYANMAR

'There are days when my children eat rice with only oil and salt.'

'We just had lunch. We ate fried cauliflower, eggs, and fermented fish sauce,' 12-year-old Chit says. 'In the past, we could afford dishes like fish and chicken. But as prices have gone up, we can only afford simple meals like water, spinach, and tea leaf salad.'

Chit lives with her parents and younger siblings in Myanmar's Yangon Region. Her mother, 45-year-old Khin, earns money ironing and washing clothes for others, while her husband is unable to work because of poor health. With eight children in total, including younger children still at home, the family faces difficult decisions every day about what they can afford to eat.

With prices rising, the money Khin makes is no longer enough to buy the foods her children once ate regularly, such as chicken or fish. Instead, she looks for the cheapest ingredients she can find, often stretching meals with vegetables, cracked eggs, and fermented fish paste.

When hunger becomes a daily reality for children

The situation facing Chit's family reflects a much wider crisis in the country. Years of conflict, economic hardship, displacement, and repeated shocks have eroded families' ability to afford food. In Myanmar, 16.7 million people were facing food insecurity in 2025 — nearly one-third of the population — and over 3.6 million people were internally displaced.

For Khin, however, the crisis is measured not in percentages, but in what she can no longer put on the table.

'There are days when my children eat rice with only oil and salt. This is no longer occasional; it has become a daily reality,' Khin says.

For the youngest children, the consequences are especially concerning. Her twins start the day with rice gruel, and by lunchtime, rice gruel is all they have again. With so little nutritious food, she says they are becoming malnourished and experiencing digestive issues.

'The impact of these struggles is that we are seeing rising rates of malnutrition among children under 5. For some school-aged children, even bringing a daily meal to school has become a challenge,' says May May Say, World Vision's Dagon Seikkan Area Development Programme Manager. 'As a result, children are forced to skip lunch during school hours, combining it with dinner only after they get home.'

Helping families rebuild meals, income, and hope

In response, World Vision is supporting vulnerable families and children with nutrition assistance, livelihoods training, agricultural support and savings groups, and low-interest loans. Programmes also include education; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and child protection, as well as emergency response. In 2025, World Vision reached 2.2 million people in Myanmar, including 1.2 million children.

For Khin, the hope is simple: to cook a proper meal again and have her family sit together. As for Chit, the future still holds dreams beyond the hardship her family faces today.

'When I grow up, I want to be a doctor and an artist, and take good care of my parents,' she says.

No child should have to grow up wondering whether there will be enough food for the next meal. Families like Chit's need urgent support today. We can work together with governments and other partners to help provide food, nutrition support, and practical livelihoods assistance for vulnerable families so parents can feed their children, keep them healthy, and protect their hopes for the future.



Khin shopping for fresh produce at the local market. Her family faces difficult decisions every day about what they can afford to eat.

ETHIOPIA

As food prices rise, Ethiopian families cut back on nutritious food

At a market in Kersa, in Ethiopia's Oromia region, Meskerem, 35, has to make a choice.

'Today I planned to buy cooking oil, charcoal, and lentils. Cooking oil has become a bit expensive, so I only bought charcoal and lentils,' she says.

Meskerem and her husband support their family through several sources of income. Her husband works as a teacher, while she runs a small business selling vegetables at the local market. The family also raises goats to earn additional income.

Some of the vegetables Meskerem sells, including onions and tomatoes, are used to feed the family. But they have no farmland, meaning they must buy grains and other staples from the market. At home, they usually eat shiro, an Ethiopian dish made primarily from ground chickpeas, split peas, or other legumes.

'Previously, we used to buy meat and cook it with vegetables. However, as the cost of living has increased, we now only eat beef during holidays,' Meskerem explains.

The pressure is particularly difficult because Meskerem's own business is also being affected by higher prices. The cost of buying vegetables from wholesalers has increased, making it harder for her to earn enough from her business while still keeping nutritious food on the table. For the family, food is taking up an increasing share of their income.

'Most of the income my husband and I earn is spent on buying food, leaving us with very little money,' she adds.

When nutritious food becomes harder to afford

The changes are felt by Meskerem's 12-year-old daughter, Betelhem. Today, Betelhem ate lentils. She likes them, particularly when they are cooked with tomatoes. But she remembers when meat was a more regular part of the family's meals.

'Previously, we regularly ate beef stew and roasted beef. However, because meat has become expensive, we now only eat beef during holidays,' she says.

Across Ethiopia, food prices have put pressure on household budgets. World Vision's 2026 Price Shocks analysis found that an average Ethiopian needed to work almost six days to afford a standard basket of 10 common food items. According to the 2024–25 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey, 40% of children under age five are stunted, and 5% of children under age five are wasted.

'Whenever food prices are increasing, the ultimate burden is reflected on the daily consumption of our children... Children will be forced to consume less, less safe food, less amount of food, and less diversified food, because families are forced to reduce the amount of food they are able to provide for their families,' explains Yidnekachew Wendaferew, technical director at World Vision Ethiopia.

'By large, inflation is driven by a staggering increase in price of food, so as the price of food increases, people's purchasing ability will dwindle, coming at a very severe cost of not being able to afford basic, healthy, safe, nutritious food,' he adds.

In 2025, World Vision reached 1.9 million people across Ethiopia with food and cash support, helping the most deprived and vulnerable communities access nutritious food. World Vision also reached more than 21,000 pregnant women and young children with nutrition support, while more than 50,000 schoolchildren received meals. Through an integrated approach, World Vision is also helping communities strengthen livelihoods and prepare for climate-related shocks, supporting households to produce and access food more sustainably.

A future beyond today's prices

Betelhem's ambitions extend far beyond the challenges facing her family today.

..... 'When I grow up, I want to become a doctor. To support my parents, I also want to build them a house with the income I earn,' she says.

But for children like Betelhem to realise their ambitions, families need to be able to afford more than just enough food to get through the day. They need access to nutritious diets, stable livelihoods, and support when shocks make basic necessities unaffordable.

Governments, non-governmental organisations, and other partners need to act now so that every child can have enough nutritious food to grow, learn, and reach their full potential.



Betelhem tends to the goats that her family raises to earn additional income.

LEBANON

When healthy food becomes a luxury: How rising food costs are reshaping one family's meals in Lebanon

For Rana, a mother of three and a public school teacher living with her husband and children in Choueifat, Mount Lebanon, the rising cost of food has changed what her family eats and how often they can afford the foods they once took for granted.

‘There are foods I used to eat before, now I don’t anymore,’ says Rana’s son Nabeel, who is 12. ‘I miss eating pizza — the ingredients are very expensive.’

The economic crisis and conflict have put more and more pressure on the family. Rana’s husband works as an elevator mechanic, and together they have had to make increasingly difficult choices as food prices rise and household incomes struggle to keep pace. Across Lebanon, families are making similar trade-offs. Rana’s story shows how those pressures are felt inside one home, where every shopping decision now carries consequences for nutrition, education, and basic household needs.

‘We used to buy meat at least twice a week, now we buy it once a month — even chicken, though it’s a little cheaper. Fruit has honestly become a luxury for us; we buy it less,’ she explains.

For Nabeel and his siblings, this means foods they once enjoyed as part of everyday family life are becoming occasional treats. Meals are increasingly shaped by what the family can afford, rather than what they would choose.

From choice to compromise

The family now relies more heavily on affordable staples such as grains, vegetables, potatoes, and noodles. Rising prices and unstable household finances mean Rana and her husband must prioritise essential expenses and choose cheaper foods, even when these are not necessarily the foods they would prefer to buy.

The change is particularly visible at breakfast and lunch.

‘Life was normal. There were three meals — breakfast, lunch, and dinner. If you wanted to prepare breakfast, we would at least include labne [a strained yogurt cheese], cheese, and a cucumber. Everything was available,’ Rana says. ‘Now, I don’t always include vegetables in sandwiches. For lunch, if a meal requires yogurt, we go without it.’

For children, these changes can mean less variety in their diets and fewer opportunities to eat foods that were once considered ordinary. Nabeel and his siblings have also become more aware of food prices and the choices his parents have to make.

‘Food increased in cost, causing more challenges to families to provide enough food on the table. This is leading to more coping through reduced meals, number of meals, or consumption of non-preferable food,’ explains Georges Abi Rizk, a resilience and livelihoods specialist at World Vision Lebanon.

For Rana’s family, the financial pressure extends beyond the grocery bill. Household repairs and other needs have had to wait while food takes priority. A broken window in the family’s home remains unrepaired because, as Rana explains, feeding her children comes first.

The family has also become much more conscious of how it manages money. Rana and her husband have learned to pay closer attention to prices and household spending, while their children have become increasingly aware of how much everyday things cost. The pressure is also felt in meeting the children’s educational needs, as the family balances school-related expenses with food and other essential household costs.

What children lose when food becomes unaffordable

For families like Rana’s, the impact of food price shocks is not limited to what appears on the dinner table.

‘It is very important to remember that food security is not just about having food on the table, but about having enough food that is also diverse and healthy, especially for children — because sufficient and balanced nutrition is a right and necessity for every child and family in society,’ says Hiba Ghtaymi, World Vision development facilitator.

As families continue to face high food costs and the effects of conflict and displacement, World Vision Lebanon has scaled up food assistance and other forms of support. By September 2026, World Vision Lebanon had reached more than 225,000 people, including over 78,000 children, through an integrated, multi-sectoral approach across the country. World Vision also distributed more than 5.7 million hot meals.

‘Since the last escalation, World Vision responded at a large scale, providing thousands of meals on a daily basis, as well as ready-to-eat kits, food parcels, and cash assistance to alleviate the cost of living for vulnerable families,’ Georges explains.

Families should not have to choose between feeding their children and meeting other basic needs. Let us work together to make nutritious food more affordable and accessible, protect vulnerable families from food price shocks, and ensure children can access the diverse, healthy diets they need to grow and thrive.



Rana prepares a meal in her kitchen. Rising prices and unstable household finances mean Rana and her husband must prioritise essential expenses and choose cheaper foods.

THE RIGHT TO ADEQUATE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD

The right to food stretches beyond consuming a minimum number of calories or nutrients. It means having reliable physical and economic access to food that is safe, nutritious, and sufficient for a healthy and active life, and the means to obtain it in a dignified and sustainable manner.²⁰

This right is recognised in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights²¹ and is legally binding on states that have ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).²² The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has further stated that the right to adequate food is realised when every person has physical and economic access, at all times, to adequate food or the means to obtain it.²³ In situations of conflict, UN Security Council Resolution 2417 prohibits the use of starvation as a method of warfare and requires the protection of food infrastructure.²⁴

For children, these protections are reinforced by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.²⁵ This Convention mandates that governments must uphold children's rights without discrimination, treat children's best interests as a primary consideration, support every child's survival and development, combat malnutrition, and help families provide a

standard of living that supports children's physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development.

Children's access to food cannot be treated only as an emergency relief issue. States must ensure that children and their caregivers can reliably access adequate, nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate food. Governments must also provide direct assistance, including through school meals, and food and cash assistance when displaced families cannot secure this themselves. These obligations continue during economic crises, emergencies, conflict, climate shocks and natural disasters, debt distress, and fiscal constraint. The affordability pressures documented in this report therefore raise not only humanitarian and economic concerns, but also urgent human rights and child rights concerns.

Food must be:²⁶

- Available
- Adequate, safe, and nutritious
- Physically and economically accessible
- Sustainable for present and future generations



A girl shows an apple during a World Vision activity in Colombia.

WORLD VISION'S RESPONSE TO THE GLOBAL HUNGER CRISIS

From life-saving assistance to long-term resilience

World Vision continues to respond to hunger and food insecurity in some of the world's most fragile and crisis-affected contexts. **In 2025, its food assistance programmes reached nearly 10 million people worldwide, with children accounting for 60% of those supported.** Across its wider humanitarian response, World Vision reached more than 35.6 million people in 70 countries, providing critical assistance including emergency food, healthcare, clean water, sanitation and hygiene, and child protection.



Delivering life-saving assistance in the most severe crises

In communities facing acute hunger, World Vision delivers emergency food assistance, cash and voucher support, nutrition services, and healthcare to help families meet their immediate needs. Since October 2023, World Vision has provided in-kind food assistance to 6.89 million people and cash or voucher assistance to 4.37 million people. It has also treated children for severe and moderate acute malnutrition, supported almost 700,000 people with emergency primary healthcare services, and reached over 600,000 children through school feeding programmes, ensuring children can continue learning while receiving nutritious meals.



Building resilience beyond emergency assistance

Recognising that humanitarian assistance alone cannot end hunger, World Vision invests in programmes that strengthen food systems and improve households' ability to cope with future shocks. Since October 2023, World Vision has provided agricultural and livelihood assets, trained people in climate-smart agriculture, and equipped households with climate-resilient crop production practices. World Vision has also expanded access to clean water and hygiene services, reaching 1.58 million people with clean drinking water and over 550,000 people with hygiene promotion,

reducing the spread of disease and improving children's nutritional outcomes.



Preparing communities for future shocks

As climate-related disasters become more frequent and severe, World Vision is increasingly investing in anticipatory action and risk reduction, providing support before forecast hazards occur. This support includes helping families protect crops, livestock, and livelihoods, and sharing climate and weather information to inform farming decisions and reduce losses. By combining emergency assistance with resilience-building, World Vision aims to reduce long-term dependence on humanitarian aid and support communities in becoming more self-reliant.



Driving action beyond programmes

World Vision complements its programmes with advocacy aimed at translating evidence from children, communities, and implementation into policy and investment decisions. Working with governments and partners, World Vision advocates for responses that address immediate needs while also tackling the underlying drivers of hunger and food insecurity, including through stronger nutrition policies, resilient livelihoods and food systems, and action on conflict and climate-related risks. By connecting evidence with decision-making and investment, World Vision seeks to help scale approaches that deliver sustainable results for children and communities.



Putting children at the centre of our response

Hunger is not only a food security crisis; it is a child rights crisis that can affect children's health, development, education, protection, and future opportunities. Across its programmes, World Vision prioritises the most vulnerable children and their caregivers, ensuring that emergency food and nutrition assistance, school meals, livelihoods support, clean water, healthcare, and child protection are delivered together so families can

meet immediate needs while safeguarding children's well-being. World Vision also works with children and communities to ensure their experiences and

voices inform decisions, policies, and investments aimed at ending hunger and malnutrition.



Maria Zita harvesting sweet potatoes in the field at the country school, Angola.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

International human rights law requires governments to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to adequate food — both in stable and fragile contexts — especially for children.²⁷ Attacks on food systems, logistical and supply chain disruptions, and food price shocks can all signal emerging risks for food security. In fragile settings, conflict, climate shocks, and hunger can reinforce one another in a vicious cycle. Conflict and climate shocks can drive hunger and disrupt livelihoods, while severe food insecurity, disrupted livelihoods, and rising food prices can deepen tensions, fuel instability, and contribute to conflict dynamics. Governments must not take actions that arbitrarily deprive people of access to adequate food. They must protect people from actions by third parties that make food less available, affordable, safe, or nutritious. And, they must take practical steps to strengthen access to food, including through social protection, school meals, fair wages, and resilient food systems.

1. Protect children's right to adequate food during shocks

Governments and international partners must ensure that armed conflict, economic crises, inflation, fiscal pressures, climate shocks, and natural disasters do not undermine children's physical and economic access to adequate food. Social protection systems should be strengthened and made shock-responsive, with timely and targeted cash, food, or voucher assistance for households most at risk. Governments should also protect essential maternal, infant, and young child nutrition and school meal programmes during periods of crisis, ensuring that fiscal pressures do not disproportionately affect children and families. In conflict settings, parties must respect International Humanitarian Law, protect food systems and related infrastructure, and never use starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.

2. Correct unjust economic structures that exacerbate inequality and undermine access to healthy food

Governments, international financial institutions, and development partners should reform economic rules and systems that make local food systems more vulnerable to shocks and prevent economies from thriving. Action should include:

- responsible and transparent debt restructuring
- fiscal and monetary policies that protect food and nutrition spending
- fairer trade and agricultural policies that support domestic food production
- measures to reduce the impact of global price volatility on local currencies and food prices
- stronger competition policies to address excessive corporate concentration and market power across food supply chains.

These reforms should also strengthen the market access and economic position of small-scale producers, workers, women-led enterprises, and local food businesses.

3. Build resilient food systems and livelihoods to withstand future shocks

Disruptions to the global food system are amplifying the impact of conflict on already fragile food systems. These pressures can deepen tensions, drive displacement, and further compound existing conflict dynamics. Governments and partners

should invest in food systems that are more local, sustainable, and resilient. They should also pivot from a state of perpetual crisis management to one of investment in resilience and support small-scale food producers, while reducing vulnerability to future food price shocks. Local solutions should be prioritised, including investing in local production and resilient supply chains, rather than relying excessively on importation.

4. Strengthen local food systems to protect children from the wider consequences of food price shocks

Responses to food price shocks must prioritise local solutions that strengthen communities' ability to withstand future crises. Governments, donors, and international partners should invest in local food production, small-scale farmers, climate-resilient agriculture, storage, transport, local markets, and resilient supply chains, rather than relying excessively on imported food. Strengthening local and regional food systems can help stabilise prices, protect livelihoods, improve access to diverse and nutritious foods, and reduce households' exposure to external market volatility. At the same time, policies must take a child-sensitive, cross-sectoral approach. When food becomes unaffordable, families may reduce the quantity and quality of food they eat, take on debt, sell assets, cut spending on healthcare and education, or even resort to child labour and child marriage. Investments in local food systems should therefore be linked to social protection, school meals, maternal and child nutrition, fair wages, and livelihood support — so that children's health, education, protection, and long-term development are safeguarded before, during, and after shocks.

5. Ensure businesses respect children's right to adequate food

Grounded in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, food producers, processors, and distributors have a responsibility to respect human rights, including children's rights and the right to adequate food. This means conducting due

diligence around human rights and child rights to identify, prevent, and address business practices that may undermine families' access to food that is available, affordable, safe, nutritious, and adequate. Children's access to adequate food is essential to their survival, development, learning, and dignity, particularly when affordability is under pressure. During food price shocks, companies should prioritise fair and transparent pricing, responsible supply and distribution practices, and procurement decisions that support local food systems. This responsibility complements, but does not replace, states' obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil the right to adequate food. Meanwhile, governments must regulate markets, prevent abuse of market power and unjustified price increases, hold companies accountable, and ensure access to remedy where harm occurs.

6. Strengthen collective action and accountability to address hunger

Ending hunger requires sustained political commitment, investment, and accountability at both national and international levels. In countries facing conflict, fragility, and humanitarian crises, governments, local and national organisations, and communities continue to play a critical role in protecting access to food and essential nutrition services. Predictable humanitarian financing and international support are also essential to sustain and strengthen these efforts, particularly where local and national capacities are under severe strain. In more stable contexts and alongside humanitarian responses where possible, governments and partners should prioritise longer-term, country-led investment in social protection, nutrition, livelihoods, and resilient food systems that can reduce vulnerability to future shocks. National and international actors should strengthen accountability for commitments and work with communities, including local organisations, children, and young people, so their experiences of hunger and malnutrition inform action on the wider structural drivers of hunger. Those drivers include climate change, conflict, debt, and economic instability.

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