

Food Insecurity In Ghana

by sustainovators

Team Members:

Amoani-Antwi Charles

Bekoe Papa Offei Obuobisah

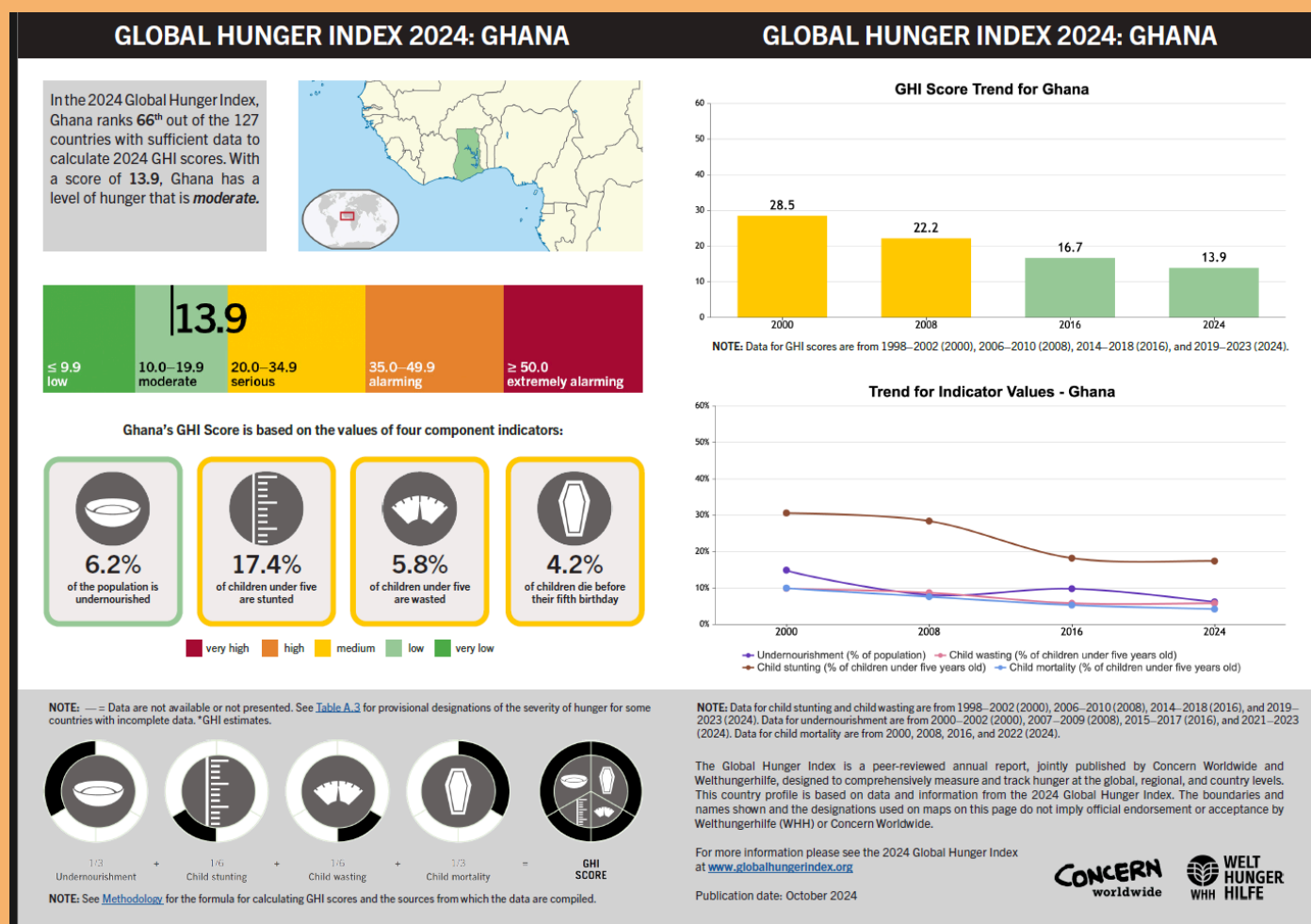
Ewurama Nhyira Acquaaah

Username: caamoani

Schools: Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology & University of Mines and Technology.

Overview Of The Problem

The United States Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as the *“limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways”*. It reflects deep socio-economic inequalities that affect many worldwide, especially students who depend on school meals for nourishment. In the 2024 Global Hunger Index (GHI), Ghana ranked 66th out of the 127 countries with sufficient data to calculate their GHI scores. While this indicates that Ghana has a moderate level of hunger globally, statistics mentioned later in our report indicates how unimpressive this is should you take a closer look at food insecurity in Ghana alone.



Source: globalhungerindex.org

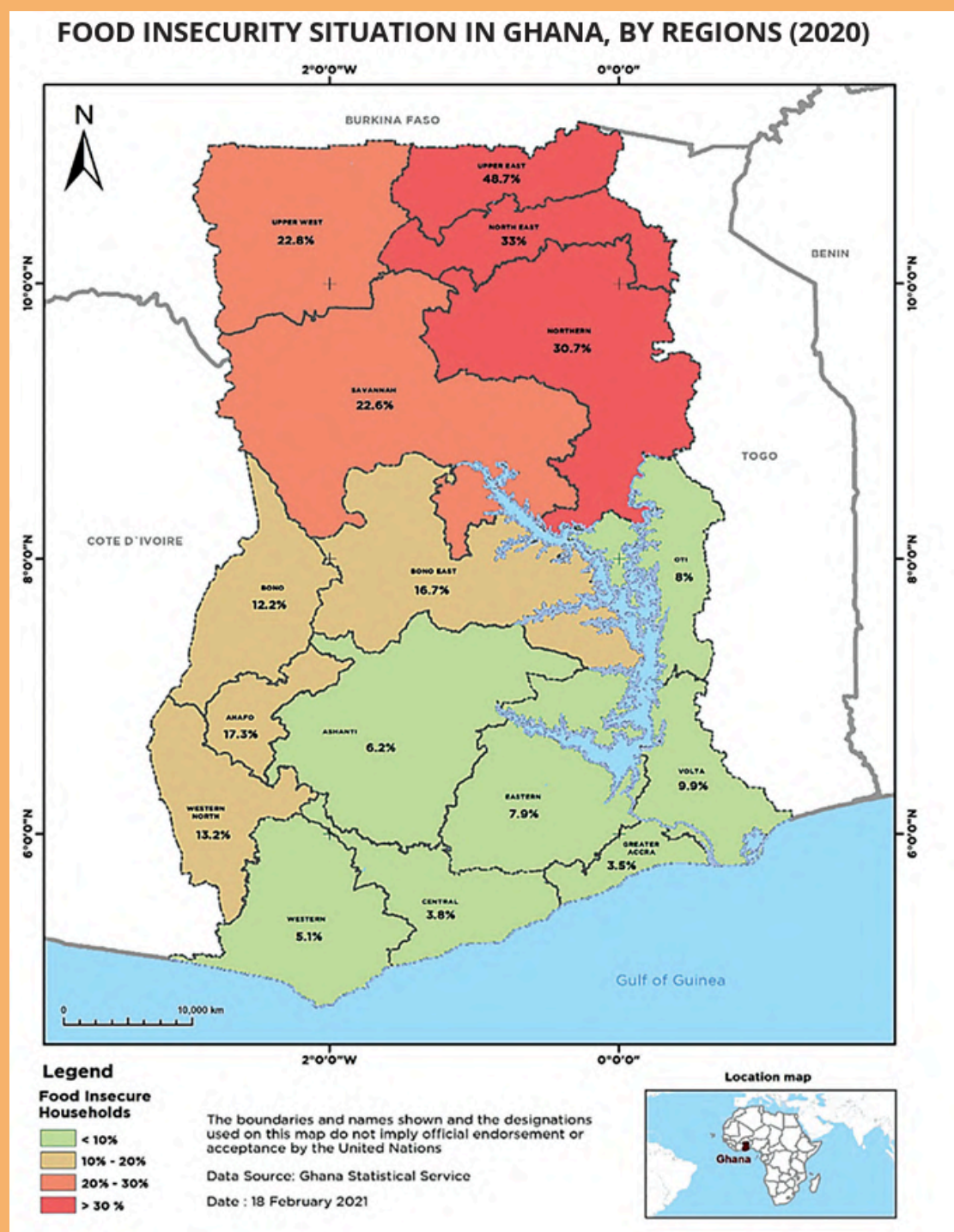
Investigating Food Insecurity Among Students In My Community

How widespread it is:

According to the 2020 Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) by Ghana Statistical Service and Ministry of Food and Agriculture, food insecurity in Ghana stands at 11.7 percent, implying a food insecure population of 3.6 million people. Implications of that study suggest that an implied 1.6 million people are severely food insecure whereas an implied 2 million people are moderately food insecure. Contrary to more common ideation that recent years would have caused an improvement in this problem, a more recent survey, the 2022 Annual Household Income and Expenditure Survey, revealed that a whopping 49.1 percent of the Ghanaian population was food insecure in ONLY the

FIRST QUARTER of the year. This represented 15.1 million of the population of Ghana, almost 10 times the number of people recorded by the 2020 survey. These statistics are not only bad in itself, they are a constant reminder of the growing impacts of climate change.

In Ghana, food insecurity is more prevalent in rural areas as compared to urban areas. The Greater Accra Region recorded the lowest food insecurity with a 27.2 percentage, while the Upper East Region, the highest, had 73.7 percent.



Source: CFSVA Survey 2020

What barriers prevent students from accessing fresh, healthy food?

Economic Hardships On Families: Fruits, vegetables and organic produce are often more expensive than processed or fried foods sold around schools. As a

result, many families and students tend to opt for the cheaper and calorie-dense options that lack essential nutrients.

Limited Availability of Fresh, Healthy Food In School Environments: Most school canteens and food vendors focus on convenience foods rather than fresh ones. Access to balanced, healthy meals is limited especially in public schools that lack structured meal programs.

Poor Infrastructure and Storage Facilities: A lack of proper refrigeration and storage leads to food spoilage discouraging vendors and schools from stocking up perishable items like fruits, vegetables and dairy products.

Insufficient Nutrition Education: There is not much food and nutrition education incorporated into the Ghana Educational Curriculum. As a result, many students and even food vendors lack awareness of the benefits of healthy meals. This results in a low demand for nutritious meals and the continued preference for processed and unhealthy meals.

Economic and Regional Inequalities: I mentioned earlier that according to the CFSVA 2020 Survey, food insecurity was more prevalent in the rural regions. Students in rural or low income urban areas face higher rates of food insecurity due to poverty, poor transportation networks and fewer local markets that supply affordable, fresh produce.

Climate Change and Overdependence on Imported Goods: Irregular rainfall patterns, droughts, and flooding affect local food production, reducing the availability of fresh produce. Also, Ghana's reliance on imported food makes prices unstable making healthy meals less affordable for many students.

How Food Insecurity Impacts Academic Performance, Mental Health, and Overall Well-being.:

Food insecurity is not just about hunger since it affects every part of a student's development. Here's how:

Academic Performance: Food insecurity affects students' ability to focus and retain information, leading to lower academic outcomes. Hunger also reduces the student's ability to concentrate and drops their energy levels, making it difficult to stay attentive and awake in class. Over time, this results in lower test scores, increased absenteeism and an increased chance of dropping out of school.

Mental Health: Students facing food insecurity often experience emotional distress, anxiety and depression. Having to constantly worry about when or what to eat next creates mental strain, lowering self esteem and motivation. This can also lead to social withdrawal and reduced engagement with classmates.

Overall Well-Being: Lack of access to nutritious food weakens the immune system and increases vulnerability to illnesses. Students may experience fatigue, stunted growth and chronic health conditions due to poor diets. These physical challenges further hinder their ability to perform well academically or participate in daily activities

Funding Cuts and Its Impact:

The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) is an initiative of the comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) Pillar 3 which seeks to enhance food security and reduce hunger in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (MDGs) on hunger, poverty and malnutrition. - <http://schoolfeeding.gov.gh/>. However, over the years there have been several cuts in the funding of the programme. This has led to financial shortages, late payments to caterers and unreliable meal delivery, which forces caterers to provide less nutritious, low cost meals for students. These inconsistencies limit student's access to the necessary nutritious meals for their development.

Local Organization Addressing Food Insecurity In Ghana

Food For All Africa



Source: <https://foodforallafrika.com/>

Food for All Africa is a registered non-profit organization that operates West Africa's first and largest food bank in Ghana. Their primary focus is catering to the nutritional needs of vulnerable individuals, including children, the elderly and persons with disabilities. They also supply food to orphanages, educational institutions and local communities. Their mission is to eliminate food waste, poverty, food and nutrition insecurity in Ghana.

Food For All Africa Programs

Food Banking:

Through this program, Food for All Africa acts as an intermediary between local farmers, supermarkets and individual donors and redirects it to those who are food insecure. This heavily aligns with the FLOSN goals of patronizing local farmers and organic produce.

Feeding Programs:

According to Food for All Africa, “*Hunger is the underlying reason behind Ghana's high school dropout rate*”. As a result they launched the *LunchBox School Feeding Initiative* in 2016 to complement the government's school feeding program. Their goal is to provide free and affordable daily and nutritious meals to

school children, with a particular focus on those in poor and underserved primary schools. By doing this, Food for All Africa has enhanced student health, boosted school attendance and ultimately contributed to the overall well-being and academic success of Ghanaian students.

Mother and Infant Nutrition Improvement Program(MINIP):

According to the Children's Health and Nutritional Status in Ghana, more than one quarter (28%) of all children under age five (5) are malnourished, resulting in stunted growth. Consequently Food for All Africa launched MINIP, an initiative that targets infant malnutrition and poverty among vulnerable members and communities nationwide.

Vocational Training:

Food for All Africa also organizes training sessions for the youth and underprivileged in the country, where they teach agricultural and sustainability principles. Not only does this help them secure jobs and become self-sufficient, it also equips them with environmental knowledge on how to partake in environmentally friendly farming practices.

Food for All Africa In Images:











All images are sourced from foodforallafrica.com

How My School Can Adopt Such Initiatives

My school, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, can establish gardens in all student hostels so that students can grow their own fruits and vegetables. Not only will this provide fresh produce for school meals, but it will also serve as a hands-on learning tool about sustainability and food systems.

Additionally, the school could introduce a farm-to-school program, partnering with local farmers to supply seasonal and locally grown foods for the school canteens. I believe this would be a very effective method since Kumasi is known as one of the most agricultural towns in the country.

Infographics:

Food Insecurity

Food insecurity affects millions globally, meaning they lack consistent access to safe, nutritious food.



1



Food Waste

A significant portion of food produced is wasted, contributing to food scarcity.

Tips

Rationally prepare meals that are just enough for you.

Invest in leftovers.

2



FLOSN

FLOSN (Fresh, Local, Organic, Seasonal, and Natural) ingredients are crucial for sustainable food systems. Including FLOSN principles in your meals will go a long way to ensure a very sustainable ecosystem for us all.

3



Join CSA Programs

Subscribe to a community supported agriculture program to receive fresh, local, produce regularly.

Look for CSA programs that offer flexible payment plans or sliding scale options.

Eat Wisely

By reducing food waste, supporting local farmers, and choosing FLOSN ingredients, we can create a more sustainable food system and combat food insecurity.





HOW FLOSN FOODS SUPPORT HEALTH, SUSTAINABILITY & JUSTICE



FRESH

- Keep more vitamins, flavor, and natural goodness.
- Less processed, so fewer preservatives and additives.



LOCAL

- Support nearby farmers and small businesses.
- Reduce fuel use and pollution from transportation.
- Strengthen community ties and local food security.



ORGANIC

- Avoid harmful chemicals that affect people and the environment.
- Protect soil, water, and beneficial insects.
- Promote safer working conditions for farmers.

SEASONAL

- Use less energy for storage and transport.
- Taste better and cost less when in season.
- Encourage respect for nature's growing cycles.



NUTRITIOUS



- Provide the nutrients our bodies need to stay strong and healthy.
- Help fight malnutrition and diet-related diseases.
- Make access to healthy food fairer for everyone.



Instagram Post:

