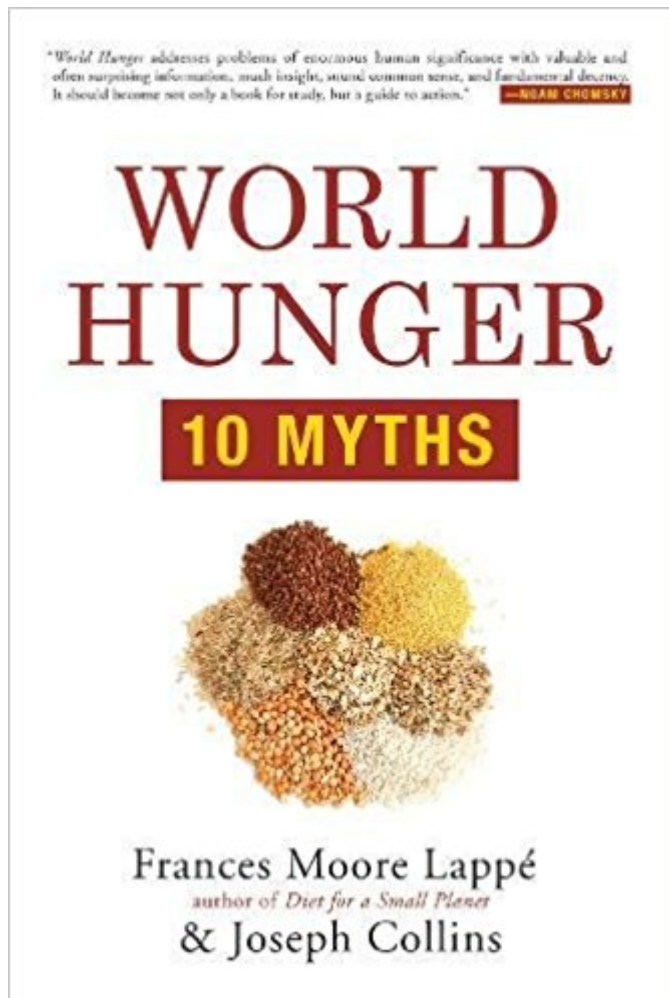


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# World Hunger: 10 Myths



## Synopsis

From best-selling authors Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins comes the 21st century's definitive book on world hunger. Driven by the question, "Why hunger despite an abundance of food?" Lappé and Collins refute the myths that prevent us from addressing the root causes of hunger across the globe. *World Hunger: Ten Myths* draws on extensive new research to offer fresh, often startling, insights about tough questions—from climate change and population growth to genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and the role of U.S. foreign aid, and more. Brimming with little-known but life-changing examples of solutions to hunger worldwide, this myth-busting book argues that sustainable agriculture can feed the world, that we can end nutritional deprivation affecting one-quarter of the world's people, and that most in the Global North have more in common with hungry people than they thought. For novices and scholars alike, *World Hunger: Ten Myths* will inspire a whole new generation of hunger-fighters.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

One of Food Tank's favorite books of the year; *World Hunger* addresses problems of enormous human significance with valuable and often surprising information, much insight, sound common sense, and fundamental decency. It should become not only a book for study, but a guide to action. "Noam Chomsky; Like its predecessors, this brilliant book distills the truth about the state of global hunger so accessibly and urgently, that you're left not just wiser, but armed and ready for the fight to make the world better." "Raj Patel, author

Stuffed and Starved; fellow at Food First; research professor, Lyndon B Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin; A must-read from the world's most trustworthy guides to how we can end hunger. With great clarity, Lappé and Collins not only discredit widespread misconceptions but provide persuasive evidence of what's needed to meet the challenge.

Hilal Elver, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food

Chapter by chapter, Frances Moore Lappé and [Joseph Collins] demolish the myths that have long prevented us from addressing hunger, and examine the policies that keep people from feeding themselves . . . Ultimately, the book's strength is in the clarity of its message. World Hunger is concise, straightforward, hard-hitting . . . Lappé and her co-authors don't just bust long-standing myths and preempt counter-arguments with an armory of research, they build enough nuance into their narrative to provoke you into questioning your own personal beliefs about hunger. And then they tell you what you can do about it. When it comes down to it, that is where its power lies: World Hunger is a manifesto for change, and its call to action has never been more urgent.

Policy Innovations

The definitive solutions-based book for all those questioning why hunger still exists when there is such an abundance of food. The book takes on difficult issues such as climate change and world population growth, drawing on years of extensive research to create attainable solutions.

Huffington Post, Food Tank's 2015 Recommended Fall Reading List

Below is a review just published by the Carnegie Council. [...]"World Hunger: Ten Myths" by Frances Moore Lappé and Joseph Collins

By Amrita Gupta | January 4, 2016, World Hunger: 10 Myths

Carnegie Council This is a review of the 2015 version of the book World Hunger: Ten Myths. World Hunger was first published in 1977. Its relevance, nearly 40 years and many iterations later, is testament to its place in the canon of food systems literature. Chapter by chapter, Frances Moore Lappé and her co-authors demolish the myths that have long prevented us from addressing hunger, and examine the policies that keep people from feeding themselves. The arguments, revised and updated as they are, are just as valid today. At its core, World Hunger is not a book about food, or the absence of food. It is a book about politics. The premise of the book is this: How we think about hunger impedes our actions towards ending it. Indeed, some of the most compelling arguments made in the book outline how actions that were supposedly designed to help

- international aid, or the Green Revolution, to name just two
- have actually exacerbated the problem. Hunger, counter to agri-business fear mongering, isn't about the scarcity of grain or land. In fact
- and Lappé lists

several examples to underscore her point. Many of the countries in which hunger is rampant are net exporters of food. By the authors' definition, hunger is a "scarcity of democracy." It is wrought by political, social, and economic inequality. Hunger, then, will exist for as long as people continue to be made powerless—not just in the international arena, but even at the national level, in the village, or within the household. Nor is hunger about overpopulation. Nowhere in the research, they write, can they find a direct correlation between population density and hunger. Hunger is driven by inequality and poverty; the rest is politics. And that 9 billion by 2050 we keep reading about? According to the research Lapp presents, the population will stabilize thereafter, and will remain well within the planet's carrying capacity. Hunger cannot be blamed on climate change or natural disasters, either. Floods, famines, and droughts have always been weathered by resilience. What makes people more vulnerable to these events? The short answer: disruptions to their resilience. Again, Lapp offers examples spanning continents and centuries—time and again, from Ireland to Bangladesh to Ethiopia, the root of the problem is socially constructed. The real killers, World Hunger reveals, are monoculture, hoarding, conflict, and debt. It is heartening that World Hunger dismisses the widely held notion that attempting to feed the world's hungry will destroy the environment. Lapp makes a convincing case for agro-ecology as the solution. Her claim that environmentally sustainable agriculture can be more productive than our current industrial system—or indeed, GMOs—is backed by very encouraging numbers. Perhaps the most insightful and profoundly disturbing chapters are the ones devoted to the myths that the free market can end hunger. In actuality, Lapp writes, the market is blind to externalities, it responds only to money, and it leads to concentration of power. For all these reasons, it directly contributes to the causes of hunger. World Hunger thus reveals one of the very tenets of neoliberalization to be founded on a falsehood. The authors do outline ways that the market and government can work together to end hunger, but add that this won't happen as long as buying power remains in the hands of a limited few. Several of the arguments made in World Hunger would have been astonishing when they were first made decades ago; some will be surprising to many still. Globalization and free trade, like the free market, is revealed to be far from the panacea that it was touted to be. World Hunger outlines, in excruciating detail, the disastrous impact that structural adjustment, imposed by the IMF and the World Bank, had on the welfare of the people and environment in developing countries. Trade agreements like NAFTA, and more recently, the TTP and TTIP, Lapp argues, are a race to the bottom; a search for the lowest wages, the most lenient regulations, and the least protected resources. What that inevitably translates to is hunger in the countries providing them. Ultimately, the book's strength

is in the clarity of its message. World Hunger is concise, straightforward, hard-hitting. A book this easy to read won't be lost in the mire of policy wonks or academia. But it is also no blunt instrument. Lappe and her co-authors don't just bust long-standing myths and preempt counter-arguments with an armory of research, they build enough nuance into their narrative to provoke you into questioning your own personal beliefs about hunger. And then they tell you what you can do about it. When it comes down to it, that is where its power lies: World Hunger is a manifesto for change, and its call to action has never been more urgent. After all, if hunger is human-made, it is also reversible.[...]

This is a GREAT book! I think EVERYONE should read it, not just college students! Very eye-opening and educational. Explains how things REALLY work out there in the real world today - people need to know. I highly recommend! GREAT info!

An excellent, concise study of various food related myths. A book that should be required reading for anyone interested in local and global food issues.

A must-read for all activists and policy wonks!

Great read!

REVIEW World Hunger, 10 Myths Lappe and Collins have done a great favor for all those concerned with the consequences of poverty. This book belongs on the desks of those who formulate and implement economic policies or contribute to causes working to alleviate hunger. Hunger, the authors emphasize, is not simply the result of poor crops, but the consequence of wealth and income inequality. FAO estimates that some 800 million people world-wide, suffer from hunger. Of these, 8000 children die each year while many more are stunted for life. Most poverty-driven hunger is concentrated in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. The core of the book consists of examinations of popularly held beliefs about causes and cures for hunger. Lappe and Collins call these proposed remedies "myths." These are ineffective insofar as they fail to improve resources to those at the bottom of the food chain. The myths are that: Too many people for too little food. Climate change makes hunger inevitable. Only industrial agriculture and GMOs can feed the World. Organic and ecological farming are not up to feeding the

world. Need to choose between "fairness" and adequate production. Only the "free market" can end hunger. Free trade is the answer. US foreign aid will solve the hunger problem. The US and industrialized "North" have no hunger problem. It is too late for real change in Power and Wealth. Although the authors are avowedly progressive activists, their critiques are not diatribes. They back up their assertions with almost 200 pages of the authors' field notes and citations from Oxfam, FAO, UNICEF, WHO, and other international and national agencies. For example, the authors criticize programs asserting that famine occurs because there are "too many people competing for too little food." Although they see this general viewpoint as erroneous, they accept that hunger can occur in many localities and they themselves have visited such areas but that they found areas had ample locally produced food badly distributed. In the same areas, effective population control is a false hope for scientific and related reasons. Each of the other myths is also examined to discover the potential good if the proposals were to be well implemented, and the attendant dangers avoided. Examples are given of successful local and regional action to reduce hunger in China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and several Indian states. In the final chapters, the authors summarize the "Take Aways" from their analyses, and are moderately optimistic. In fact, the authors' hope for greatly reducing hunger and its associated ills is based on their belief in the expansion of participatory democracy. They want convinced activists everywhere to help politicians take appropriate action to eliminate the scourge of hunger.

After reading this book, you realize that solving the problem of world hunger is not just a matter of producing more food and getting it to starving people. Hunger is not an isolated phenomenon; it is related to many of the other problems that make our modern world dangerously unequal and unstable. The ten myths debunked in this book treat of matters ranging from climate change and industrial agriculture to free trade and foreign aid. Besides analysis of the problems, the authors offer sensible solutions and explain the many ways in which everyone can make a contribution. The book is packed with information but remains highly readable – a great resource for teachers, students, and anyone who feels anguish at the sight of hungry kids.

Approaching the topic of world hunger can seem pretty overwhelming, but this book makes an excellent starting guide. The authors of *World Hunger* walk you through digestible, and fascinating

myths all while reframing the way we look at hunger today. You're left vastly better informed, but also vastly more optimistic at the end. The reality is that we can do much more than we think. Read this book if you really care to understand the state of hunger in our world.

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