

Makayla Damico
Waverly High School
Lansing MI, USA
Ethiopia, Climate

Ethiopia: Fresh Minds and Fresh Ideas

I think a lot of us, myself included, don't think about how many people go to bed hungry every night. We take for granted going to bed with a full stomach each night. We have many resources and not only that but resources most of us always have access to. That a lot of people do not. For my country I will be focusing on Ethiopia. There are lots of other countries that struggle with food shortage, but out of all of them I chose Ethiopia. The main reason for this is that 20 million people in Ethiopia are currently experiencing food insecurity. Ethiopia is the largest, most populated country in the horn of Africa.

Let's talk a little bit more about the country itself. Ethiopia is located in Africa and is also in proximity of the Middle East and Europe. Ethiopia has a very diverse climate and landscape. Which is part of the reason for why food shortage is such a big issue. Ethiopia has had various problems with droughts. As well as tons of other weather related issues. Which is part of the reason for food shortage. Not being able to grow food or crops because of the climate. Another issue that is not only affecting Ethiopia but a worldwide problem is inflation. The inflation rate for consumer prices in Ethiopia has moved over the past 56 years. Between 9.8% and 44.4%. As well as an average inflation rate of 9.9% per year. But the overall price increase was 14,799.24%.

In addition to climate issues and inflation, conflict is another major issue for food insecurity in Ethiopia. The latest war in Ethiopia was November Third, 2020. It was the Tigray war. The war was an armed conflict that lasted about two years. The war was primarily fought in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. The aftermath of this war had a devastating impact on the health care system of Tigray. In addition to the many health problems people faced, the war had a costly impact on the Ethiopian economy. In the time span of just one year government debt had increased six percent. The war also tarnished the country's relationship with foreign creditors. (-World Report 2024 [hrw.org/world](https://www.hrw.org/world-report) report) (- Inflation Rates In Ethiopia)

Food shortage is a big issue, but water shortage contributes to this dilemma in numerous ways. One of the main pressing issues is with the variability in rainfall patterns and distribution, coupled with extreme climatic events. This has caused water scarcity in Ethiopia to become a problem. Approximately 93 percent of all water goes to agricultural use. The average rainfall for Ethiopia is 2,000 mm over the south-western highlands, and less than 300mm over the south-eastern and north-eastern lowlands. This means that the distribution between the regions in Ethiopia is very diverse. The region you live in decides the way you will have struggles. Due to this, agriculture is suffering. Which then leads to numerous droughts throughout the country. This leads to greater shortages of water and a surplus of other issues.

As you can see, there are many different issues contributing to the food insecurity in Ethiopia. The first of these issues I would like to talk about is climate. (U.S Agency for International Development). Due to the diverse climate in Ethiopia there is very scattered rainfall which leads to water shortages and droughts. These water shortages lead to an increase in inflation. With less water agriculture is less successful, meaning there is a higher demand than supply for food. Inflation increases poverty rates within Ethiopia. This causes further food insecurity. (-Climate KnowledgePortal.Worldbank.Org)

Additionally, population is another big part of food shortage. The population is growing rapidly in Ethiopia. In 2022 the population had an increase of 2.57% from 2021. This doesn't seem like a lot of growth but the average population growth in a year is only 1.1% per year. Due to the population growing at such a brisk pace. It puts a big strain on the country's food sources. Another role the population plays into food insecurity is the bigger population because this contributes to over farming which then leads to deforestation. Which in turn degrades the environment. The people need to be able to do things such as growing crops for food.

Moving on to something more positive, one of the solutions that the government of Ethiopia is focusing on is climate adaptations. One of the ways that they are trying to do that is by reducing emissions by 68 percent by 2030. They would also like to restore up to 15 million hectares of land. Lastly they want to work on 40 adaptation interventions across agriculture, water, forestry, transport, urban, health, and more. Their plan is called The Ten-Year Perspective Development Plan. The plan has six pillars; ensure quality growth, improve productivity and competitiveness, undertake institutional transformation, and to ensure private sector leadership in the economy. While also ensuring equitable participation of women and children and lastly to build a climate resilient green economy. This is a plan that should help greatly with food insecurity in Ethiopia.

There are currently many solutions in motion to help resolve the issue of food insecurity in Ethiopia. Another of these solutions is WFP'S work in Ethiopia, also known as the World Food Program. They have been working in Ethiopia since 1968, using food assistance to empower women and transform areas affected by climate change. Another area of focus is keeping children in school. WFP has helped 10.2 million people in 2022 with their program. WFP brings life saving relief in emergencies while also using food assistance to build peace, stability and prosperity for people that are recovering from conflict, disasters and the impact of climate change.

Another solution that is in motion to help food shortages in Ethiopia is called the Mercy Corps. This is another organization whose main goal is to help connect people across the globe to clean water, nutritious food, and better economic opportunities. In the hopes of a more peaceful tomorrow. Mercy

Corps also connects buyers and sellers to the market opportunities that power a flourishing local economy.

These are just two out of many other programs out there striving to help make a difference with hunger in Ethiopia. These programs are what helps get the information out there to people that a change needs to happen. People are hungry. The issue of food insecurity has gotten worse. In 2023, Ethiopia was measured at 22.25 percent for food insecurity. This issue is pressing onward, so we need to develop more effective solutions. While the current organizations are working hard, we need to do more.

My idea is to start from the issue that all the other problems are stemming from, or in my opinion the root cause. Climate because of the rain patterns being weird and scattered. Making it nearly impossible to grow crops. If the climate wasn't so bad people would be able to grow their own food and even have a surplus of it. So, what if we created a type of irrigation system that holds the different amounts of water from the rainfalls that they get. And is able to catch the water. And measure the correct amount to give to the crops. And to be able to not get the rain on the crops we could keep them covered under some sort of pavilion. Or overhead structure. That way the irrigation system can catch the rain fall water and we could have tubes that run underground to get the water to the crops efficiently.

This would keep the crops safe from too much rain but also control the perfect amount of water for them. Irrigation systems can become quite costly but that's where donating can come in handy to help with the funding. We could also spread word about it over social media. All things considered this project has really shined a lot of light on how dire food insecurity is in Ethiopia. It has really opened my eyes to seeing how many people just don't have the luxury and access to food and water twenty four seven.

Let's talk about a solution for the financial aspect of this. One of my ideas to fund my solution was to work with small businesses, for example Pura Vida the jewelry brand. When Hawaii had all those wildfires back in 2023. They were the deadliest in the United States in over a century. So, one of the things Pura Vida did was help them by selling a bracelet and the money from the bracelet went to Hawaii to help with the wildfires. I also know of lots of other not only small businesses but big ones that help out with donations to charities and many other organizations. We could partner with said companies to gain funding for the project.

My other solution to the financial problem is kind of similar. Taco Bell, for example, it's a big corporation. But everytime you order food from there, they ask if you would like to round up to the nearest dollar for charity. Most people say yes because it's only a couple cents. But those couple of cents add up quickly when almost everyone who went through the drive through that day rounded up. It makes such a big difference and a huge impact. In 2024 the Taco Bell foundation awarded 23 million dollars to nearly 450 youth serving organizations. It's the small things like just rounding up your total that make the biggest

differences. To sum it up, my financial plan to fund my solution is to try and collaborate and work with charities and corporations. For example in Michigan the Taco Bell foundation works with about 18 different youth organizations. That's just in Michigan alone, so imagine the amount funded nationwide. There are so many ways to get people to start helping with the donation process of these things. Such as making social media platforms and ads for people to see. As well as advertising with signs and campaigns.

The funding assistance would be coming from outside the country. However the government in Ethiopia might be able to help with some of the funding as direct aid. As well as possibly getting help from non government organizations. In the worst case scenario, let's say we can only get half the funds we need. We could always try and get some type of loan from the world bank or wealthier countries. But the overall goal would be to raise the money by working with small businesses and organizations that want to help make a difference.

I have learned a lot about not only food insecurity itself, but the very specific issues for why Ethiopia struggles with food insecurity. I really had to dive into the unfortunate issues people from Ethiopia struggle with in their daily lives. I think the most important thing I took away from this essay is that there is still lots of work that can be done to help food insecurity. Not only in Ethiopia, but all around the world. Bringing young minds who have a fresher perspective on everything is such an amazing opportunity to get the younger generations involved. As well as getting new ideas that might not have been thought of before. I'm grateful for the chance to be able to share my ideas. Thank you for taking the time to read my essay and hearing what I have to say about food insecurity in Ethiopia.

Sources

- Wikipedia
- Inflation Rates In Ethiopia
- Climate KnowledgePortal.Worldbank.Org
- World Report 2024 [hrw.org/world](https://www.hrw.org/world-report) report
- U.S. Agency for International Development

