

HUNGER IN A WORLD OF PLENTY





The world stands on the brink of four famines in 2017 – something that has never happened before in modern history.

An extreme lack of food is causing severe hunger, malnutrition and death across Africa and the Middle East.

30 million people – more than the number of people who live in Australia – were experiencing severe food insecurity in northeast Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Yemen. 10 million of these people face emergency and famine conditions. (N.B. Figures are from May 2017 and subject to change.)

Parts of South Sudan were declared as officially in Famine on February 20.

These are just four of the many countries that are facing high levels of food insecurity this year.

In Malawi, Sudan, Afghanistan, DRC or Syria millions of people do not have enough food to feed their families. The situation in some of these countries could worsen if the international community do not address urgent needs and resolve the root causes.

Photo: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam Intermón

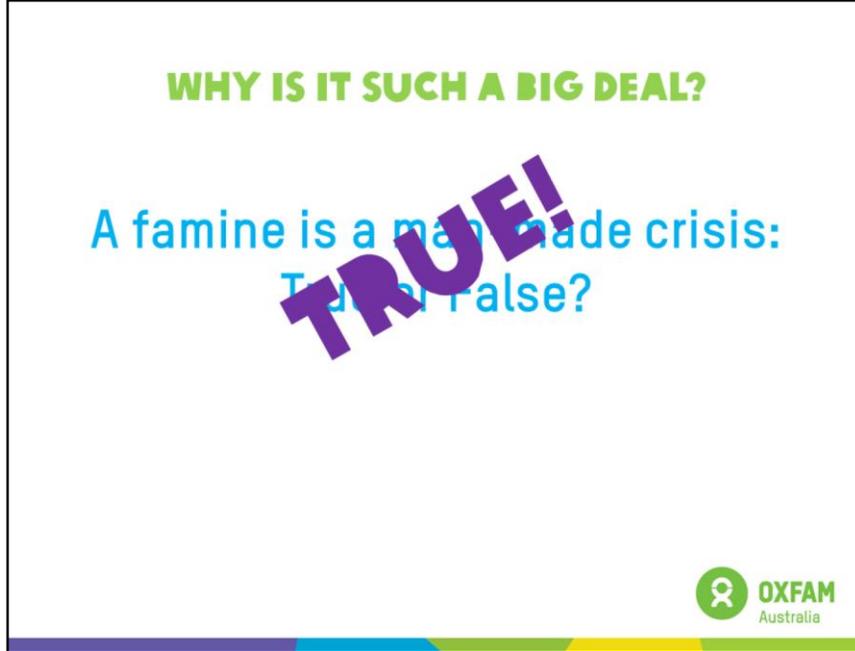
WHY IS IT SUCH A BIG DEAL?

A famine is a man-made crisis:
True or False?



So here's a starting question for you: Do you think a famine is a man-made crisis – that is something within our control to create or prevent from happening?

Stand up if you think it's true, keep sitting if you think it's false.



If you're standing, you are correct. Famines are man-made crises.

While droughts and other natural hazards can lead to food shortages, famines only occur when the situation becomes extreme, because people and institutions don't respond quickly and appropriately to the warning signs.

In other words, so if a famine has occurred it's always because people have let it happen, either through bad decisions or not taking action when food shortages start happening. There's always lots and lots of warning that a famine is approaching, and I'll show you that warning system in a few moments.

So this is one reason why one famine is a big deal – it means the food system has broken down in multiple ways.

So you can imagine it's even more serious today, when there's a possibility in a very short time four famines may be happening at once.

WHY IS IT SUCH A BIG DEAL?



Because famines are man-made, with the right planning and appropriate responses to the warning signs, they should also be preventable.

So another reason why this is such a big deal is because in 2011, a Famine hit Somalia, killing nearly 260,000 people. Half of them were children. After it happened, the world swore 'never again' would they allow a single famine to occur.

In fact, the UN and other organisations (including Oxfam) started a global campaign called "Never Again: A Charter to End Extreme Hunger", highlighting the fact that it could have been prevented – the warning signs were there for two years before the famine occurred, but were not acted on at the time.

Sadly, it seems that history is repeating itself in this regard, and in fact worse than ever before.

WHAT IS A FAMINE?

“Famine” is a technical term, declared after evidence is gathered and analysed against specific criteria.

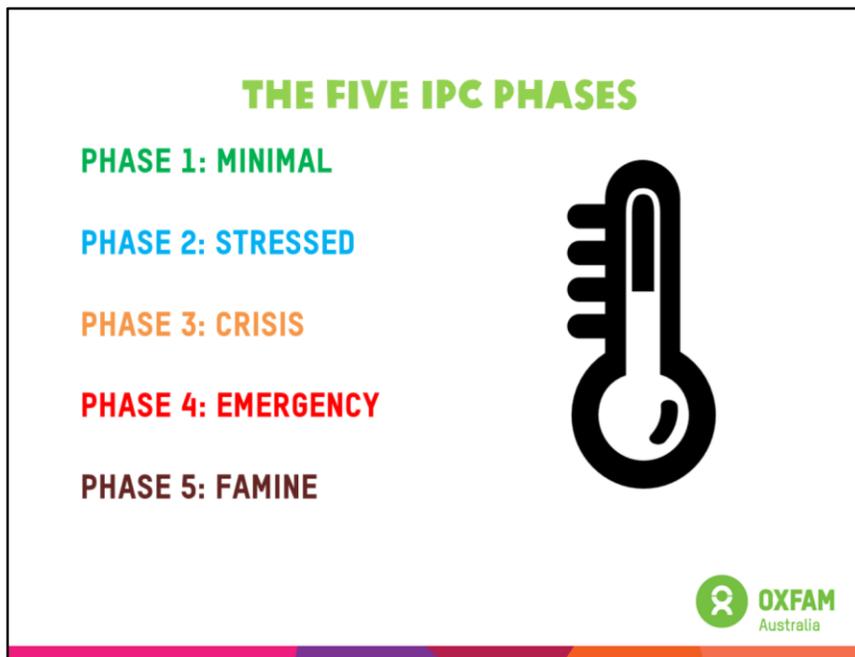


While this word gets thrown around a lot, “Famine” is actually a technical term, declared after information about food shortages, malnutrition and deaths is gathered and analysed.

This analysis is called the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (or IPC for short.) The IPC is part of that ‘warning system’ we spoke about earlier.

Oxfam, along with the UN, other aid agencies and governments, work around the world to help classify levels of food security in certain countries, in line with the IPC.

It is an extremely serious term that does not get used lightly – despite the fact we might hear it or use it this way. It’s not a word like “hunger”, because as you will see in a moment it means something very significant and terrible.



The IPC has five phases – spanning from minimal (or being reasonably food secure) to Famine, the worst and most serious category of food insecurity.

It's kind of like a thermometer – but instead of getting hotter and hotter, people get hungrier and sicker.

The IPC uses evidence of mortality (deaths), food consumption, changes in livelihoods and malnutrition to decide what phase a geographic area should be classified.

So what do words like “food security” and “famine” actually mean? These next slides help explain what they mean in human terms.



Let's start at the start – what does 'food security' mean?

This video follows the story of Marie and Roberto, some teenagers from the Philippines. It explains what food security means and what some of the causes are.

(Click image to play video.)

LET'S TALK ABOUT HUNGER

Confused by the language of food crises? Learn how to spot them early and understand how your action can help save lives.

FOOD SECURITY

When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to meet their dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

PHASE 1

The infographic for Phase 1 Food Security is set against a dark blue background. It features four distinct icons: a pie chart with a small red slice, a brown sack with a pig and a sheep, a grid of 15 blue water bottles, and a row of various food items including a fish, a leafy vegetable, a carrot, an apple, and a bunch of grapes. Below each icon is a specific metric.

- <5%** of the population is acutely malnourished
- means of earning an income
- >15 liters of water per person per day
- >2,100 calories per person per day; consistent quantity and quality of food available

OXFAM Australia

So, back the IPC. IPC's Phase One represents a time of relative food security. People are generally getting enough healthy, safe and nutritious food, water and work to live an active and healthy life.



Phase 2 is “Stressed” – that is a situation where people are eating only just enough and people are starting to get malnourished.

The IPC also includes water consumption in their measurements. People experiencing Phase 2 food insecurity will only have access to about 15 litres of water a day, but this is still unstable.

To put that into context, if you press that half flush button on the toilet it uses about 4.5 litres. Go to the toilet three times and that’s your days water gone – nothing for drinking, cooking, washing.



Phase 3 is “Crisis” levels of hunger, where at least one in five households have significant food gaps, or are having to sell their assets to feed themselves; levels of malnutrition are abnormally high. Anything from Phase 3 onwards is when urgent action is required.

If your assets are things like cattle or sheep, then not only are you getting rid of your invested wealth, but you’re also getting rid of things that can provide you and your family with food in desperate times.

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY

When there is a severe lack of access to food, high and increasing acute malnutrition, excess deaths, and people face an irreversible loss of their means of earning an income.

PHASE 4

15-30%
of the population is acutely malnourished


critical and irreversible interruption to the means of earning an income

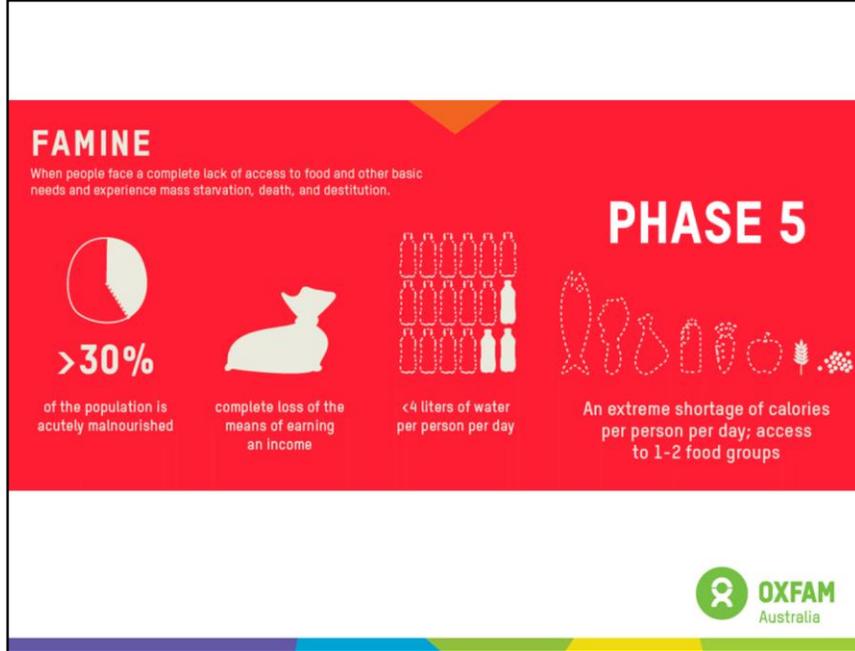

4-7.5 liters of water per person per day


<2,100 calories per person per day; access to 3 or fewer food groups



Phase 4 is “Emergency” levels of hunger, where one in five households face large food gaps – if you’re lucky you’ll have access in three food groups, but usually it’s lower – and as a result there are very high levels of malnutrition.

It’s also when lots of deaths start to be reported.

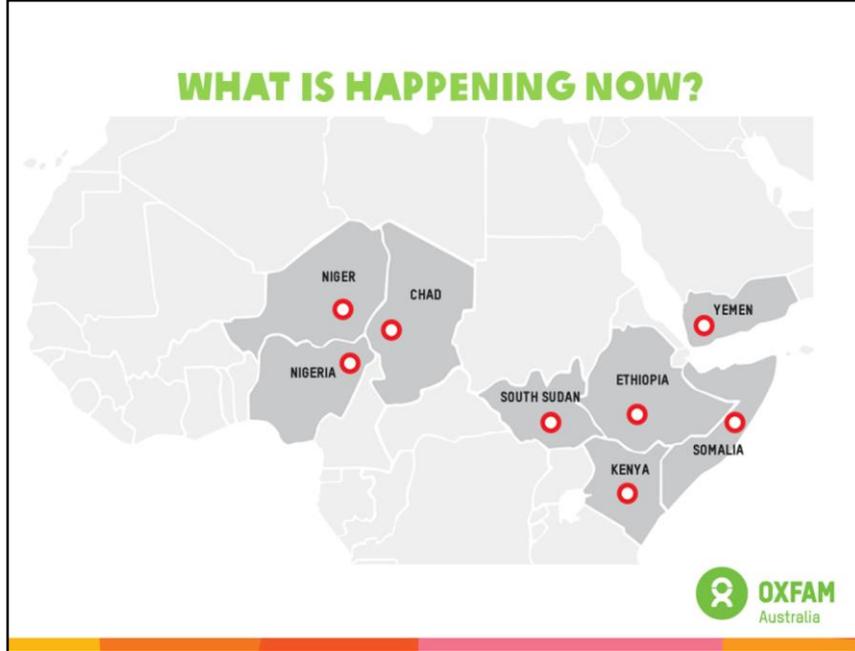


Under the IPC, Phase 5 – Famine is declared when a very large number people have already died due to lack of food, either from starvation or from a disease made worse by lack of food.

At least one in five of households face extreme food gaps. Death and starvation are evident. More than a third of the population have acute malnutrition. Twice as many people die in Phase 5 than did in Phase 4.

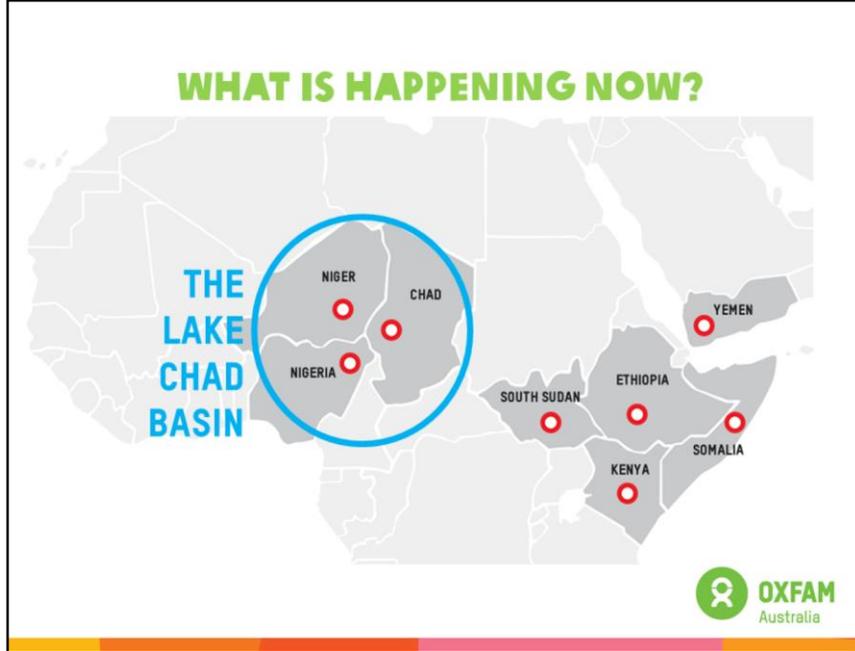
The other thing is that for Famine to be declared, it means there are two other extremely serious phases that have already happened – and food insecurity, disease and death have still gotten worse.

This is why it is a serious term that does not get used lightly, because it means that the world has failed to organise itself and act in time to save people’s lives – it is the most serious call for help you can get.



So what is happening now with the current hunger crisis?

As you can see, the crises are spread across very different areas of the world, and as mentioned earlier, there are four going on at the same time.



North eastern Nigeria, south eastern Niger and western Chad are what is described as “The Lake Chad Basin” – parts of it are currently in Phase 4, considered a humanitarian emergency like we saw just before.



South Sudan you can see in the middle there – it's the youngest country in the world. Parts of this country were declared to be in Famine in February, as mentioned earlier, and others are in Phase 4.



Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia are often referred to as the “Horn of Africa” as together it looks a bit like a rhinoceros horn. Areas here are in Phase 4 too.



And Yemen just above it, is also in Phase 4.

They might look close together on this map, but it actually spans roughly 4,500km – as far as if you went from the centre of Australia to the tip of India.

What is happening in each of these areas is very different to each other, and the causes of each hunger crisis are very different. So let's explore this.

WHY IS IT HAPPENING?

THERE IS NO SINGLE CAUSE OF FAMINE.

IT'S CAUSED BY VARIOUS FACTORS, INCLUDING:

- **CONFLICT**
- **SEVERE WEATHER - PERSISTENT DROUGHT**
- **CHRONIC POVERTY**
- **INSECURE SUPPLY**
- **ACCESS PROBLEMS**



There is not a single root cause that just explains famine and hunger in each of these four regions - each context has its unique aspects.

However, there is always a fatal combination of various factors that can include conflict, and severe weather events such as persistent drought, chronic poverty, lack of trade, insecurity (which not only can make food hard to find but also extremely expensive) and access.

For example, ongoing war and conflict are the primary drivers of the situations in northern Nigeria (part of the Chad Basin), South Sudan and Yemen.

In some parts of Ethiopia and Kenya, communities are also suffering from a catastrophic drought, the impacts of which have likely been made more severe by climate change.

In Somalia, it is a bit of both the factors we mentioned before, drought and weak governance after years of conflict.

Conflict restricts people's access, drives people from their homes,

communities and livelihoods – this includes their farms, their gardens and their jobs, and it also disrupts trade so food can't get to people and when it does, it can be extremely expensive.

Persistent drought erodes people's coping strategies and assets, so the back-up plans people might make to help them through a tough time have been well and truly used up, with no way for people to create new ones. For example if you've already had to sell most of your cattle to help your family survive, and the drought keeps going and gets worse, people can become very desperate.

I'm going to talk about each area more specifically now. The figures I'm going to talk about might be upsetting to some of you, especially as each one is a person with a family and a life like ours. They are from May 2017, and may have changed since this presentation was made.



As I mentioned earlier, the current famine declared in Sudan is the first time famine has been declared since 2011.

In South Sudan 100,000 people are already experiencing famine, while around 4.9 million more are in need of emergency assistance across the country because they are experiencing Phase 3, 4 or 5. One in three are experiencing severe hunger right now, and if assistance doesn't increase, by July half the country is expected to be affected by extreme hunger.

More than half of South Sudan is aged below 18 – so the famine, hunger and ongoing crises in the country is robbing it of its future, its talent, its young – and yet incredibly resilient – people. People in South Sudan face an impossible choice: stay and try to survive hunger, or go in search of food and risk their lives.

This is Tabitha, and her daughter who is sucking on a dry 'Tuok', which is a dry seed of some kind of palm tree, usually eaten as a sign of nothing to eat. They were chased out of their home and arrived in the small village Oxfam was working in, however most of their animal died before they made it to safety. The community is generously sharing all the food it has with new arrivals – they only survive on fish and water lilies.

Photo: Bruno Bierrenbach Feder/Oxfam

YEMEN



**2/3 PEOPLE
ARE HUNGRY**

**7 MILLION PEOPLE
IN PHASE 4**



In [Yemen](#), almost two-thirds of the population are hungry, with more than 7 million of these people at the point of starvation and don't know where their next meal is coming from.

This is Nemah, with two of her five kids, in the small tent her family built in Alhasse village in the Abs district of Yemen. Before the war, Nemah's husband had a good income working in their local markets – but since having to flee their hometown of Herad, the only way her family get food is if she goes out to beg on the streets.

Photo: Oxfam



Across the [Horn of Africa](#) 18.1 million people are in need of emergency food and water due to severe drought across Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. In Somalia, already serious food insecurity could tip into famine if the April-June rains fail and people do not receive humanitarian support.

This is Bisharo and her one month old baby girl, from the Korile temporary settlement in the Somali region of Ethiopia. When Oxfam visited, the baby still didn't have a name. This is because in Bisharo's culture, the naming of a child involves a ceremony where a goat is killed, but because of the drought they haven't been able to do this. Bisharo's family do have pigs, but because of the drought only they only have 20 left – the other 130 have gone.

Photo: Tina Hillier/Oxfam

THE LAKE CHAD BASIN

**4.4 MILLION PEOPLE IN
DESPERATE NEED OF
FOOD**

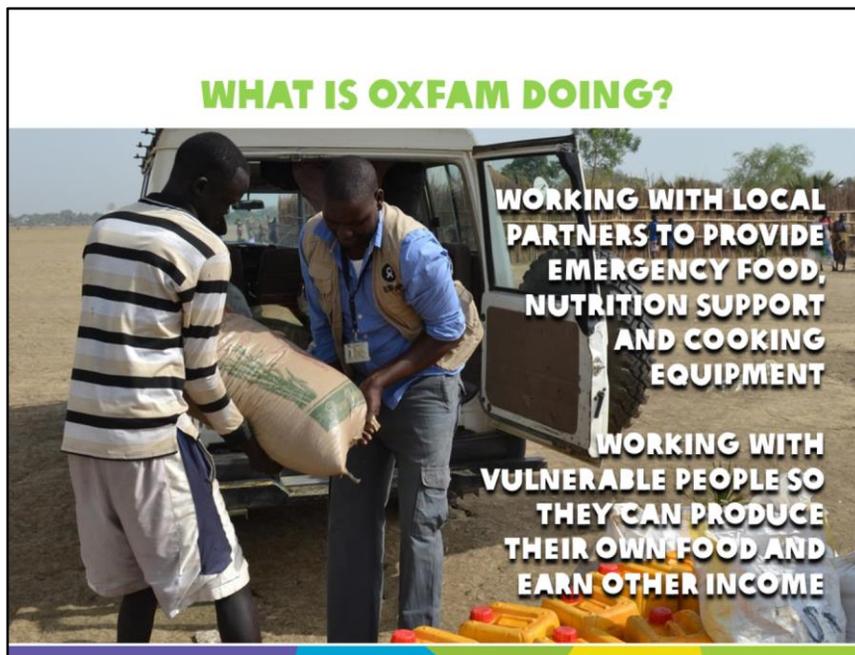
**400,000 LIVING IN
AREAS WE CAN'T
REACH – LIKELY IN
FAMINE**



In [Nigeria](#), at least 4.4 million people in the northeast are in desperate need of emergency food, including 400,000 people living in areas cut off from aid who are likely already suffering famine.

This photo shows a group of women at the Kindjandi camp in Nigeria, where they live after have escaping from fighting between Boko Haram and the military.

Photo: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam Intermón



Oxfam is there in South Sudan, the Lake Chad Basin, across the Horn of Africa and in Yemen to provide life-saving support to those most in need of help. In fact, we have helped more than one million people already:

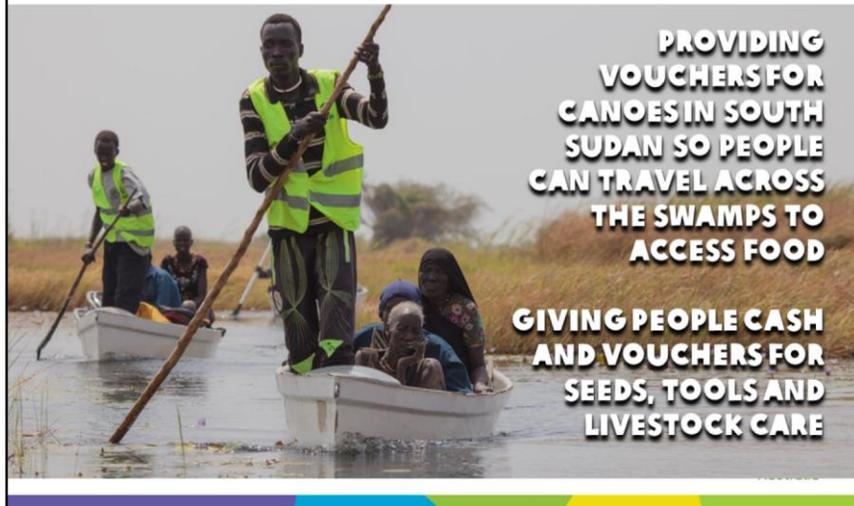
We're partnering with local organisations to help them emergency food distributions and nutrition support, as well as essentials as cooking equipment and buckets.

This is a photo of Oxfam staff unloading food aid, including beans and oil at the Nyal airstrip in South Sudan. When the photo was taken, the best way to get these essentials to the villages and communities was by flying it in. The food was be distributed, along with salt to complement the World Food Programme food distributions, and reached 300 households made up of mostly women and children.

However we also work with vulnerable people so they can produce their own food so they don't have to rely on distributions like this, and also help them earn other income if they live somewhere where they need to buy a lot of their food.

Photo: Corrie Sissons/Oxfam

WHAT IS OXFAM DOING?



I bet when you think of something people South Sudan might need to keep them from starvation, canoes aren't the first thing you think of.

But actually, one of Oxfam's big projects over there is providing people with vouchers for canoe trips. This is so people who live on small islands, many of whom have fled there to escape fighting in the civil war, can travel across the swamps to access food.

These are some Oxfam people in Panyijar County, in the north-central part of South Sudan, who are paddling some vulnerable people to the mainland so they can register for a World Food Programme food distribution. When Oxfam took this photo in March, the county was in a Phase 4 Emergency, and the canoes and food distribution and other things were part of an effort to make sure it didn't tip over in to full-blown Famine. If these people didn't make it by canoe, the people distributing the food would never know they were there desperately needing assistance.

Oxfam also gives people cash and vouchers for seeds, tools and livestock care.

Photo: Bruno Bierrenbach Feder/Oxfam

WHAT IS OXFAM DOING?



As we saw before, famine isn't just about food, it's also about people's access to water.

So Oxfam is also trucking in urgently needed water to the worst drought affected areas, building water infrastructure so water gets to people where they now live.

This photo is of Malak, who is five, and lives in Al-Jalilah village in Yemen. She, her mum and the other 4,700 people who live in the village have benefited from a water tank and a pump line built by Oxfam, which means the cost of buying water will decrease by 60 percent.

We're also improving sanitation through building bathing facilities and repairing toilets, to prevent the spread of disease. The underlying causes of acute malnutrition can include diseases and diarrhoea, which then is made worse if there is no clean water for people to rehydrate themselves, or clean water to wash hands or wash food.

Photo: Omar Algunaid/Oxfam



So what can we, here in Australia, here in our schools, do to help? As you have learned, Famine and hunger is complicated and there is no single 'right' way to respond. But even though things are happening on the other side of the world, we can still help and affect change.

Here are a list of powerful ways you can make a difference, both here in Australia and in the places that need it most.

Share what you have learnt today. Teach your fellow students or community about hunger by holding a Hunger Banquet! A Hunger Banquet is a lunchtime activity you can do with your class, year level or whole school, where everyone gets a meal they will never forget. It's a fun and easy way to explore the causes of global hunger and the inequalities in the world's food system, and get a taste of what it might be like to live in a country where food is not as plentiful as in Australia.

Information on how to hold one is available on the Oxfam Australia website at www.oxfam.org.au/hungerbanquets

Photo: Ballarat Grammar School

WHAT CAN WE DO?



Together, we can make sure relief and help reach more people. You could respond by raising money for Oxfam, it will mean we reach more people more quickly, especially in those areas that are not at Phase 5 Famine yet, to try and make sure it doesn't get as bad as predicted.

You can make a donation online via <https://my.oxfam.org.au/p/emergency-food-crisis>

Photo: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam Intermón



You can also write letters to your Federal Member of Parliament asking for them to take action here in Australia in support of the Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger. Oxfam has a letter writing, so you can tell them about what you have learnt, and ask them how Australia is assisting the international efforts.

You can download our Global Goals School Resource Kit at <http://oxf.am/ZeWH>

But also as individuals, you can use what you've learnt today. Remember the IPC, and understand that when organisations start talking about Phase 2 and Phase 3, it means things are getting very bad. This is when you, as global citizens in the international community can speak up and take action, so we get in there to prevent famine from occurring.

THANK YOU



Thanks for your time and attention today.