



Dining for Women

## Program Fact Sheet

### **PROGRAM: The Hunger Project**

**WEBSITE:** <http://www.thp.org>

**MISSION:** *The Hunger Project is a global, non-profit, strategic organization committed to the sustainable end of world hunger. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, The Hunger Project seeks to end hunger and poverty by empowering people at the grassroots level to lead lives of self-reliance, meet their own basic needs and build better futures for their children.*

**WHY THIS ISSUE IS SO IMPORTANT:** The Hunger Project focuses on chronic, persistent hunger as distinct from the acute famine emergencies that make the news. Less than 10 percent the world's undernourished people are hungry because of famine.

Chronic, persistent hunger is not due merely to lack of food. It occurs when people lack opportunity to earn enough income, to be educated and gain skills, to meet basic health needs and have a voice in the decisions that affect their community.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that there are 923 million hungry people in the world. In 2007, 75 million more people were added to the total number of undernourished people relative to the period of 2003-2005, driven, for the most part, by soaring food prices.

Ninety-eight percent of the world's undernourished people are in developing countries. Nearly two-thirds of the world's hungry people live in Asia. In sub-Saharan Africa, one in three people suffers from hunger.

The Hunger Project does not distribute food because they do not consider food aid as a sustainable solution to world hunger. If poorly managed, the distribution of food can destabilize local prices and undermine local production and trade, which are critical for local agricultural development and long-term food security.

The Hunger Project works in partnership with grassroots people in Africa, Asia and Latin America to develop effective bottom-up strategies.

**THE HUNGER PROJECT'S STORY:** The Hunger Project was founded in 1977 and in its first years, focused on massive public education and advocacy campaigns on the issue of hunger, designed to mobilize a global constituency committed to the end of hunger.

In 2004, Founding President of THP, Joan Holmes, was appointed to serve on the United Nations Millennium Project Hunger Task Force. The Hunger Project seized on this opportunity of unprecedented worldwide attention on issues of hunger and poverty to play a leadership role to further the Millennium Development Goals and

highlight gender as a priority. They launched a educational and advocacy campaign designed to transform the way the world does development and have the world community recognize that bottom-up, gender-focused strategies are the only viable pathway to achieving the MDG's on a sustainable basis.

Now, more than 30 years later, The Hunger Project is a very different organization from when it was first founded. While its roots are in education and advocacy efforts, it focuses on on-the-ground programs throughout the developing world which mobilize communities and enhance and build the capacities of women, men and children to end their own hunger and poverty.

**WHERE THEY SERVE:** The Hunger Project is active in 24 countries around the world. It has programs in eight countries in Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Senegal and Uganda), India, Bangladesh, Mexico and supports partner organizations in Bolivia and Peru.

**WHAT OUR COLLECTIVE DONATIONS WILL SUPPORT:** *Since The Hunger Project is a larger organization than we usually select, our donations will be directed to programs in **India**, specifically programs to empower elected women representatives. We want to thank chapter leader Cari Class for her recommendation of THP.*

### **COUNTRY AT-A-GLANCE: India**

India is the world's largest democracy and second most populous country with a population of 1.14 billion. Of this, 34 percent live on less than US\$1 a day, and 80 percent on less than US\$2 a day. With 47 percent of children underweight, India has severe levels of child malnutrition, ranking it third in the world.

**BRIEF COUNTRY HISTORY:** Aryan tribes from the northwest infiltrated onto the Indian subcontinent about 1500 B.C.; their merger with the earlier Dravidian inhabitants created the classical Indian culture. The Maurya Empire of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. united much of South Asia. The Golden Age ushered in by the Gupta dynasty (4th to 6th centuries A.D.) saw a flowering of Indian science, art, and culture. Arab incursions starting in the 8th century and Turkic in the 12th were followed by those of European traders, beginning in the late 15th century. By the 19th century, Britain had assumed political control of virtually all Indian lands. Indian armed forces in the British army played a vital role in both World Wars. Nonviolent resistance to British colonialism led by Mohandas GANDHI and Jawaharlal NEHRU brought independence in 1947. The subcontinent was divided into the secular state of India and the smaller Muslim state of Pakistan. A third war between the two countries in 1971 resulted in East Pakistan becoming the separate nation of Bangladesh. India's nuclear weapons testing in 1998 caused Pakistan to conduct its own tests that same year. The dispute between the countries over the state of Kashmir is ongoing. Despite impressive gains in economic investment and output, India faces pressing problems such as significant overpopulation, environmental degradation, extensive poverty, and ethnic and religious strife. (*The CIA World Factbook; BBC*)



- India is slightly more than one-third of the size of the US
- Populations is 1,147,995,904 (July 2008 est.)
- Natural hazards include droughts; flash floods and widespread and destructive flooding from monsoonal rains; earthquakes
- Environmental issues include soil erosion; overgrazing, air and water pollution from raw sewage and agricultural runoff, non potable tap water, population growth is overstraining natural resources
- The country has a burgeoning urban middle class and has made great strides in fields such as information technology. Its large, skilled workforce makes it a popular choice for international companies seeking to outsource work.

- India boasts a massive cinema industry, the products of which are among the most widely-watched films in the world.
- Citizen lives continue to be dominated by the ancient Hindu caste system, which assigns each person a fixed place in the social hierarchy.



### HOW THEY WORK:

The Hunger Project addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty using a methodology that is affordable, replicable and sustainable. Their methodology emphasizes rural development and self-reliance. It enables women and men to eradicate persistent hunger in their communities, and makes them more resilient so that they can cope with famine or other emergencies as they arise.

THP has identified three critical elements that, when combined, empower people to make rapid progress in overcoming hunger and poverty:

1. [Mobilizing people at the grassroots level to build self-reliance](#)
2. [Empowering women as key change agents](#)
3. [Forging partnerships with local government](#)

The Hunger Project's approach is different from the conventional, top-down planning used by many development agencies and governments. These top-down approaches follow a service-delivery model and often undermine our most important resource: the creativity and self-reliance of people living in conditions of hunger and poverty themselves.

**HOW THEY WORK IN INDIA:** Recent developments in the laws guarantee women a voice in local democracy, a profound breakthrough in the position of women in rural society. The future of rural India, where the highest concentration of poverty prevails, depends on overcoming enormous challenges in health, education, nutrition, population and environment. Women bear primary responsibility in every one of these areas.

The Hunger Project has been active in *India* since 1984 and currently works across 14 states. The Hunger Project's approach of mobilizing people for self-reliant action, empowering women as key change agents and forging partnerships with local government comes together in one comprehensive strategy, the *Panchayati Raj Campaign*.

The 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution mandated that one-third of all seats in *panchayats* (village councils) be reserved for women, bringing more than one million women into public political life. The Hunger Project facilitates the leadership of these women leaders with key interventions in each year of their five year tenures.

**Year One:** Conduct Women Leadership Workshops (WLW) and follow-up needs-based workshops to strengthen skills of women leaders.

**Year Two:** Work with leaders to create bottom-up plans for villages to meet basic needs.

**Year Three:** Facilitate the formation of federations at district and state levels to overcome bureaucratic obstacles.

**Year Four:** Focus on ensuring successful implementation of plans and policy changes.

**Year Five:** Carry out campaigns to encourage participation of women as voters and as candidates in run-up elections.

The Hunger Project has partnered with **55 civil society organizations** to train more than **70,000 elected women representatives**. In turn, these women have created advocacy networks for long-term, sustainable changes in their lives and those in their community. Women panchayat members have brought clean water to their villages, improved local sanitation, built schools, and started campaigns against domestic violence, dowry and child marriages.

**HOW PROGRAM SUCCESS IS MEASURED:** The Hunger Project measures success using the following indicators:

- Number of workshops
- Number of partner NGOs participating in each state
- Number of federations created
- Number, skill achievement and satisfaction of women participating
- Increased resources to panchayats
- Change in reservation laws
- Removal of two-child norm and other laws detrimental to women's leadership
- Number of child marriages blocked
- Reduction of violence against women

**FINANCIAL PROFILE:** The Hunger Project has received the highest rating from Charity Navigator and meets all the standards of the Better Business Bureau. The Hunger Project is also a Grade A, Top-Rated Charity by the American Institute of Philanthropy.

THP is committed to spending less than 25 percent on overhead, which includes fundraising and administration. In 2007, 20 percent of revenue went toward fundraising and administration, while 80 percent went directly to programs.

**DFW GIVING HISTORY WITH PROGRAM:** New program

#### **SOURCES AND RESOURCES:**

<http://www.thp.org>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/country\\_profiles/1154019.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/country_profiles/1154019.stm)

<http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/rw.html>