

## Critical Analysis of SDG Two

By Teagan Lee

**Goal Two: Zero Hunger: end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition universally and promote sustainable agriculture.**

### Target 2.1

A recent google search proclaimed hunger as the world's number one health risk. Hunger kills more people than AIDS or malaria. At first glance, goal two: Zero hunger, is an unsurmountable peak. There many paths to the summit but all are incomplete.

Like other SDGs, goal 2 is broken into targets. These targets range from hunger goals, to food production goals, to investment, trade and marketing goals. The targets feed each other (pardon the pun) and cannot stand alone. However, each target will be tackled separately. The idea is that as nations achieve targets they become a step closer to realising the larger goal of ending world hunger. This analysis looks at target 2.1: end hunger and ensure access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food year round for all people by 2030.

### Observations

A 2011 FAO news release approximated the number of people without access to healthy food at 925 million or 1 in 7 people globally. The number of people living with hunger is on the rise. Yet, the percentage of hunger effecting global populations has fallen from 33% in 1969 to roughly 15% in 2010. Africa accounts for a quarter of the world's hungry population.

Another FAO study (2014) estimated that 48.3% of Zambians were malnourished. The ramifications of such widespread malnutrition was felt throughout society stressing family systems, social systems as well as the national atmosphere of goodwill and unity.

While in Zambia, I have heard many stories of people dying unexpectedly from preventable illnesses such as high blood pressure. I elicit excited shouts of "You run?!?! You exercising?!?!" from people on the road whenever I go running. As if exercising is novel idea. The average breakfast is sweet tea and bread or cakes. I am not surprised when a colleague starts her day with a soda and a bag of cookies or maize porridge sweetened with lots of sugar.

Maize is Zambia's staple food. In some households people eat maize at breakfast lunch and dinner. In fact, agricultural critiques claim that the country is locked into Maize production. Mass maize production allows for little variation in agricultural conditions, or for the needs or preferences of Zambian consumers with diverse diets. Thus, the Zambian diet is overwhelmingly dominated by maize, something like 57% of the average person's daily caloric intake.

### Recommendations

Many interventions aimed at mitigating malnutrition and hunger are possible. Such as small-scale farming and marketing programmes focusing on diversifying crops and building capacity or nutritional education programs. Yet the root of the problem is more complex than simply implementing programs. The effects of colonialism, complex trauma, climate change, material poverty, changing demographics and logistical challenges (especially for villagers) are at play. Of the many steps that could be taken for food security (planting more drought resistant crops) or ending hunger for vulnerable populations (initiating feeding programs at schools) I feel that the most important is safety. Safety is the first step on any journey towards health and wellness. As individuals begin to implement programs there will be a need to address historical food related traumas (such as communities starving due to drought) and cultural traditions around food (women generally want to be fat because the more you weigh the more money and food you have). Public awareness around diet and health and wellness need to consider culture. Establishing a safe environment is integral to discussions that center on preserving culture and tradition while focusing on a shift from the current Zambian diet to one that is more balanced and healthy.

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I think the younger populations would embrace these changes and be able to champion them within schools and so on. Older and vulnerable populations could be reached through local clinics and hospital outreach programs. Another possible point of interest is institutions (gyms, health centers) that focus on health and wellness. There are few gyms in Zambia. Projects that bring fitness and nutrition to the average Zambian would be great. I think once these projects and programs begin there will be a snowball effect towards achieving goal 2.

### **Relationship between Goal Two, Goal Four and Goal Five**

As I have mentioned previously the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of goals built on the Millennium Goals. Participating nations intend to achieve all 17 SDGs by 2030. The goals aim to improve the overall quality of every person's life thus they are all related. I have now looked at goal two, four and goal five. Goal number five is to *achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*. Goal four is to *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. Goal number four is to *ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*.

If Zambia aims to achieve safe and equal access to food by 2030 then they will need quality and inclusive education lifelong learning opportunities for anyone involved in food, agriculture and marketing. In addition, women will need equality in order to feed the nation. Zambia already heavily relies on female farmers, market vendors and consumers. When these women wield a hoe or sell produce at the roadside they have their families and communities in mind. They are working towards a better future for themselves and those they love.

### **In Sum**

SDG number two aims to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition universally and promote sustainable agriculture. I have observed that Zambia has the potential to meet this target but not the resources. I recommend a small start working gradually towards the ultimate goal of a satiated healthy nation. Lastly, goals two, four and five are inter-reliant. In order to achieve one goal aspects of other goals are already a part of it.