



# The Atlas of World Hunger

*Thomas J. Bassett, Alex Winter-Nelson*

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Earlier this year, President Obama declared one of his top priorities to be “making sure that people are able to get enough to eat.” The United States spends about five billion dollars on food aid and related programs each year, but still, both domestically and internationally, millions of people are hungry. In 2006, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations counted 850 million hungry people worldwide, but as food prices soared, an additional 100 million or more who were vulnerable succumbed to food insecurity.

If hunger were simply a matter of food production, no one would go without. There is more than enough food produced annually to provide every living person with a healthy diet, yet so many suffer from food shortages, unsafe water, and malnutrition every year. That’s because hunger is a complex political, economic, and ecological phenomenon. The interplay of these forces produces a geography of hunger that Thomas J. Bassett and Alex Winter-Nelson illuminate in this empowering book. *The Atlas of World Hunger* uses a conceptual framework informed by geography and agricultural economics to present a hunger index that combines food availability, household access, and nutritional outcomes into a single tool—one that delivers a fuller understanding of the scope of global hunger, its underlying mechanisms, and the ways in which the goals for ending hunger can be achieved. The first depiction of the geography of hunger worldwide, the *Atlas* will be an important resource for teachers, students, and anyone else interested in understanding the geography and causes of hunger. This knowledge, the authors argue, is a critical first step toward eliminating unnecessary suffering in a world of plenty.

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