



Food and Justice

What does food have to do with justice?

Around the country, and around the world, access to one of the basic essentials of life - food - is often limited by economic and social means. The pursuit of justice regarding food asks us to address questions of hunger, access to food resources, and the fair treatment of labor in the food and agricultural industry.

How many people are affected?

According to the UN, **over 842 million people worldwide** were impacted in the last year. In 2012, **more than 17% of US households** were food insecure. Lack of access to nutrition can lead to extreme health issues. **Hunger is the leading cause of childhood mortality in developing nations.**

“Hunger is a scandal”

“The scandal that millions of people suffer from hunger must not paralyze us, but push each and every one of us to act: singles, families, communities, institutions, governments, to eliminate this injustice.”

— Pope Francis 2013-12-11

“We know that a peaceful world cannot long exist, one-third rich and two thirds hungry.”

— Jimmy Carter

Food, Labor, and Pay -

One issue is the exploitation of food industry producers. In the United States:

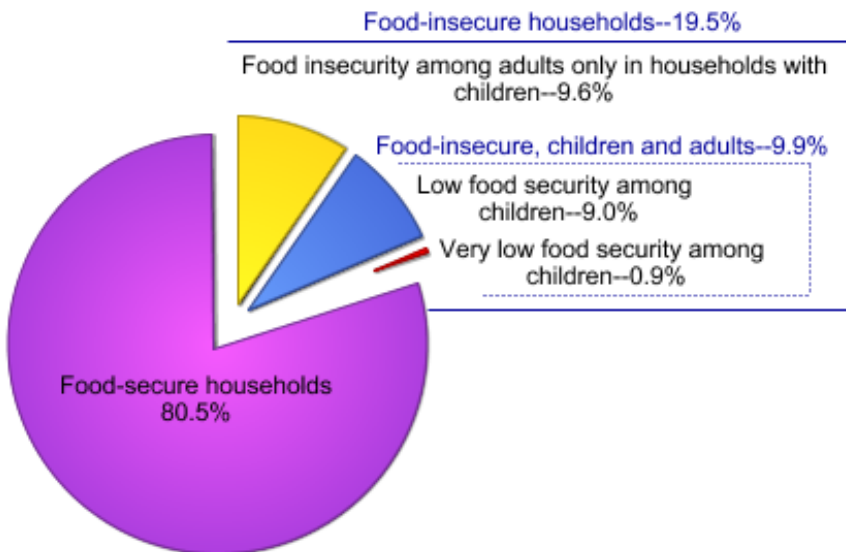
- farm workers were long forbidden the right to organize, and according to some reports, remain “some of the most economically disadvantaged working groups in the US.” (Kandel 2008, as referenced by CIW.org)
- Wait staff remain at a modified version of the minimum wage, dependent on optional gratuities for more than 60% of their income.

Is there anything I can do?

- **Learn** – Take a class. Attend a guest lecture. Talk with a professor. Read. Research.
- **Act** – Get involved with co-curricular organizations. Form a discussion group. Talk to your elected representatives. Serve in the community.
- **Reflect** – No matter your faith background and identity, put your intentions for the world, its people, and its resources in your prayer and reflections.

Food insecurity is affecting college students in record numbers alongside the rapid rise in tuition. There are over a hundred student food banks established today, with a projection of continued rapid growth.

U.S. households with children by food security status of adults and children, 2013



What is Food Insecurity?

Lack of regular access to nutritious food, or an inability to regularly purchase the healthy and often more pricey options is now being referred to as “food insecurity.” It contributes to increased risks of health issues, impaired cognitive functions, and accelerated levels of stress.

Resources

College and University Food Bank Alliance cufba.org

United Nations Food and Agriculture fao.org

Coalition of Immokalee Workers ciw-online.org

Catholic Relief Services crs.org

For more information, visit Loyola’s Social Justice Web Portal luc.edu/socialjustice

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2013 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.