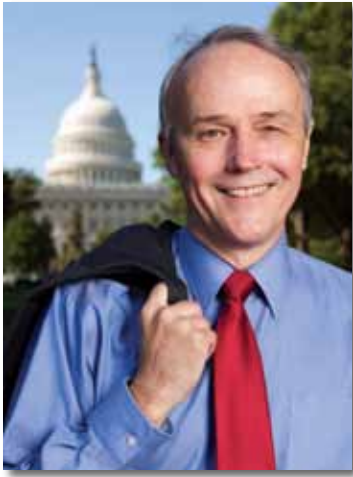


Joe Portnoy



Dear Friends,

Just a few hundred miles from the U.S. coast, individuals and families in Haiti are struggling to recover from long-standing poverty made worse by the 2010 devastating earthquake. On the

other side of the world, in Africa, Liberia is rebuilding farms, schools, and health clinics torn apart by two successive civil wars.

Over the last few years, Bread for the World members like you have persuaded their elected officials to make reducing global hunger and poverty in developing countries like Haiti and Liberia an important U.S. government priority. Thanks to your advocacy, we have helped achieve critical changes. The administration, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—the country's premier development agency—and Congress have taken important steps toward making U.S. foreign aid more effective in reducing hunger and poverty.

In September 2009, for example, the Obama administration launched Feed the Future, an initiative that aims to reduce hunger and poverty in the developing world by investing in the agricultural productivity of poor farmers. A year later, the administration released the nation's first Global Development Policy, an overall strategy that for the first time provides clear guidance to all U.S. government agencies carrying out development programs in low-income countries.

Last fall, USAID started implementing a series of reforms that will make the agency more effective, accountable, and transparent. In Congress, Republicans and Democrats have taken the first steps toward reforming U.S. foreign assistance by passing legislation that included improvements in portions of the Foreign Assistance Act, which was written in 1961.

It's a good start—and a lot of it is due to your advocacy—but there is still more to be done. This year we have a major opportunity to build on and finish the work of transforming U.S. aid so it is more effective and benefits more hungry and poor people around the world. We want Congress to support—and make permanent—

these reforms already under way: to push the government to focus even more directly on reducing poverty, while also ensuring that there is clearer accountability for how our aid dollars are spent and their results. We also want a revitalized U.S. development agency, and strategies to ensure that U.S. aid meets the needs and wants of people in recipient countries.

Better coordination, more flexibility, greater accountability, and closer partnerships with local organizations could mean the people who need help the most get it faster while maximizing the benefits of our tax dollars.

What is an Offering of Letters?

We can translate these concerns into laws and policies that help hungry and poor people improve their lives by participating in Bread for the World's 2011 Offering of Letters. Every year we invite churches and diverse groups across the country to write personal letters and emails to their members of Congress on an issue that's important to hungry and poor people. This outpouring of concern sends a powerful message to our country's political leaders and helps us as a nation move closer to our goal of ending hunger. We are driven by our faith to make our voices heard in Congress and to make our nation's laws more fair and compassionate to people in need.

By working to make U.S. foreign assistance more effective, we are also helping the global community meet the Millennium Development Goals—especially Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. We lead other countries in foreign assistance, and by reforming how we deliver U.S. aid we can also help accelerate reaching these goals.

There is no doubt that development investments in poor countries also contribute to security and prosperity here at home. These programs, including programs that alleviate malnutrition, improve the lives of hungry and poor people in developing countries. They lay the foundation for future generations to live in a more peaceful and prosperous world, with less hunger.

Thank you for being part of this meaningful work by participating in the 2011 Offering of Letters.

Sincerely,

David Beckmann
President, Bread for the World

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What Are the Issues?

Opportunities in 2011

Bread for the World's 2011 Offering of Letters urges Congress and the administration to press forward with reforms to make U.S. foreign assistance more effective in reducing poverty. These reforms will help millions of people move out of hunger and poverty.

The main driver of poverty reduction in the world is the hard work of poor people themselves. Given the opportunity to improve their communities and provide a better life for their children, they will seize it. We need to make sure U.S. foreign aid reaches those who need it most and that it supports their efforts to lift themselves, their families, and their communities out of poverty.

Over the last decade, Bread for the World members have helped triple U.S. funding for assistance programs that are focused on reducing hunger and poverty and promoting economic development in poor countries. These programs do a lot of good. For example, the rate of chronically hungry people in developing countries has fallen from 20 percent to 16 percent.

More recently, Bread members have helped build momentum to reform U.S. foreign assistance. We have already achieved critical changes. We have helped make international development—specifically the reduction of world hunger—a higher priority for the U.S. government. Our government is leading an international initiative to strengthen agriculture and improve nutrition in poor countries. The U.S. component of this initiative is called Feed the Future.

Congress has also started drafting reform legislation, including a possible overhaul of portions of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, the legal basis of our government's overseas development work. We will continue to work with Republicans and Democrats to generate bipartisan support for these reforms. Since 2008, Bread for the World has helped build formidable coalitions, including the broad-based Modernizing Foreign Assistance Network, as well as among other faith-based groups, to press for these reforms.

We seek changes on four fronts:

- A stronger U.S. government focus on **reducing poverty**.
- Clearer **accountability** for how U.S. aid dollars are spent and their results.
- A **transformed** U.S. development agency.
- U.S. aid that meets the needs and wants of **local people**.

Reforms in U.S. foreign assistance will mean more help to millions of hungry and poor people for many years to come. Bread for the World believes the United States should be investing more in reducing poverty around the world. Improving the quality and efficacy of aid programs will strengthen the case for generosity and maximize the use of our current aid dollars.



Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Martha Tiah grows rice, vegetables, and plantains on her farm near Kpaytno, Liberia. With her income, she's able to send her five children to school.

Opportunities in 2011

More effective aid matters to poor countries. Haiti, for example, is struggling to recover from long-standing poverty made worse by the 2010 earthquake. Similarly, the people of Liberia are emerging from two devastating civil wars that left many more deeply impoverished. These problems cannot be overcome quickly. But more effective U.S. assistance will make a big difference as Haitians and Liberians—and people in many other developing countries—increase their capacity and infrastructure so they can become self-sufficient and build a better future for themselves.

More effective U.S. assistance can also achieve a rapid reduction in malnutrition among children worldwide. Recent studies demonstrate that the best way to reduce child deaths and disabilities from malnutrition is to focus on babies and pregnant women.

For Bread for the World members, advocacy for hungry and poor people is a matter of faith. We are moved by God's grace in Jesus Christ to help our neighbors—whether they are next door or on the other side of the world. We push for changes in laws and systems that enable hunger and poverty to persist.

“I find it ironic our policies toward the poorest nations of the world are still driven by the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961. I am thankful Bread for the World will be calling on Congress to reform our foreign assistance to make it more effective and beneficial to the lives of poor and hungry people around the world. Consider the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., a partner in this vitally important effort.”

– Rev. Dr. Carroll A. Baltimore, Sr.
President, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.



Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Jocelyn Jean learns how to make the shapes of letters during a literacy class in Mirebalais, Haiti. The class is part of a program offered by Fonkoze, Haiti's largest microfinance organization.

U.S. Foreign Aid in Action: Stories from Haiti and Liberia

Like many poor countries, Liberia and Haiti have struggled for years to meet the needs of their people. Both countries have faced the entrenched challenges of hunger and poverty, and more recent events—two long civil wars in Liberia and the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti—have further impoverished many people.

“Both Haiti and Liberia had a string of unsuccessful governments—governments that were pretty incompetent, that didn’t invest in agriculture, that didn’t invest in the people,” said W. Gyude Moore, an advisor to Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and a Bread for the World board member. “Both countries have huge infrastructure needs, and both are very, very poor.”

Effective U.S. foreign assistance is critical to countries like these. Speaking of Liberia, Moore said, “Just imagine a country that for the last two decades has been disrupted by wars, coups, and different kinds of upheavals. This is where the help we get from U.S. foreign aid goes a long way.”

As the following stories illustrate, Liberia and Haiti have great potential for progress. The program David Kpan, the Liberian farmer profiled in “The Sweet Taste of Cocoa,” is participating in is a good example of U.S. aid that meets the needs of local people. He and other cocoa farmers have been able to rehabilitate their farms and provide for their families and communities. With continued U.S. assistance and the farmers’ hard work, these kinds of results can be replicated throughout the country.

In Haiti, earthquake relief aid is still needed, but the country’s long-term challenges require a different approach to aid—one that is better coordinated and involves all sectors of Haitian society. “The Power of the Purse” looks at how Fonkoze, a community microfinance organization that receives U.S. government assistance and support from U.S. churches, has helped women

lift themselves and their families out of poverty. Small loans are the entry point into Fonkoze (which stands for *Fondasyon Kole Zepòl*, or Shoulder-to-Shoulder Foundation) for most women, but they soon experience multiple levels of support—including nutrition and literacy classes, and business skills development—that can help them rebuild their lives.

As the stories illustrate, effective U.S. foreign aid helps support the efforts of poor people themselves. Families can become self-sufficient—no longer just surviving but prospering. But how far Liberia, Haiti, and other developing countries can go will depend in large part on making foreign assistance more effective.

Right now U.S. foreign assistance is scattered over 12 government departments, 25 different agencies, and nearly 60 offices. Aid programs are often redundant or working at cross-purposes with no coherent strategy to unite them—leading to one big tangle of inefficiency. U.S. aid could benefit millions more people once it is better coordinated.

Better coordination, more flexibility, greater accountability, and closer partnerships with local organizations and governments could mean faster help for the people who need it most.



Laura Elizabeth Poir

Road conditions near Petit Goave, Haiti, are an indication of the country’s poor infrastructure. Effective foreign assistance is critical to developing countries such as Haiti and Liberia.

The Sweet Taste of Cocoa

WEHPLAY, LIBERIA—If you could use only two words to describe David Kpan’s approach to life, the words on his motorbike’s license plate would suffice: “Patience Pays.”



David Kpan

Like many farmers here, 51-year-old Kpan had to abandon his lush cocoa farm during the long years of Liberia’s civil wars. When he returned to it in 2005, he found himself in an overgrown farm full of dead trees, in a devastated country with little capacity to help its citizens.

Even before the war, Liberia’s cocoa farmers faced considerable challenges. For starters, cocoa—which is used to make chocolate—produced in Liberia was considered inferior in the global market because there was no grading system in place to evaluate it. Farmers also lacked the business and marketing skills needed to improve their crops so they could receive better prices at the market.

Now, walking among his cocoa trees with his children scampering around him, Kpan points out the numerous yellow-orange cocoa pods ready for harvesting. He describes how he has been able to rehabilitate the 2.5-acre farm he inherited from his father.

In 2007, Kpan heard about a program that offered training for cocoa farmers like him—the Livelihood Improvement for Farming Enterprises (LIFE) program, run by ACDI-VOCA, a U.S. nongovernmental organization supported in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Kpan took classes on better farming practices—such as pest management, crop diversification, and harvesting—but he also came away with a new way of thinking about his livelihood. Through the program’s “Farming as a Business” curriculum, he learned how to budget and how to record all of his expenses and profits so he could track his progress from year to year.

“Before, I didn’t know whether I’m going backward or progressing,” Kpan says, gesturing to the farm around

him. “[Now] I always plan what to do in a year, and I always take record of my farming activities. At the end of the year I evaluate to see whether I’m doing well. If I’m doing well, I continue. If I’m not doing well, I redouble my efforts.”

Wearing jeans and a torn brown dress shirt, Kpan holds a blue hardback journal in which he’s recorded his farm’s activities in neat lines across the pages. Under a column titled “Cocoa work plan activities by monthly cost,” Kpan lists his 2009 expenses—which included harvesting, shade management, packaging the beans, and transporting them to the market—as USD \$262.23. He sold 407 kilograms (896 pounds) that year for \$598.80. His net profit for the year is totaled at the bottom of the page: \$336.57.

Kpan expected to surpass that amount in 2010, since by last October, with a month left in the growing season,



David Kpan’s children often help him harvest cocoa pods after their school day ends. Here, four of his sons open the pods and scoop the beans into large buckets, while their sister leads them in song.



Laura Elizabeth Pohl

David Kpan teaches science to students at Wehplay Public School in Nimba County, Liberia. Kpan is also the school's principal.

he had already made a \$280 profit. This is partly because he's getting a better price for his cocoa—but also because he's part of a farmers association that has boosted his economic power.

The Zoe-Kwadoe Farmers Association, of which Kpan is the chair, includes 276 farmers from the area. By working together and selling their cocoa in bulk instead of individually, the farmers can increase their access to buyers and get a better price for their beans.

In 2009, Zoe-Kwadoe—which means “We Are One”—sold 13 metric tons of cocoa and expected to sell even more in 2010.

“We are fighting for Liberia to be on the map of cocoa-producing countries,” Kpan says. “And how do we do that? By producing quality cocoa—not quantity, but quality. We can get people interested to come here. It's one of our major goals, that Liberia is known as a quality cocoa-producing country.”

Producing quality cocoa is possible now that an international grading system, established by ACDI-VOCA, is in place. Prior to this, there was no way for buyers to distinguish good quality cocoa from bad, and there was no incentive for farmers to follow the strict fermentation process that results in higher quality cocoa—which ultimately gets the farmers a better price.

With his profits, Kpan has been able to complete his family's house and buy a motorbike, which is

what he uses to transport his cocoa to the market.

“I'm very careful now how I'm spending,” Kpan says. “My children are not hungry and can go to school. I'm able to buy rice for two or three months.” He smiles and nods to some of the family members before him. “All of them ate this morning, so they are very happy. If it was a hungry home, they would look different.”

The LIFE program also helps farmers understand the importance of diversifying their crops, so they have a steady supply of income in case one or more crops fail. To that end, Kpan and his family also farm rice fields, grow kola nuts, and tend a garden near their house that includes cassava and other vegetables. Next year he'll add other crops.

The success of Kpan and some of the other farmers has caused the association's ranks to grow. While he hopes the LIFE program will expand beyond the three Liberian counties in which it's currently operating, the training he's received has made a lasting impact on him and his family.

“With or without ACDI-VOCA,” he says, “we can still stand.”



Laura Elizabeth Pohl

David Kpan uses a motorbike to transport his cocoa beans to market. He was able to buy the motorbike—a luxury for many Liberians—with the profit he made in 2009.

Making Cocoa

David Kpan's cocoa farm is a 20-minute walk from his home, across skinny dirt paths and small streams that lie under a couple acres of lush trees. Several of his kids trail after him, carrying colorful buckets and jugs of water.

When the green cocoa pods become yellowish-orange, they are ready to be harvested. Kpan hoists a long stick with a hook on the end and quickly cuts the thick stem holding the pods to the trees. They drop to the ground with a soft thud. His 12-year-old daughter, Zlaymerno, collects the pods into a burlap sack, singing all the while, and brings them to four of her brothers who are sitting in a clearing.

Two of the boys whack the pods with sticks to break them apart; the other two scoop the gooey pink-white beans out of the shells into blue and orange buckets, and then hurl the shells onto a pile at the base of an enormous tree. Those shells are later used to make soap.

To get the highest quality cocoa possible, Kpan follows strict fermenting and drying procedures. That means that after the family finishes their work for the day, all the beans are gathered into a pile and left to ferment for seven days under layers of banana leaves.

"The fermentation process is important because that's how we give flavor to the cocoa," Kpan says. Of the four grades of cocoa, his is grade 2. "I can get to grade 1 if I follow the fermentation process."

After a week, Kpan and his family carry the beans back to a solar dryer that sits near their house. The dryer is a huge help to Kpan and neighboring cocoa farmers. Most farmers have to dry their beans outside, which is a significant obstacle in a country whose annual rainfall can sometimes reach 200 inches a year.

Inside the dryer, Kpan walks down an aisle with trays of cocoa beans on either side. He leans over the waist-level trays, spreading the beans out evenly and throwing the bad ones on the ground.

The solar dryer is one of three ACDI-VOCA has helped build in the community. The farmers provide the building materials and ACDI-VOCA supplies the plastic sheeting that wraps over the structure's wooden frame. Kpan can adjust the plastic to let out condensation; an opening at the top also performs the same function.

After the beans are fully dry, Kpan bags them for market, hoisting them onto his motorbike for the trip. He can carry 100 kilos of beans at a time, and it usually takes him four trips to get his full harvest to the market.



The Power of the Purse

MIREBALAIS, HAITI—Forty women sit on wooden chairs in the hot sun, holding their purses as they wait for their turn to repay their loans. They're clients of Fonkoze, Haiti's largest microfinance organization, which is supported by U.S. foreign assistance as well as U.S. churches—including many Bread for the World partners. The organization was founded by Haitian Catholic priest Father Joseph Philippe in 1994.

It's a serious occasion. While the gathering opened with prayer and singing, the group is silent as individual women stand and put their bills in numerical order before presenting them to the credit agent. Each carefully signs her name in a blue record book.

Rosemene Charles, a 44-year-old mother, has come to these meetings for seven years. Back then, she received a loan from Fonkoze (an acronym for *Fondasyon Kole Zepòl*, or Shoulder-to-Shoulder Foundation) for 600 Haitian dollars—about \$55. She used it to start a small business selling candies and cookies, but she was soon able to expand to other products—and locations. Not only does she sell her products at the local market, she also operates a small business from the front room of her house, a short walk away from this afternoon's meeting.

"When my profits started multiplying, I bought a goat, pigs, and now I'm making a profit," said Charles. "I just keep turning the money around and around, and my loan has become more as the years went by."

Her store is in a room off her front porch. Just behind her concrete house are a small garden, grapefruit and plantain trees, and a shed where she stores corn and other dried food. Nearby is her kitchen, a small wooden structure that includes bowls and pots for cooking.

"I've come very far," says Charles with a quiet smile. "I didn't have this house you see; I built

it while I was in Fonzoke. My house was a broken-down house before—nothing but pieces of wood standing up."

Several of Charles' children—who range from 6 to 24 years old—are home and helping with chores. She has been able to send all of them to school; seven years ago, she could only afford to send the oldest. "My satisfaction is that every year they move up to the next grade," she says.

Charles credits much of her success to her solidarity group, a small circle of close friends who take out loans together. If one woman has trouble repaying her loan one month, the other women can help her cover it.

"We've been together for so long," she says. "I don't think I ever want to leave these ladies. We're friends; we get together and have fun, we talk. We have so much that we share."

These solidarity groups join others to form what Fonkoze calls Credit Centers, larger groups of 30 to 40 women who work together to bring themselves out of poverty. Each center elects a chief who is trained to lead the women and offer education and literacy classes. The chiefs also represent the women at regional and national assemblies, ensuring that clients' input is incorporated into organizational decisions.



Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Rosemene Charles



Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Rosemene Charles operates a small store out of her home in Mirebalais, Haiti. Here, she works near her kitchen, which stands next to grapefruit and plantain trees behind her house.

Charles's Credit Center, meeting today, calls itself "Fok Li Bon," meaning "It Has to Be Good." It's run by Elza LaFortune, a no-nonsense woman who arrived at the meeting via motorbike. A Fonkoze client for 10 years, she receives a stipend every three months to organize education, health, nutrition, and literacy classes for the women.

The literacy classes, held twice a week for two hours, begin with the women learning how to make the shapes of letters so they can sign their names. Charles is a member.

"My parents never sent me to school," Charles says, "so every time I had to sign [my name], I had to make little crosses on papers. Now I'd like to know how to read and write. I'm going to feel like I'm a different person when I can sign my name."

Most of the women in Charles' Credit Center are graduates of the first two levels of Fonkoze's Staircase Out of Poverty program. The first—and newest—level, called *Chemen Lavi Miyò* (CLM, The Pathway to a Better Life), is an 18-month program geared toward helping the poorest of the poor—women who don't yet have the skills to manage even a small loan.

That would be women like Marie-Ang Lory, a 28-year-old mother of three who lives outside Mirebalais. Fonkoze case managers found her when they went to visit her mother and noticed a small shack outside the mother's home. "Is that where you cook or leave your animals?" they asked. The mother said no; it was her oldest daughter's home.

The shack was in such bad shape that Lory and her children had to put plastic bags over their heads when it rained so they wouldn't get wet. The case managers took photographs of her and the house, and quickly put her into the CLM program.

For the past 17 months, Lory has attended meetings twice a week with case managers who teach her and other



About 80 participants in *Chemen Lavi Miyò*, a program offered by microfinance organization Fonkoze, meet twice a week in Mirebalais, Haiti, to learn basic life skills.

women everything from caring for livestock to setting five-year personal and professional goals. They also learn about nutrition, how to identify when their children are sick, and the importance of drinking safe water.

"My life has turned around. Now I have a house where no water comes in—it's got a cement floor—and my kids are going to school," Lory says. "I have five goats and 25 chickens. I'm moving forward."

Lory will soon graduate from CLM and move up to the next Fonkoze program, which is aimed at women who want to start a small business but need business, literacy, and education classes.

Small loans have helped Charles and the majority of Fonkoze's 50,000 female clients across Haiti become more self-sufficient and provide for their families, but these women also contribute to the economic life of their communities—a critical factor in a country with no safety net, little infrastructure, and a banking system that was destroyed by the 2010 earthquake. With access to credit and other resources through Fonkoze's network of 41 branches, mostly located throughout rural Haiti, these women play a critical role in rebuilding Haiti.

"Before, I had nothing to do. But when I started with Fonkoze, all of a sudden I had lots of things to do. I had a business to run," says Charles. "I have moved up. I have moved forward with my life."

For more stories, see www.bread.org/OL.

Questions and Answers

The economic recession is hitting our nation hard and may continue well into the future. Shouldn't we help hurting people here before we tackle poverty and hunger overseas?



The Guatemalan Alliance to End Hunger works with the Ministry of Public Health to distribute a fortified drink mix to families at risk of malnutrition.

We can and should do both—helping hungry and poor people in our country and elsewhere in the world. As Christians, we believe our government should devote some of its resources to support the efforts of poor people—wherever they live—to move out of poverty.

Today, U.S. poverty-focused foreign assistance accounts for less than 1 percent of the U.S. budget. With these limited resources, we must ensure that our government and the recipient countries use them wisely and effectively. Investing in developing poor countries is an important component of our national security and foreign policy. It increases political stability in developing countries and fights the hopelessness that leads to conflicts and terrorism.

A more effective system of foreign aid will allow help to reach those who need it most in a timely manner. Resources will be better spent, accountability improved, and decisions made in consultation with recipient countries and local

organizations. This would also mean our tax dollars will go further at a time when our nation's leaders must make hard budget choices.

In the past, aid to countries like Haiti has not always been used well. How can we help make foreign aid more effective in countries where governments are not strong or other barriers exist?

Conflict, political instability, bad governance, and weak institutions have thwarted past aid efforts in Haiti and a number of other developing countries. We do not condone corruption and this is why we should work hard to ensure transparency in our foreign aid programs. Research and experience tell us that the active participation of local citizens in development programs, especially in planning, monitoring, and keeping their government accountable, keeps corruption minimized or even eliminated.

In Haiti's case, the country was essentially devastated—its infrastructure, its health network, its banking system. Disaster relief is important, but a year later, relief efforts should turn into long-term development efforts. Perverse as this may sound, the devastation offers a fresh start for the country, including strengthening the government's capacity so it can implement development programs effectively.

In poor countries like Haiti, there are often large and effective networks of self-reliant local organizations such as Fonkoze (an acronym for *Fondasyon Kole Zepòl*, or Shoulder-to-Shoulder Foundation). With Haiti's banking system badly damaged, Fonkoze provides a tried and tested model of how small loans can be used to help make poor people economically self-reliant—while at the same time improving their health, nutrition, and literacy.

The work of these civil society organizations, however, should not excuse governments from performing what is essentially their responsibility. But

“Bread for the World's Offering of Letters is a powerful and accessible mechanism for congregations to put their faith in action and advocate for ending hunger and poverty.”

— Susan M. Sanders
Minister for Global Sharing
of Resources
United Church of Christ

Questions and Answers

governments can learn a lot from these local organizations, especially in developing transparent ways to track budget flows and progress on aid projects to reduce corruption.

From the U.S. government's side, it is also important that foreign aid is better coordinated and programs do not duplicate each other—not only in Washington, DC, but also in the countries that receive U.S. foreign aid. The U.S. government's main development assistance agency, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), must be transformed and revitalized with more staff and expertise to lead and implement these changes. Today, the implementation of much of USAID's programs is out-sourced since the organization no longer has enough in-house technical experts to coordinate the projects.

Wouldn't it be better to donate to reputable charities instead of depending on government foreign aid?

Charitable aid is important, but what is more difficult is changing the systems that allow hunger and poverty to persist. This is why changing the policies and practices of how we deliver foreign assistance is essential to reducing hunger and poverty.

The U.S. currently leads other countries in delivering foreign assistance, a position we have effectively leveraged to generate more aid from others for poor countries. In 2010 the United States spent close to \$23 billion on poverty-focused development assistance, and many of these programs are delivered by faith-based and secular nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Unlike charities, the U.S. government can coordinate international efforts that include other donor governments, multilateral institutions and NGOs, as was done in the Haiti earthquake relief effort. It is being done now with the current international initiative to strengthen agriculture and nutrition in poor countries. In fact, our government has leveraged development funds from other wealthy countries such as Germany, Great Britain, Canada, and Japan.

Unlike charitable assistance, U.S. government aid can provide incentives for governments in developing countries to become more effective, efficient, and transparent.

The changes we seek—focusing aid on poverty reduction, ensuring better accountability, transforming USAID, and involving local communities in recipient countries—will help foreign aid get to those who really need it. Focusing on poverty also helps distinguish development aid from our nation's political and military goals.

Some believe foreign aid just makes other countries dependent on the United States. Shouldn't we find a way to make sustainable change?

Sustainable change requires partnerships with recipient countries and involvement by local communities and other civil society organizations in



Laura Elizabeth Pohl

A mother holds her son as he receives a vitamin A capsule during a vitamin distribution clinic near Mirebalais, Haiti. Fonkoze started the clinics last year after bank managers noticed that many of their clients' children were malnourished.

"The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services have launched a Catholics Confront Global Poverty initiative that calls for reform of U.S. international assistance to strengthen poverty reduction and human development, including preserving the role of faith-based institutions as partners. Bread's Offering of Letters on foreign aid reform is a welcome complement to our initiative."

*Most Reverend Howard J. Hubbard
Bishop of Albany
Chairman, Committee on
International Justice and Peace
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops*

Questions and Answers



planning and implementing aid programs, building local capacity to implement programs, and building commitment and accountability for results.

Haiti's Fonkoze is a good example of how U.S. foreign assistance—and support from churches—can lead to self-sufficiency. A group of 32 grassroots leaders, led by Haitian priest Father Joseph Philippe, formed the organization in 1994. Today, its network of 41 branches—mostly throughout rural Haiti—helps 50,000 women become economically self-sufficient. It has rightfully been called Haiti's "Alternative Bank for the Organized Poor."

A U.S.-funded project in Liberia, being implemented by nongovernmental organization ACDI-VOCA, is helping the country's cocoa farmers produce quality cocoa beans and become better businesspeople. The impact has been so positive that David Kpan, who leads a cocoa farmers association in Nimba County, says they can now stand on their own.

Viewed largely, the impact of our nation's generosity and leadership, and Bread's advocacy, can be measured in millions of lives saved and transformed. For example, the Campaign for Child Survival (the subject of our 1984 Bread for the World Offering of Letters) raised immunization rates from 15 percent to nearly 80 percent in the 1980s. Efforts to increase access to HIV/AIDS drugs in Africa helped millions of people over the last decade, helped by Bread's advocacy for funding the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). The proportion of primary school-age children enrolled in school in sub-Saharan Africa increased from 56 percent in 1999 to 70 percent in 2006—thanks in large part to the 2000 Jubilee Campaign, which reduced the debts of poor countries in exchange for allocating more of their funds for education and

other development needs.

Janite Ezher visits her local Fonkoze branch in Mirebalais, Haiti. The bank, one of the oldest of the organization's 41 branches, serves 8,650 clients.

How will foreign assistance reform affect the Millennium Development Goals?

To achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, we must shift from U.S.-led to recipient country-led development. Our development priorities must emphasize mutual accountability in order to accelerate progress. Developing countries took the lead in designing and implementing the strategies to achieve these goals, but they cannot do it alone. Rich countries, including the United States, have agreed to be partners in this effort.

We have made a lot of progress since the goals were adopted in 2000. But in order to achieve these goals, especially the eradication of extreme hunger and poverty, we must reform the way we deliver U.S. foreign assistance. By changing our policies and laws governing U.S. foreign aid, we can make our aid more effective on the ground and help more hungry and poor people.

Hunger and Poverty Facts

Real progress has been made in the fight against poverty:

Since 1990:

- The number of people living on \$1.25 a day fell by 400 million people.
- The rate of chronically hungry people in developing countries fell from 20 percent to 16 percent.
- The mortality rate for children under 5 fell by 40 percent or more in Ethiopia, Malawi, and Niger.

But the world suffered a big setback beginning in 2007 with the food price crisis and the global recession.

As a result:

- 1.5 billion people are in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.25 a day.
- Even though there has been an overall percentage decrease, 925 million people still suffer from chronic hunger worldwide, nearly 90 million higher than in 2000.
- More than 350,000 women die every year from complications during pregnancy, childbirth, or in the six weeks after delivery.
- 24,000 children die every day from poverty, hunger, and preventable diseases. That's one child every 3.6 seconds.

To help the world's hungry and poor people, U.S. foreign assistance must be made more effective by changing the laws and policies governing aid:

A stronger focus on reducing poverty.

- For every 5 percent drop in income growth in a developing country, the likelihood of violent conflict or war within the next year increases by 10 percent.
- Poverty-focused development assistance accounted for just 0.6 percent of the entire U.S. budget in fiscal year 2010.
- For example, Ghana was the first African country to significantly cut the number of its people living in extreme poverty—from 37 percent in 1991 to about 16 percent in 2008. They achieved this through increased farm production by committing 10 percent of its budget to agriculture, and better coordination with aid donors.

Clearer accountability for how aid dollars are spent and their results.

- Currently, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, created under the Bush administration in 2004, is the only U.S. foreign assistance agency that publicly posts how its money is being spent, reports on its progress, and evaluates its impacts. The State Department and USAID are making efforts toward greater transparency.
- A recent Center for Global Development assessment of the quality of aid of 31 donor countries and agencies found that the United States scored in the bottom third on all evaluation indicators. This includes aid predictability, fragmentation across donor agencies, and use of recipient country systems.

A transformed U.S. development agency.

- USAID experienced a 38 percent decline in its workforce between 1990 and 2007, resulting in a diminished capacity to manage programs and resources.
- Downsizing at USAID over the past few decades has led to a dramatic loss of technical expertise. By 2010, the number of agricultural development officers decreased by 90 percent as compared to the mid-1980s.

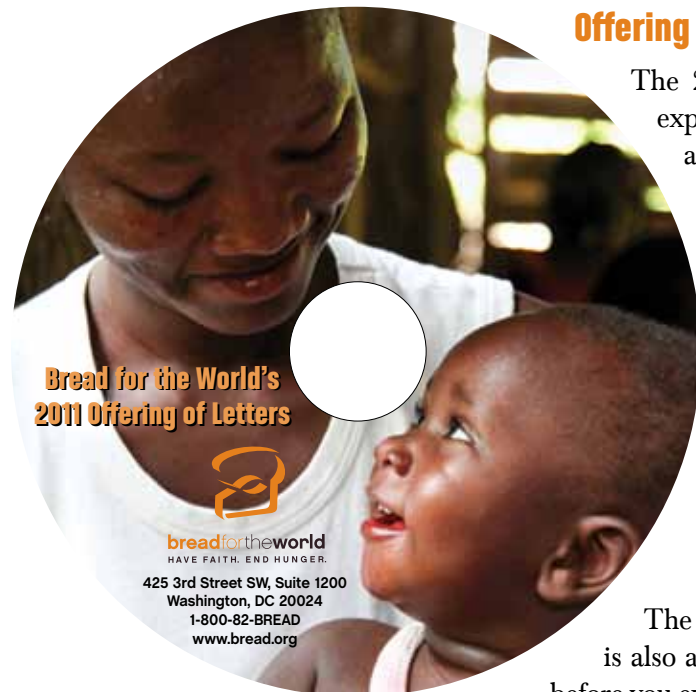
Aid that meets the needs and wants of local people.

- Despite the U.S. government's comprehensive, multi-sectoral development and relief strategy for Ethiopia, 90 percent of U.S. assistance to that country in FY 2008 was spent on HIV/AIDS and food aid.
- In an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development study that included 55 countries, the United States scored well below its peers on its ability to promote country partnership.

To view sources, see www.bread.org/OL.

Multimedia Resources

A variety of multimedia resources can help you educate yourself and your church, campus, or community about the issues covered in this year's Offering of Letters.



Offering of Letters DVD

The 2011 Offering of Letters DVD contains a 7-minute video explaining the campaign this year, the importance of letters, and an introduction to Bread for the World. It's available in English and Spanish.

The DVD is a great resource for many settings:

- Play it during coffee hour or other gathering times during the weeks before your Offering.
- Show it at letter-writing tables during your Offering.
- Play it during church or campus classes, especially those that address hunger and/or justice issues.
- Put it on your church's website by adding a link to www.bread.org/OL.
- Show it on your church, campus, or retirement community's television station.

The one-minute video clip "We Are Bread for the World"—which is also available online—can be shown during a worship service just before you explain what the Offering of Letters is about. It's also available in English and Spanish.

Check Out Bread's Website

Visit www.bread.org/OL, the companion website to your Offering of Letters kit. You'll find the latest updates on the campaign, hunger facts and figures, sample letters, and strategies to help prepare for your Offering. Find information about workshops and activities, and get connected with Bread Teams in your community.

You'll also find extended interviews with people featured in the Offering of Letters video, plus Bread President David Beckmann. Find and share all Bread videos on our YouTube channel, www.bread.org/youtube.

Bread's photos, which you can use to illustrate your presentations, can also be downloaded from Flickr, www.bread.org/flickr.

Subscribe to Broadcast on iTunes or listen directly at www.bread.org/go/podcast. Our monthly podcast helps you explore the issues in this year's Offering by sharing the stories of people and communities working to end hunger and those affected by our work. Each edition of Broadcast also includes updates on key legislative developments on Capitol Hill.

Field Focus stories show you people who are being helped by Bread's advocacy. You'll find personal stories from communities, families, and individuals around the world whose lives are better because of your advocacy.

Or you can stay connected with Bread using various social media:

- Facebook www.bread.org/facebook
- Twitter www.bread.org/twitter
- MySpace www.bread.org/myspace
- YouTube www.bread.org/youtube

After your Offering, share your photos, memories, and ideas. Encourage others to get involved—www.bread.org/OL is a place to find resources, exchange experiences, inspire, and be inspired by the work of our community. Your experience will encourage others to be a voice for hungry people.

What Can I Do?



Katie Gentry

Planning an Offering of Letters

Every year, thousands of Christians and other people of faith across the United States send handwritten letters to their members of Congress. Writing a heartfelt letter is a prayerful, reflective, and personal way to seek God's justice for hungry people. When we combine our letters, we raise a strong voice.

Members of Congress receive thousands of emails per week. While click-advocacy is easy, handwritten letters are unique. They virtually guarantee that your senators or representative will take note of your opinion. Even a few handwritten letters can influence their actions and votes.

Organize an Offering of Letters: 10 Easy Steps

1 Pray for the Offering. Reflect on a passage of Scripture that includes a call to bring justice to poor and oppressed people (e.g., Isaiah 58:6-10 or Matthew 25:31-46). Ask God to show you how to interpret this call. Consider using the reflection on page 22 for your group.

2 Create Your Team. Consider who might be helpful in planning and publicizing an Offering of Letters: Your pastor? Christian education director? Social concerns or mission committee? Youth group leader? Invite them to join your team.

3 Gather Resources. Read this handbook thoroughly for information and ideas, and watch the accompanying DVD. Check in with your Bread for the World regional organizer (see page 30 for contact information). Visit www.bread.org/OL for updates and the most recent sample letter, as well as a sample PowerPoint presentation you can use to educate your community.

4 Develop a Plan. Arrange a meeting with your team to review resources. Consider how to integrate the Offering of Letters with worship and educational activities. Decide when and where to hold your Offering of Letters. Keep your pastor informed and ask for his or her support. Involve others through creative activities (see pages 24-25 for ideas). Seek the appropriate approval from your church's governing board far enough in advance to get the Offering of Letters on the church calendar.

5 Get the Word Out. Ask your pastor to lift up the Offering of Letters in a sermon. (A scriptural study for the Offering can be found on page 22.) Show the Offering of Letters DVD. Write an article on the Offering of Letters for the church newsletter. Place a bulletin insert or announcement in the Sunday bulletin. Offer a "Minute for Mission" during worship. Share information about your Offering of Letters via Facebook, Twitter, your blog, or other forms of social media. Encourage others to spread the word in the same ways, as well as at their small group or Bible study meetings. Display the poster found in the pocket of this handbook on a bulletin board.



A mother and her daughter participate in Bread's 2010 Offering of Letters at Saint Camillus Church in Silver Spring, MD. The church generated more than 350 letters to their members of Congress.

"Bread for the World is a model of how advocacy should be done; they make every effort to be bipartisan. There is no organization for which I have more respect, and I hope many of our congregations will engage in letter-writing about foreign assistance reform."

— Daniel Vestal
Executive Coordinator
Cooperative Baptist Fellowship

Planning an Offering of Letters

6 Write letters. Letter-writing can be done at a special time during worship, in the pews or narthex after the service, at fellowship hour, in a class or youth group, near dining halls, or anywhere people gather. Provide paper, envelopes, pens, and the latest sample letter (found at www.bread.org/OL). Show the Offering of Letters DVD so people can see families who could be helped by their letters. Invite anyone who prefers not to write to pray for hungry people affected by these policies. Remember that letter-writing at home yields fewer letters. Encourage letter-writers to fill out the sign-in sheet (found in this handbook's pocket) so they can receive a free one-year membership to Bread for the World.

7 Gather the Letters. Offer the letters to God for a blessing during worship. Count and note the number of letters written to each member of Congress. Stamp and mail each letter individually; do not bundle them in one envelope. Complete and return the evaluation form "Give Us Your Feedback," found in the back of this handbook or online at www.bread.org/OL to Bread for the World's national office. Your report ensures that Bread's staff can follow up effectively with congressional offices.

8 Give Thanks. To God, to your team, to your letter-writers, and to those who prayed.

9 Follow Up. Consider how to let people know about the fruits of their labor. Will you publish monthly updates on the Offering in your church bulletin, campus newsletter, or website? Have the letter-writers signed up to receive updates from Bread for the World? You can find updates at www.bread.org/OL.

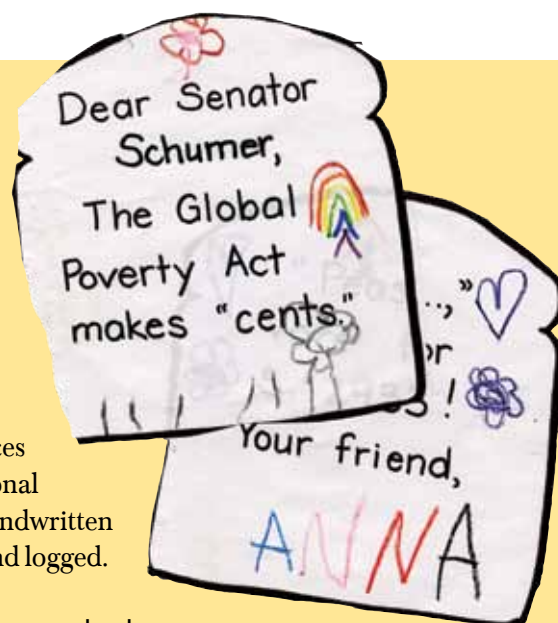
10 Celebrate victories, large and small.

Don't forget to complete and return your evaluation form or fill it out online at www.bread.org/OL.

Why Handwritten Letters?

Because they work. Research from the Congressional Management Foundation confirms that handwritten, mailed letters are still the best way to communicate with your members of Congress. In fact, 96 percent of Capitol Hill staff reported in a survey that if their member of Congress had not reached a decision on an issue, personalized letters would influence his or her position.

Personalized emails can also be effective, but congressional offices experience large amounts of email and sometimes lack the additional staff to handle the volume and evaluate the email's authenticity. Handwritten letters from constituents of members of Congress are always read and logged.



Kids can get involved, too! Children in your church or community can write letters to their members of Congress, as these kids did for Bread's 2009 Offering of Letters (right).

A Sample Presentation

Brother Francklin Armand, who lives in Haiti's Central Plateau, takes his role as a community leader seriously. In the years before the January 2010 earthquake, he helped transform the region by promoting irrigation and reforestation. Armand convinced international donors to support greenhouses, fish farming, and long-term agricultural projects instead of simply giving away food. Thanks to him, today schools in the Central Plateau, one of Haiti's most lush and fertile regions, teach children how to farm and care for the land.

Much of Haiti, however, looks nothing like this. Devastated by the earthquake and decades of grinding poverty, 5 million people struggle to find clean drinking water, and millions more rely on donated food and international aid. This is not sustainable. Haitians deserve the chance to drink clean water and grow or purchase their own food. With the right kind of aid and good governance, the people of Haiti can restore barren land and build their own future, just as Armand did.

Bread for the World's 2011 Offering of Letters urges Congress and the administration to press forward with reforms to make foreign assistance more effective in reducing poverty. These reforms will help millions of people move out of hunger and poverty, not only in Haiti but around the world.

Bread for the World members and people in our church have helped build momentum to reform U.S. foreign assistance over the last several years, and we achieved important changes. We helped make the reduction of world hunger a higher priority for the U.S. government. Our government is now leading an international effort to strengthen agriculture and nutrition in poor countries, where the plans would be developed by the people of that country.

This year our campaign has four objectives:

- A stronger U.S. government focus on reducing poverty
- Clearer accountability for how aid dollars are spent and their results
- A transformed U.S. development agency
- U.S. aid that meets the needs and wants of local people

As leaders like Francklin invite thoughtful, long-term assistance, let's make sure our nation meets that challenge and supports the efforts of our sisters and brothers in the developing world. Members of [our church's name] will be writing letters to our senators and representatives today during [describe time, place]. Your letter is very important. Our leaders need to hear from us.



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

A boy drinks from an open pipe in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

What Makes a Good Presentation?

Start with a story that illustrates the issue. (More stories are available online at www.bread.org/OL). If you can use photographs, all the better. Speak loudly and clearly—and from the heart, not from your paper!

Explain what the 2011 Offering of Letters is about and the goals we hope to accomplish together.

Explain that to accomplish these goals, we need as many people as possible to write their members of Congress and tell them why these issues are important. Return to your story to show how U.S. foreign aid reform is important and why it will improve the lives of hungry and poor people around the world.

Writing Letters to Congress

The Two-Minute Letter

There are four simple steps to an effective letter:

1. Write your name and address at the end of your letter AND on the envelope, so your members of Congress know you are one of the people they represent.

2. Ask for specific action, using this sentence or your own words:

I ask you to reform foreign aid to make it more effective in reducing poverty.

3. Give reasons why. Some examples:

- Share your personal story about what motivates you to write. Letters with personal stories are the most compelling and effective.
- My church is already helping by [example], but I also expect my country to take the lead in combating global poverty.

4. Send your letter to Congress.

Put each letter in a separate envelope and address it. Send your letter to:

Sen. _____ Rep. _____
U.S. Senate U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC 20515

The most recent sample letter is always available online at www.bread.org/OL. Please visit the site before holding your Offering of Letters.

Because of security procedures, your letter may take two to four weeks to reach Congress, so please plan accordingly. Your letters will make an important difference for people who are hungry and poor.

Sample Letter

Date _____

Dear Sen. _____ or Dear Rep. _____,

I'm asking you to reform the way the United States delivers foreign assistance so it will help millions of people in poor countries move out of hunger and poverty. Streamlined and more efficient U.S. foreign aid programs will ensure that our tax dollars are used effectively and that the aid we give is what local people in poor countries such as Haiti and Liberia really need.

By focusing our aid dollars on moving people out of poverty, we help foster economic growth and opportunity. Fewer people struggling with poverty and stronger, growing economies in developing countries contribute to our own national security as well.

This is why I am asking you to support reforms in the ways we deliver and administer U.S. foreign aid. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your Address

God Is Up to Something



"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

– Isaiah 43:19

God is a God of history, constantly up to some kind of transformation of our broken world. When we tune in we can see evidence of God's hand shaping our world and surprising us in the midst of our uncertainty.

Scripture shows us a God who hears the cry of enslaved people and delivers them. Thousands of years ago God used Moses to appeal to the Egyptian government to release the enslaved Hebrew people. This began the long journey of the Israelites' great exodus from Egypt. "Moses said to the people, 'Do not be afraid, stand firm, and see the deliverance that the Lord will accomplish for you today'" (Exodus 14:13)

God also uses enlightened rulers as agents of deliverance. In Psalm 72, King David offers prayerful instruction for his son Solomon, who will become the ruler of a nation. David's expression of devotion and care for his people, near and far, is a foreshadowing of the righteous reign of Christ and his promise and covenant. "For he delivers the needy when they call, the poor and those who have no helper. ... From oppression and violence he redeems their life" (Psalm 72:12-14)

God even uses the enlightened intervention of foreign governments. The good and faithful governor Nehemiah rebuilds a community, giving life and restoring dignity to the people, with the support of the God-inspired benevolence of King Cyrus of Persia. (Nehemiah 5:1-6)

In Jesus Christ, God was made flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus was God at work in history, as sins were forgiven, sight restored, and sickness healed (Matthew 15:30-31). As members of the body of Christ, we are a transformed people listening for God's invitation to create life-giving changes.

As citizens of the United States and stewards of God's creation, we have a unique calling. The way the United States responds to those in need is God's concern and our responsibility.

At the turn of the millennium, the global Jubilee campaign for debt relief was an international example of a response to great need. So, too, are the Millennium Development Goals, international targets for reducing poverty that most of the world's nations agreed to in 2000. Isn't this God at work in our time, responding again to the cries of people enslaved by poverty and hunger?

Reforming U.S. foreign aid policies and programs is our chance to join God in creating something new. Making these changes can touch millions of lives and transform poverty and despair into life and dignity. Increasing the effectiveness and delivery of foreign assistance can move people from suffering to dignity—mothers can live through childbirth, infants can survive the clutches of parasitic illness, boys and girls can learn to read, and parents can earn enough to feed their families.

God is up to something and is calling us to share in this new creation.

Jim Stipe
Making U.S. foreign assistance more effective can help more kids get an education, like these schoolchildren in India.

Worship Aids

Dedication Prayer for Letters

Almighty and faithful God, we acknowledge your sovereignty and your steadfast love for all humanity. You work marvels in our day that we cannot fathom. Empower these letters to touch the hearts and minds of our members of Congress. Help them inspire a more perfect global community by rebuilding our nation's foreign aid policies on justice, righteousness, and compassion for all people.

Litany for an Offering of Letters

Leader: The Lord hears voices weakened by hunger.

All: We unite our voices in strength by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: Remove strongholds of complacency and neglect.

All: Build up compassion within us and our leaders.

Leader: Release the bondage that shackles those who struggle to overcome poverty.

All: Help us strengthen their arms through justice, and plead their cause through righteousness.

Leader: Let the weak say, "I am strong!"

All: Illuminate for us the path from despair to hope.

Leader: Make the crooked paths straight.

All: Empower us to transform unjust laws into decrees of compassionate justice.

Leader: Seize the moment for transformation.

All: Shape us into a global beloved community that provides opportunity for all.

Leader: We unite our voices and take our stand for righteousness' sake.

All: Release the oppressed from the bondage of neglect, and let our policies reflect the sacred value of every human life.



A boy reads his Bible during Sunday worship at an Assemblies of God service in Saclepea, Liberia.

Laura Elizabeth Pohl

"While serving as the bishop of the Sixteenth Episcopal District, which includes Haiti, I saw the hard work and dignity of the people who struggled to live. I also saw the need for our country to reform its foreign assistance to make it more effective in addressing the complex needs of our sisters and brothers. Bread for the World's 2011 Offering of Letters will put us on the road to doing just that."

— Bishop Carolyn Tyler Guidry
Presiding Prelate of the Eighth Episcopal District
Chairperson of the Social Action Commission
African Methodist Episcopal Church



Laura Elizabeth Pohl

A Global Hunger Challenge

An estimated 1.5 billion people live on less than \$1.25 a day. We have most likely heard this estimate, but we often have trouble grasping what this means for the average person in the world. So, let's get more specific. What if we could afford only as much food as the average Haitian?

That's what more than 100 leaders from 44 national anti-hunger organizations did in September 2010 when they accepted InterAction's Global Hunger Challenge. Participants spent no more than \$34.33 on food for five days—an amount equivalent to what an average Haitian can spend on food each week. Think you can do it? Join others from your church or community and take the challenge:

1. Commit to a five-day food budget of no more than \$34.33 that includes all food and drinks.
2. Keep a record of your experience:
 - Write in a journal or diary each day to track your challenge and share your experiences. Entries can be short and focused with just a couple of sentences each day.
 - Share what you learn by posting a short note on your personal web page or social network. Tell us about your shopping list and what meals you choose. Help others understand what you're learning.
 - Tie in any relevant stories related to your experience in humanitarian or development work.
 - Use Facebook, Twitter, My Space, or other social media to share information about this challenge and your experience with it. When you tweet, include the handle @bread4theworld.
3. Write a letter to Congress about your experience of living on the five-day food budget of an average Haitian family. Help your senators and representative understand why we need reformed and stronger U.S. foreign assistance programs (see sample letter on page 21).

For more information on this activity, see www.interaction.org/global-hunger-challenge.

“Our issue is not whether we can resolve poverty in our time, but whether we have the will and resolve to do so. We appeal to Congress to view the resolution of poverty as foremost a moral issue that requires a response rooted in justice, which is no more than love finding a way in this world.”

– Dr. Leonard Lovett
Ecumenical Officer of Urban Affairs, Church of God in Christ

Activities

‘Development Happens’ Board Game

Make additional copies of the Development Happens board game (found in the handbook pocket), and divide into groups of no more than four people each. Each group will need a board game, a die, and four game pieces to represent four developing countries (Haiti and Liberia, for example). The game pieces could simply be four small squares of paper in different colors. Instruct the players to take turns rolling the die and moving their countries around the board until one country achieves “Development Happens.”

Afterward, help participants process the game with these questions:

- What obstacles or challenges did your country encounter as it worked to end hunger and poverty?
- Some countries seemed to progress fairly easily. Why? Were these factors always fair?
- How could U.S. foreign assistance be improved to better assist countries trying to foster good development?

If your group has not conducted an Offering of Letters, you may want to end this game with the participants writing a letter to their members of Congress.

Other games and educational activities, including for children, are available online at www.bread.org/OL.



Get Your Church Involved in Bread’s Work

• **Pray and learn.** Bread offers resources for education and worship—to help churches learn about issues of hunger and poverty as well as to pray for those in need and for our nation’s decision makers. Bread for the World Sunday is an annual opportunity for your church or campus to renew its commitment to overcoming hunger and poverty.

• **Reach out to Congress.** Bread for the World churches communicate with members of Congress through letters, email, phone calls, and personal visits. Throughout the year, Bread provides information, resources, and updates on nonpartisan issues important to hungry people. Each year, Bread invites churches to take up an Offering of Letters to Congress on an issue important to hungry people.

• **Support Bread for the World financially.** Individuals and churches make generous contributions to support the work of Bread for the World.

• **Become a Covenant Church.** Covenant Churches make specific commitments to pray and learn about hunger, and to give of their time and resources to end hunger in their community, the nation, and the world. Annual financial gifts average \$500, but some are as much as \$5,000 a year. Bread offers resources and networking opportunities for Covenant Churches to strengthen their ministries.

Resources for Education and Advocacy

Helping Hungry People: A Sunday School Curriculum teaches older elementary-age students about the Christian call to help people in need. Children will “travel” to places where people live in poverty and learn the teachings of Jesus. They will also engage in a variety of activities to help hungry people. Download the curriculum at www.bread.org/OL.

Getting Ready to Come Back: Advocacy Guide for Mission Teams will help short-term mission teams traveling internationally to see and respond to the political, social, and economic systems that contribute to hunger and poverty. \$10 at www.bread.org/store.

Reaching Out to Your Church or Campus



Walter Hidalgo (left) and Michael Klein participated in Bread's 2010 Hunger Justice Leaders program last June.

“Churches that are grounded in the principles of service and justice are called to alleviate hunger. In joining Bread’s Offering of Letters, we work for policies and actions that make the world a better place for its poorest inhabitants. By enacting reforms in U.S. foreign assistance, our country will make far greater strides in the reduction of global hunger.”

– Stanley J. Noffsinger
General Secretary
Church of the Brethren

Nurture Your Faith

- **Pray and fast** to be in spiritual solidarity with hungry and poor people. Allow God’s Spirit to guide and order our lives and actions for justice toward all our brothers and sisters who are living in poverty.
- **Invite friends or community members** to form a Bible study about hunger.

Connect with Bread for the World in Your Community

- **Attend an Offering of Letters workshop** in your church or community to learn about the 2011 campaign and how to organize an Offering of Letters. Check Bread’s events calendar for workshop dates and locations at www.bread.org/go/events or contact your Bread regional office for help (see page 30 for contact information). If you can’t be present at a local event, ask your organizer about options for attending a “virtual” workshop.
- **Schedule an Offering of Letters in your church**, ideally in the spring or early summer.
- **Join Bread for the World at our Lobby Day** June 14, 2011. Bread members from around the country will gather in Washington, DC, to speak directly with their members of Congress about issues covered in this Offering of Letters. Lobby Day will be preceded by a Gathering, June 11-13. Check our website for more details.

Engage Your Church

- **Form a book group** to read David Beckmann’s new book, *Exodus from Hunger*. For more information, see www.bread.org/go/book.
- **Become a Bread Covenant Church.** Strengthen your church’s hunger ministry through a Covenant Church relationship with Bread for the World; www.bread.org/go/covenant. When you make a commitment to integrate hunger concerns into the life of your congregation, Bread for the World provides tools that will equip your church to learn more about hunger, pray for hungry people, and take action to end hunger through advocacy.
- **Celebrate Bread for the World Sunday**, an annual opportunity for your church or campus to renew its commitment to overcoming hunger in God’s world. On Sundays in fall 2011, worshipping communities across the country will lift their voices on behalf of hungry and poor people.
- **Subscribe to Bread for the Preacher**, a free monthly email for busy pastors. Each edition features preaching aids and worship resources that address issues of hunger and poverty. Sign up at www.bread.org/go/preacher/.

Engage Your Campus

- **Form a Bread for the World Campus Team.** Bring together hunger activists on your campus to take action on hunger. Design a strategy to educate your campus and lobby your members of Congress.
- **Invite your elected officials to speak on campus.** Ask them to talk about what they’re doing to address hunger here and abroad. Mobilize your campus around their visits.

Reaching Out to Your Church or Campus

- **Launch a letter-writing contest.** See who can write the most letters to elected officials about the 2011 Offering of Letters. Create a “letter-writing thermometer” to measure your progress.
- **Link with Universities Fighting World Hunger,** an organization that helps campuses boost hunger awareness and advocacy (www.universitiesfightingworldhunger.org/).

Connect with Bread for the World Online

- **Explore Bread’s Offering of Letters website,** www.bread.org/OL, for the most recent campaign updates, sample letters, and resources for further education and action.
- **Join Bread’s Facebook page,** www.facebook.com/breadfortheworld, which features contests, questions about our work, and ways to stay engaged in our efforts.
- **Listen to Broadcast,** our monthly podcast of stories and interviews, at iTunes or www.bread.org/go/podcast.
- **Read Bread Blog,** www.bread.org/go/blog, for stimulating points of view and innovative ideas.
- **Follow us on Twitter:** @bread4theworld and @breadinstitute
- **Join Bread’s Quickline email alerts.** Learn when calls to Congress are most urgently needed. The alerts will give you clear background information on the issue and a short message to convey to your senator or representative. Sign up online to receive alerts at www.bread.org.

For questions or advice about these and other suggestions, contact your regional Bread for the World office (see contact information page 30) or call our national office at 1-800-82-BREAD.

“Because poverty and hunger are complex, global problems, churches need to address both the immediate needs (providing food to the hungry) and work to change political, social, and economic systems that make it so difficult to break the cycles of poverty. Bread for the World provides churches the knowledge and tools for dealing with the systemic issues, making it possible to dream of the day when hunger will be eradicated from our planet.”

– Juan Francisco Martínez, Ph.D.
Center for the Study of Hispanic
Church and Community
Fuller Theological Seminary

Become a Bread Leader

Bread leaders are an essential part of Bread for the World’s mission to win changes in policies, programs, and conditions that allow hunger and poverty to persist. Bread is committed to developing volunteer leaders throughout the country who are working to end hunger.

Start or join a Bread Team. A Bread Team is a local group of volunteers who turn faith into action by building the movement to end hunger at home and abroad. Teams cultivate grassroots support, engage the media, build coalitions, and urge decision makers to end hunger. Contact your regional organizing staff (see page 30) to learn more.

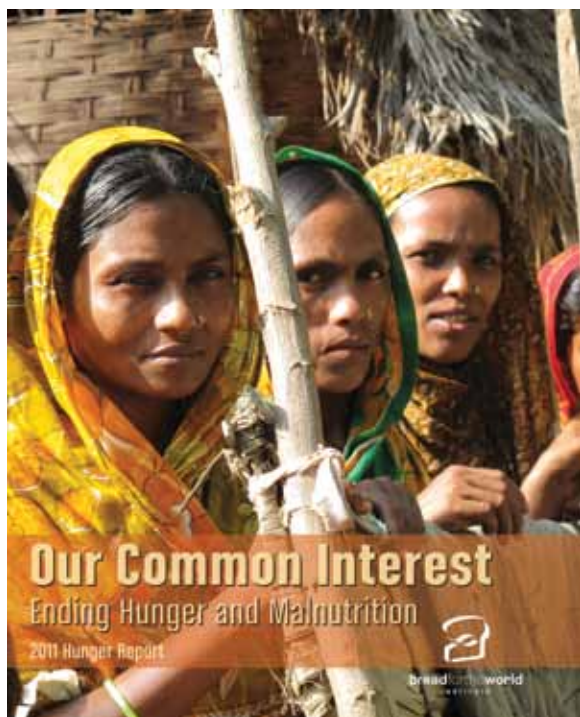
Organize a local visit with your members of Congress. Most members regularly visit their home states and districts, particularly during congressional recesses. Recruit Bread members, and faith and campus leaders to take part in the visit. If the member isn’t available, meet with the district director or request a conference call with his or her congressional staff in Washington, DC, who handles foreign affairs. Some offices have teleconference capabilities so that more members of your group can be on the call. Be sure to contact your regional organizer for help in planning the meeting.

Write a letter to the editor or an op-ed in your local newspaper about why your members of Congress should support hunger-fighting initiatives. See www.bread.org/go/tips for tips on writing effective letters and editorials.

Find out more about Bread Teams at www.bread.org/go/community.

More Resources on Hunger

Tackling Global Hunger and Malnutrition



As you learn more about the issues involved in this year's Offering of Letters, be sure to take a look at Bread for the World Institute's latest Hunger Report, *Our Common Interest: Ending Hunger and Malnutrition*. The report—chock-full of stories, analysis, and data—focuses on the global response to the rise in hunger as a result of the 2008 food price crisis.

The crisis was a wake-up call for the global community and started a new conversation about hunger, malnutrition, and food security. Now, two years later, there is a renewed focus on the importance of agriculture and its role in decreasing hunger and malnutrition. *Our Common Interest* examines the events that led to the establishment of Feed the Future, a new initiative from the U.S. government that focuses on improving the productivity and livelihoods of smallholder farmers—which plays a direct role in lowering hunger and poverty rates.

The report includes a six-session Christian study guide for those who'd like to delve more deeply into these topics during adult education classes or small group meetings. Designed for Christians of many theological and political viewpoints, each session includes prayer, Scripture reflection, questions about the report's topical themes, and ideas for personal involvement and action.

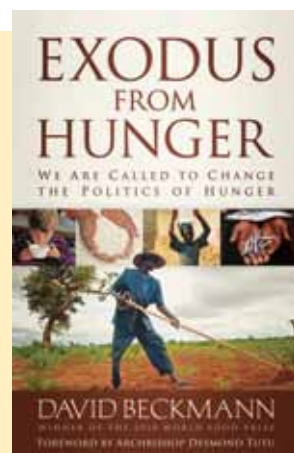
Our Common Interest also has its own website, www.hungerreport.org, which includes the full printed report plus interactive information on global hunger trends, health, and the Feed the Future recipient countries. You can find information by topic, view a slideshow, and watch short video interviews with Bread for the World Institute's experts and policy analysts.

We Can Create Effective Change

You'll also find plenty of information, stories—and inspiration—in David Beckmann's new book, *Exodus from Hunger: We Are Called to Change the Politics of Hunger*. Beckmann looks at the causes of hunger, presents case studies of countries that have made great strides against it, and puts a human face on the problem by sharing stories of people who are, quite simply, hungry every day.

The problems can seem overwhelming, but Beckmann lays out a clear and workable plan for effectively using political channels to make great progress. He calls Christians to join God in helping to change the politics of hunger.

To find out more about the book, order it, or read brief excerpts, visit www.bread.org/go/book.



Bread's National Gathering 2011

Changing the Politics of Hunger

**Bread for the World's National Gathering
June 11-14, 2011, Washington, DC**

God is calling people of faith to change the politics of hunger. You can respond by coming to Washington, DC, to lift your voice on behalf of hungry and poor people around the world.

This year, we have an extraordinary opportunity to make a big difference in how our country engages with poor countries around the world. More than at any time in recent decades, Congress and the president are prepared to work together to transform the way the United States delivers foreign aid to developing countries.

But it won't happen without our voices urging Republicans and Democrats to work together. We know hunger is not a partisan issue, and we have to remind our members of Congress that they must work as one to get the job done.

Bread for the World's National Gathering 2011 will bring together hundreds of people of faith from across the country. From June 11-12, we will worship and pray together, learn from experts and each other, and be equipped to lobby Congress to make U.S. foreign aid more effective and responsive to the needs of developing countries.

On Monday, June 13, we will meet and interact with more than 100 nongovernmental (NGO) organization leaders, development experts, and others who have taken up the challenge of ending child malnutrition. This special international conference, co-organized with Concern Worldwide, Ireland's premier international development group, will push for greater government action to end child malnutrition worldwide.

Some of the participants in this conference will join us on June 14 for Lobby Day. Your presence, and the presence of developing country NGO leaders, will be a powerful witness to members of Congress.

We will hold Bread's National Gathering at American University, while the international conference will be at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC. We will have a range of accommodations to suit your budget.

Register now at www.bread.org/go/gather. You can get an early bird discount if you register before April 30, 2011.

When you leave Bread's National Gathering you will be refreshed, renewed, nourished, and your faith strengthened. You will also be equipped with new advocacy skills, new information, and relationships that will support you as you speak on behalf of hungry and poor people.



Participants in Bread's 2009 National Gathering head to their first plenary session at American University in Washington, DC.

"I heartily endorse Bread for the World's campaign to reform and strengthen U.S. foreign assistance. Foreign assistance saves lives and gives people tools to lift themselves out of poverty. It makes the world a safer place for all of us. I encourage every church to sponsor an Offering of Letters as a way to put faith into action on behalf of needy neighbors around the world."

– Galen Carey
Director of Government Affairs
National Association of
Evangelicals

Contact Bread's Regional Organizers

As the time approaches to write your letters, please contact your Bread for the World organizer for an update on the campaign and the latest sample letter, or visit bread.org/OL.

Central Midwest (AR, IL, IN, MO)

205 W. Monroe Avenue, Suite 311
Chicago, IL 60606
Phone: 1-800-447-0BFW
Email: breadchicago@bread.org

Upper Midwest and Plains (IA, KS, MN, ND, NE, SD, WI)

122 W. Franklin Avenue, Rm. 310
Minneapolis, MN 55404
Phone: 1-800-363-7BFW
Email: breadmn@bread.org

Southeast (AL, FL, GA, LA, MS, NC, SC)

100 Edgewood Ave. NE, Suite 1690
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: 1-888-BFW-0073
Email: breadsouth@bread.org

Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, RI, VT)

475 Riverside Drive, Room 1926
New York, NY 10115
Phone: 1-866-238-0507
Email: northeast@bread.org

North Central (KY, MI, OH, PA, WV)

11 West Monument Ave., Suite 410
Dayton, OH 45402-1233
Phone: 1-800-619-9BFW
Email: north.central@bread.org

Western

(AK, AZ, CO, HI, ID, MT, NV, NM, OR, WA, UT, WY)

325 NW 21st Ave., Suite 100
Portland, OR 97209
Phone: 1-888-75-BREAD
Email: breadwest@bread.org

Mid-Atlantic and Central Southern (DC, DE, MD, OK, TN, TX, VA)

425 3rd St. SW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20024
Phone: 1-800-82-BREAD
Email: bread@bread.org

California (CA)

155 South El Molino Ave., Suite 101
Pasadena, CA 91101
Phone: 1-800-315-3BFW
Email: breadca@bread.org

Organizer for Latino Relations

155 South El Molino Ave., Suite 101
Pasadena, CA 91101
Phone: 1-800-315-3BFW
Email: pan@bread.org

"As people of faith with hearts tuned to the reality of a hungry world, we know that poverty has deep and complex roots. As Christians, we believe this reality of marginalization can be transformed. The efforts of U.S. citizens committed to social justice and human dignity to make U.S. foreign assistance more responsive to the real needs of impoverished communities can contribute in real ways to this critical transformation. Adelante, Bread for the World!"

– Marie Dennis
Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns



Rick Reinhard

Give Us Your Feedback

Send Us Your Feedback and Receive a Free Offering of Letters Kit Next Year

Your feedback on the 2011 Offering of Letters is very important. We will use it to follow up with your members of Congress, conduct media work, and measure the impact of this campaign. Please complete this form, fold, seal, stamp, and mail it. You can save a stamp by completing the online form at www.bread.org/OL or by calling 1-800-82-BREAD. Thank you!

My Offering of Letters

I conducted an Offering of Letters on (date) _____

Name of church, campus, or group _____

Address of church, campus, or group _____

My church's, campus', or group's religious affiliation (if any) is _____

My church's, campus', or group's racial/ethnic composition is _____

This is my first Offering of Letters (check one) Yes No. I have conducted _____ (number) in the past.

My Offering of Letters was attended by _____ participants (number). We generated _____ letters (number).

Indicate the number of letters sent to: Sen. _____ Number of letters _____

If necessary, add others on reverse side. Sen. _____ Number of letters _____

Rep. _____ Number of letters _____

Rep. _____ Number of letters _____

I already submitted my Offering of Letters sign-up sheet: Yes No. (Sign-ups will receive Bread memberships.)

The 2011 Offering of Letters Kit (Please rate the following statements on a scale of 5 to 0. Circle your choice.)

The Offering materials were written in a clear, understandable way.

5 4 3 2 1 0
Agree completely Mostly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Mostly disagree Disagree completely

Comments _____

In general, the kit provided me with all the materials I needed to conduct an Offering of Letters.

5 4 3 2 1 0
Agree completely Mostly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Mostly disagree Disagree completely

Comments _____

Based on the table of contents, the *most* useful section(s) of this kit is (list and explain why): _____

Based on the table of contents, the *least* useful section(s) of this kit is (list and explain why): _____

I showed the Offering of Letters DVD Yes No, because _____

I showed the "We Are Bread for the World" video Yes (1-minute, 7-minute) No

I showed the 2-minute message by Rev. David Beckmann Yes No

I used the 2011 Offering of Letters Interactive website to get additional resources to plan and conduct my Offering of Letters Yes No

In the future, I intend to use ONLY the online version of the Offering of Letters kit for my Offering Yes No

Please cut out and mail to Bread for the World

Information About You

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____
Street City State ZIP

PHONE (HOME) _____ (WORK) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Thank You!



BREAD FOR THE WORLD
ATTN: ORGANIZING DEPARTMENT
425 3rd Street SW, Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20024

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Please use the space below for additional comments or suggestions.

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