

**A Message from Malnutrition Matters' President Hart Jansson:**  
**Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

[www.malnutrition.org](http://www.malnutrition.org)

As an international program we are witnessing the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the efforts underway to mitigate it in every country and region where we work. The safety and health of our staff, associates, their families, our beneficiaries and customers, and our many partners has always been our priority. In the current situation we are taking all measures possible to keep everyone out of harm's way.

As a provider of appropriate technology and training services that support accessible and affordable nutrient-dense food in disadvantaged communities, Malnutrition Matters (MM) is innovating ways to respond to the change in social and economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some countries or regions within countries are in lockdown mode and this situation may persist for some time. **MM understands that local production of nutrient-dense food is an essential service, critical to the maintenance of life, especially for the disadvantaged.** All the more so, as it reduces gender inequality and empowers women in a time of reduced economic opportunity, and it provides nutritious food when other supply chains may be disrupted. As an example, MM's SoyCow can efficiently produce 1,000 to 2,000 servings (250ml each) of soymilk or soy yoghurt per day, at an operational cost of 4 cents per serving.

MM issued a bulletin entitled [Small-scale Soy Dairy COVID-19 Hygiene Practice Guide](#) to all our customers and partners. This bulletin enables entrepreneurs using MM's small-scale soy dairy equipment to safely procure inputs, produce soy foods and distribute and sell foods in a manner that maintains ultimate safety in a COVID-19 context. **WE ENCOURAGE ALL OF OUR PARTNERS AND ENTREPRENEURS TO CAREFULLY READ AND IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATIONS.** A related FAO Bulletin, published in 2020: *Social Protection and COVID-19 response in rural areas*, is accessible here: <http://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/ca8561en>.

Other responses in our programming will include:

- Development of training aids which will facilitate remote training from MM staff, rather than in-person training
- Development of training guidelines that will enable local trainers to train entrepreneurs while practicing physical distancing and related hygiene practice
- Emphasis during training of distancing and hygiene practices to maintain health and safety wrt COVID-19, including appropriate use of mask, gloves, soap and bleach
- Provision of equipment and remote training to trainers to answer situations where other commodity value chains / supply chains have been disrupted: as local processing of soyfoods requires only soybeans, sugar and charcoal / firewood **AND NO OTHER INPUTS, it is much simpler and more robust than most other value chains that supply protein-rich food.**

As the COVID-19 public health crisis will inevitably lead to a livelihoods crisis in developing regions, already evident in India and some African countries, and a deeper hunger crisis,

Malnutrition Matters believes that a massive stimulus response will be necessary in the coming weeks to address these large-scale secondary crises. Failure to implement such a stimulus will likely result in hundreds of millions being added to the ranks of the food insecure. The following excerpt from an article that was originally published on [www.foodtank.com](http://www.foodtank.com) expresses Malnutrition Matters' position on the needed post-COVID policy response.

“COVID-19 has hit hard, fast and everywhere. It is, above all, a public health crisis and addressing it as such is today's most critical challenge. But already the links to other crises are emerging, and none is as urgent as the pending hunger crisis.

Just over 10 years ago, global food security suffered a huge shock when prices of staples like wheat, rice, and maize entered a prolonged period of high and volatile prices. On the heels of the food price crisis came the 2008 financial crisis and a global recession. Meanwhile, the slower-acting but no less devastating effects of climate change continued unabated, associated with more frequent and intense floods, droughts, and extreme weather events. The combined effects of conflict, climate change, and economic recession have led to [a steady rise](#) in hunger worldwide over the past three years, after decades of abatement.

For most of the world, there is no public provision for lost income, and for far too many, each day's income is needed for that day's food.

Last year, a global economic slowdown was one of the main reasons an additional 20 million people were added to the hunger count. Hunger rose not because there was a shortage of food, but because people couldn't afford to buy it.

... we need a new type of public investment in the global food system, not just a return to the status quo. This means investing in food systems that not only support stable and sufficient calorie supplies but also improved nutrition, micronutrient availability, and reverses the rise in obesity and non-communicable diseases.

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It means both reducing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and building resilient rural communities that can cope with the effects of climate change. And it means improving the income and livelihoods of small-scale producers, reducing their vulnerability to global shocks and crises.

Saving lives is paramount in a pandemic. But as governments take an unprecedented role in economies around the world, **it is timely to remember that human health depends not just on protection from a virus, but also access to a sufficient and nutritious diet.** Our public response must be bold and encompassing to match the scale of the challenge facing us all.”

The full article is available here:

<https://foodtank.com/news/2020/04/we-need-a-global-stimulus-package-to-avoid-a-covid-19-hunger-crisis/>