**Good Food in Greenwich Food Poverty Action Plan**

**Background**

Food poverty is a long-standing problem that partners have worked hard to address in Greenwich for many years. There is increasing national and London-level evidence of rising levels of food poverty. Foodbank use is a high profile issue and Trussell Trust data documents the increase in numbers of people experiencing food poverty at a crisis level[[1]](#footnote-1). Less evident is the long-term household food insecurity believed to be experienced by many more people, also documented by a number of recent national reports[[2]](#footnote-2) [[3]](#footnote-3) [[4]](#footnote-4).

In 2015, the *Good Food in Greenwich[[5]](#footnote-5)* Food Poverty Subgroup took the decision to evaluate the local situation in order to have a firm basis from which to develop further strategic action. A needs assessment was undertaken to investigate how food poverty is experienced in Greenwich and to identify potential local-level solutions.

Food poverty can be defined as *the inability for individuals to afford, or to have access to, foods that make up a healthy diet in ways that are socially acceptable to them*. This could include:

* Having limited money for food after paying for other household expenses;
* Living in areas where food choice is restricted by local availability and lack of transport;
* Lacking knowledge, skills, cooking equipment or space necessary to prepare healthy meals.

The definition we have used includes both crisis level food poverty and longer-term food insecurity. Food insecurity can be defined as:

The inability to acquire or consume adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so[[6]](#footnote-6).

The diagram on the following page shows the different levels of food insecurity, ranging from mild through to severe food insecurity[[7]](#footnote-7).

Figure 1. Levels of food insecurity on a scale of increasing severity



**Findings of the Greenwich Food Poverty Needs Assessment**

Findings of the needs assessment reflect those of national and London-level research, confirming that food poverty in Greenwich is a significant issue that has increased in recent years and is predicted to grow worse. Statistics suggest that large numbers of adults and children living in low income households in Greenwich are at risk of food poverty. As lower income groups tend to have poorer diets, with fruit and vegetable and fibre intakes below national recommended levels, low intakes of some vitamins and minerals and high sugar intake, these residents are likely to be experiencing compromised nutritional intakes that may put their health at risk. Those identified as being particularly vulnerable include; low income families with young children, the homeless and those living in poor housing, recently arrived migrants, the elderly, those with mental health problems and drug and alcohol users.

A wide range of factors causing food poverty were identified. These factors do not usually occur in isolation and were reported to combine, producing highly complex and stressful situations that are hard to manage or resolve. Financial problems were found to contribute most significantly to food poverty, as being on a low income reduces the amount of money available for food. This is compounded by a lack of food-related knowledge and skills, which restricts the ability to purchase the foods required for a healthy diet on a limited budget. Physical access is also a problem. A number of deprived areas of the borough have been identified where it is hard to access affordable and healthy foods but where unhealthy foods are readily available to local residents. The impacts of these problems were seen to cross the full spectrum of food insecurity, ranging from mild to severe food insecurity.

**Recommendations of** **the** **Greenwich Food Poverty Needs Assessment**

The findings and recommendations from this report will be used to inform a number of strategic plans for the borough, including those focusing on anti-poverty and welfare reform, the twin priorities of obesity prevention and improving mental wellbeing under the Greenwich Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and the wider work to address health inequalities in the borough.

The needs assessment indicates that, whilst a wide range of activities are taking place to address food poverty in Greenwich, there is still a great deal more to be done. A full set of recommendations for action are presented on pages 83-85 of the report and include:

* Reviewing and updating the existing *Good Food in Greenwich* Food Poverty Action Plan;
* Ensuring that advice and support services for people experiencing food poverty are widely publicised and available to those with greatest needs;
* Maximising opportunities for low income households to improve their financial situation and manage conflicting demands on income;
* Improving access to affordable, healthy food in deprived neighbourhoods as part of wider social regeneration and community development in the borough;
* Supporting community meals provision to vulnerable groups;
* Maximising services that support the development of food-related knowledge and practical life skills;
* Annual monitoring of food poverty levels in Greenwich.

These recommendations have been used to structure the Greenwich Food Poverty Action Plan.

**Framework for GFiG Food Poverty Action Plan**

Linking advice & support services with people experiencing food poverty

Meals for vulnerable groups

Actions for 2017-18 in blue

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| **Aim 1: To ensure advice and support services for people experiencing food poverty are widely publicised and available to those with greatest needs** |
| Objectives & actions | Outputs & outcomes | Lead | Partners | Timescale |
| Objective 1 Develop training and resources for front-line staff in community centres and services to raise awareness of food poverty and ways it can be addressed in the borough |  | NN |  | Short term/ongoing |
| 1.1.1 To develop and deliver briefings to raise awareness of food poverty and support services  | Front-line staff have increased awareness of food poverty and support services and are able to signpost users effectively | NN |  | Ongoing  |
| 1.1.2 To deliver food poverty briefing for Health & Wellbeing Line staff and explore ways food poverty can be detected during calls and signposting opportunities | Front-line staff have increased awareness of food poverty, support services and are able to signpost users effectively | NN | CACT | Training June 2017Ongoing |
| 1.1.3 To develop and pilot a signposting sheet for practitioners  | Signposting form created & distributed (see Excel spreadsheet)Front-line staff have increased awareness of food poverty, support services and are able to signpost users effectively | NN | CACT, GFB, LW Coaches | April 2018  |
| 1.1.4 To promote and support the roll-out of MEOC training to front-line staff and volunteers | Front-line staff have increased awareness of food poverty, support services and are able to signpost users effectively | NN & SS | GFB, GAVS | Ongoing  |
| 1.1.5 To meet with the Greenwich Advice Network and GAVS to develop further ideas for action to address food poverty in partnership with members of the network | Input to action plan from CVS organisations/joint actions planned | NN |  | Dec 2017 |
| Objective 2 Explore ways the Greenwich Community Directory and Early Help Directory can be used to identify support services for people experiencing food poverty as part of the wider implementation of the borough’s ‘plan for prevention’ |  | NN |  | Ongoing |
| 1.2.1 To ensure food poverty is addressed in the Wellbeing Planner of the GCD, adding an ‘I statement’, support services and top tips | Members of public have access to advice & support to deal with causes of food insecurity | NN & RL |  |  |
| 1.2.2 To explore ways the GCD can address food poverty more generally e.g. having a separate section | Members of public have access to advice & support to deal with causes of food insecurity | NN | RL, Steve Ollier |  |
| 1.2.3 To meet with Early Help to explore ways the Directory can accommodate advice and support with food poverty | Members of public have access to advice & support to deal with causes of food insecurity | NN |  |  |
| 1.2.4 To meet with Oxleas to explore ways the Families Information page of their website can accommodate advice and support with food poverty | Members of public have access to advice & support to deal with causes of food insecurity | NN |  |  |
| Objective 3 Explore ways to make support services more accessible to those in need across the borough. For example, using adviser-led drop-ins at ‘community hubs’ such as community centres, schools, children’s centres and health centres |  | JC |  |  |
| 1.3.1 To deliver joint fuel and food poverty sessions at Children’s Centre fruit and veg stalls | Pilot session delivered developed and delivered in 1 centreIncreased public awareness of money saving advice and support (food & fuel) | SELCE, NN, GCDA, GGCC  |  |  |
| 1.3.2 To pilot Live Well Coach session at Greenwich Food Welcome Centre in Eltham | 6-week pilot at Eltham Welcome CentreBetter signposting and support for Foodbank users | GFB, SP/ST |  |  |
| 1.3.3 To establish an advisory group to develop a joint funding proposal for a Greenwich Food Bank Live Well initiative  | Better signposting and support for Foodbank users |  |  |  |
| Objective 4 To engage with communities in areas of high deprivation with poor food access to identify need and plan action to address this need |  | AS |  |  |
| 1.4.1 To develop and deliver community action planning workshops in priority areas identified by the FPNA, including Well Communities areas | 10 sessions deliveredInput to action plan from local communities/joint actions planned | NN | GCDA, KAI, Ajoda, Positive Steps,  | Jan 19 |
| 1.4.2 To recruit, train and support Community Food Champions to support community-based action | A team of local champions established and meeting regularly.Increased awareness of food insecurity and support available disseminated in priority communities | NN/GCDA |  |  |
| 1.4.3 To develop and support the implementation and evaluation of action plans in those areas | Community action planned and implementedBetter support for people experiencing food poverty at local level |  |  |  |

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| **Aim 2: To maximise opportunities for low income households to improve their financial situation and manage conflicting demands on income.**  |
| Objectives & actions | Outputs & outcomes | Lead | Partners | Timescale |
| Objective 1 To address the causes of food poverty by targeting specialist social welfare advice to Greenwich residents experiencing food poverty by funding and expanding the capacity of the local advice sector. |  | JC |  |  |
| 2.1.1 To work with the RBG Welfare Rights Service and other advice and support agencies to maximise benefit uptake and reduce delays and errors that may exacerbate food poverty | Residents with more financial security |  |  |  |
| 2.1.2 Provision of training for advice and support agencies by WRS | Better signposting to WRSResidents with more financial security | WRS |  |  |
| 2.1.3 Wider promotion of the WRS and other advice and support agencies via the Greenwich Community Directory and signposting sheet for front-line community staff | Better signposting to WRSResidents with more financial security | All |  |  |
| Objective 2 Building upon work to increase London Living Wage, particularly targeting small local businesses and the service sector |  | JC |  |  |
| 2.2.1 To run a workshop with key partners to explore way to address this | Workshop developed & deliveredA plan developed Increased LLW employment available in Greenwich |  |  |  |
| Objective 3 Maximising breastfeeding rates  |  | CB |  |  |
| 2.3.1 To maintain UNICEF Baby-Friendly accreditation | Higher rates of breastfeeding initiation and duration |  |  |  |
| Objective 4 Maximising uptake of Healthy Start vouchers  |  | CB |  |  |
| 2.4.1 0-19 Health Visiting contract contains a KPI on numbers of Healthy Start registration forms signed | Increased uptake of HStFamilies with more money available for food | DP |  |  |
| 2.4.2 Welfare Rights Service to send out registration forms | Increased uptake of HStFamilies with more money available for food | WRS |  |  |
| 2.4.3 Student project to include research into parents’ knowledge and attitudes to Healthy Start in one Children’s Centre in South of borough and recruitment of local retailers | Report of findings & recommendations for increasing uptake | DDL & NN | Storkway/Alderwood/Vista Fields? |  |
| Objective 5 Maximising uptake of free school meals |  |  |  |  |
| 2.5.1 To conduct research to establish the reasons for the shortfall in uptake and inform strategies to increase uptake | Student project? | CH  |  |  |
| 2.5.2 To lobby for introduction of universal FSM in Greenwich |  | All |  |  |
| Objective 6 Expanding provision of energy advice and support to more deprived local communities to reduce fuel poverty |  | JC |  |  |
| 2.6.1 Pilot SELCE Energy Champions with Central Children’s Centres | Residents saving money on energy bills | SELCE |  | Ends Nov 2017 |
| 2.6.2 Deliver food poverty and saving money on food bills training to Energy Champions  | Energy Champions have increased awareness of food poverty and money saving tips | NN |  | July 2017 |
| 2.6.3 Add food poverty question/s to Energy Champions’ home visit script and develop signposting sheet | Energy Champions have increased awareness of food poverty, support services and are able to signpost users effectively | NN |  |  |
| 2.6.4 The Stay Warm Stay Safe campaign includes advice on energy efficiency AND food poverty | Residents save money on food and fuel bills | NN | BL |  |
| 2.6.5 Explore potential for the Fire Safe & Well home visits to include food poverty question/s and signposting to support services | Advisers have increased awareness of food poverty, support services and are able to signpost users effectively | NN | BL |  |

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| **Aim 3: To support and coordinate a range of initiatives to make healthier food available in more deprived neighbourhoods** |
| Objectives & actions | Outputs & outcomes | Lead | Partners | Timescale |
| Objective 1 Expanding provision of Healthy Start registered fruit and veg stalls to children's centres and/or community centres in areas of poor food access |  | GCDA/CH |  |  |
| 3.1.1 Cost current model of provision | Create business case and access funding | LLC |  | May 2017 |
| 3.1.2 Apply for Section 106 funding for roll-out of stalls to centres in other priority areas | Residents have improved access to affordable fruit and veg and consumption increasesIncreased use of HSt vouchers for fruit & veg | CH | Planning |  |
| Objective 2 Encouraging local retailers to register with Healthy Start |  | CB |  |  |
| 3.2.1 Recruitment of local retailers in South of borough | Increased use of HSt vouchers means more money for food | DDL |  |  |
| 3.2.2 Working with Trading Standards to increase the numbers of Healthy Start registered retailers, including Woolwich Market traders | Increased use of HSt vouchers for fruit & veg | DDL & NT | Gerard Anthony  |  |
| Objective 3 Exploring the concept of and opportunities for healthier convenience stores |  | GCDA/CH |  |  |
| 3.3.1 Update GFiG Food Poverty Subgroup on regional level meetings with Symbol Group retails | Local plans informed by regional developments | CP |  |  |
| Objective 4 Expanding the healthier catering commitment to target outlets in deprived areas with highest concentrations of cheap takeaways, particularly in the vicinity of schools |  | GCDA/CH |  |  |
| 3.4.1 Identify outlets in priority areas | Increased availability of healthier food choices | NN & LLC | GCDA |  |
| 3.4.1 Update GFiG Food Poverty Subgroup on regional level discussions to identify, supply and promote healthier ingredients with suppliers | Local programme informed by regional developments | CP/LLC |  |  |
| Objective 5 Developing healthier food retail strategy for Greenwich, including business opportunities for local people using surplus food e.g. community cafes/kitchens |  | JC |  |  |
| 3.5.1 To run a workshop with key partners to explore way to address this, linking with the London Plan  | Key partners inform development of strategy | NN |  |  |
| 3.5.2 GFiG to lobby RBG to develop strategy | A strategy that results in improved access to healthy and affordable food in priority areas | GFiG |  |  |
| 3.5.3 To develop a street markets development plan for Greenwich | Improved access to affordable fruit and veg in priority areas | CP |  |  |
| 3.5.4 Identify shops owned by RBG and explore potential incentives for businesses offering a better range of healthy foods e.g. reduced business rates/rents business support | New food businesses/community food projects providing healthy and affordable food in priority areas | GCDA |  |  |
| Objective 6 To explore ways to maximise use of existing levers within planning regulations to improve healthier food retail in Greenwich |  | JC |  |  |
| 3.6.1 To meet with Planning to identify ways to encourage planning officers to follow existing regulations, including Supplementary Planning Guidance | Improved access to healthy and affordable food considered in all planning applications | JC  | AL, CM, BL, CP |  |
| 3.6.2 To compile evidence that can be used when responding to planning consultations | Improved access to healthy and affordable food considered in all planning applications | NN |  |  |
| Objective 7 To explore the potential for linking new developers with the Public Health commissioned *Good Food in Greenwich* Food Environments initiative, so that opportunities for healthier food retail can be explored during the early stages of planning new developments |  | JC | GCDA/CH |  |

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| **Aim 4: To support the provision of meals to vulnerable groups in Greenwich.** |
| Objectives & actions | Outputs & outcomes  | Lead | Partners | Timescale |
| Objective 1 Developing a borough-level infrastructure for surplus food redistribution. |  | GCDA/NN |  |  |
| 4.1.1 To assess the need for pantries/community shops to redistribute surplus in more deprived communities | Areas where residents would benefit identified | NN |  | Jan 18/ ongoing |
| 4.1.2 To develop and cost a model for surplus food redistribution | Model to support funding applications created | GCDA | NN | September 2018 |
| 4.1.2 To identify organisations to host and/or fund pantries/community shops | 3 pantries piloted | GCDA NN | Triangle Homes, Peabody,  | Dec 2018 |
| 4.1.3 To secure funding for capital (fridges & storage) | Panties up and running |  |  |  |
| Objective 2 Supporting community projects such as community lunch and breakfast clubs to access surplus food. |  |  |  |  |
| 4.2.1 To publicise FareShare to potential Community Members | Community projects making savings on food costs | All |  |  |
| Objective 3 Expanding school breakfast club provision |  |  |  |  |
| 4.3.1 To meet with School Business Managers to establish levels of provision | Identify gaps in provision and plans to fill these | CH/EEA |  | April 18 |
| 4.3.2 To audit breakfast club provision in schools  | Identify gaps in provision and plans to fill these | CH/EEA |  |  |
| Objective 4 Expanding existing school holiday meal provision. |  |  |  |  |
| 4.4.1 To run a phase 2 pilot in 5 centres during summer 2017 | 6 weeks of provision x2 weekly in 5 centresX meals provided  | MT/GCDA | FareShare, Environmental Health, GLL, CACT, PH, GFiG volunteers | July – August 2017 |
| 4.4.2 To evaluate phase 2 and use the findings to secure longer-term funding | Evaluation report | KG | PH, GCDA, GLL, CACT | October 2017 |
| 4.4.3 To develop guidance on setting up and running a holiday scheme incorporating meals  |  | MT | KG, NN |  |
| 4.4.4 To meet with School Business Managers to establish levels of holiday activities provision in schools |  | NN |  | Dec 17 |
| To provide advice and support on holiday meal provision to organisations in priority areas | More holiday activity schemes providing food |  |  |  |
| To secure funding to mainstream meal provision as part of existing holiday provision for children and young people, including youth hubs, adventure playgrounds and school-based activity schemes | Fewer children experiencing food insecurity during school holidays |  |  |  |
| Objective 5 Expand community lunch club provision |  |  |  |  |
| 4.5.1 Explore community transport options | More isolated older residents able to attend community mealsReduced social isolationReduced malnutrition | Soc. Isol. Strat. Group? | GSPlus/VCG and others | May 2017 ongoing |
| 4.5.2 Compile list of community lunch clubs for publicity purposes (GCD, GFiG & Live Well websites) | Increased attendance levelsReduced social isolationReduced malnutrition |  |  |  |
| 4.5.3 Map venues with kitchens that can be used by communities | Increased provision of community meals |  |  |  |
| Objective 6 Exploring ways that the Greenwich Meals on Wheels service can identify isolated older people and those at risk of malnutrition and develop and provide enhanced support for these individuals. |  | Soc. Isol. Strat. Group? |  |  |
| 4.5.1 Meet with AOPS Meals in Wheels commissioner to explore potential for a new service model | Reduced social isolationReduced malnutrition | NN |  | May 2017 |
| 4.5.2 Arrange visit to Camden to learn from their pilot of the Hertfordshire model | Identify ways to improve Greenwich meals on wheels service | NN | Sustain, GSPlus, Jason McCullock, GCDA |  |

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| **Aim 5: To provide services that support the development of food-related knowledge and practical life skills to those likely to experience food poverty and those providing care and support to them** |
| Objectives & actions | Outputs& outcomes | Lead | Partners | Timescale |
| Objective 1 To provide further targeted cooking and budgeting skills training to vulnerable groups identified in this report, including families on low income, young people leaving care, people in recovery from drug and alcohol addiction and those with mental ill health |  | GCDA/CB |  |  |
| 5.1.1 Develop antenatal and early years provision | Families cooking more meals from scratchImproved nutrition & reduced food insecurity | GCDA | AH |  |
| 5.1.2 Pilot Families First cookery club and Xplore programme | Families cooking more meals from scratchImproved nutrition & reduced food insecurity | GCDA, Claire Devlin | Avery Hill Youth Club | August 2017 |
| 5.1.3 Explore potential for food-related sessions in libraries | Increased awareness of ways to eat well on a budgetSignposting to cookery clubs & related services | NN | GLL, GCDA |  |
| 5.1.4 Identify food-related sessions to deliver on the GCDA stall at Woolwich Market | Increased awareness of ways to eat well on a budgetSignposting to cookery clubs & related services |  |  |  |
| Objective 2 To explore opportunities to provide practical healthy eating and cookery training for carers of older adults, people with learning disabilities and those with mental health problems |  |  |  |  |
| 5.2.1 To establish current level of malnutrition training and opportunities for additional training and support for RBG commissioned carers, including guidance for carers | Increased early identification & preventions of malnutrition  | NN | AOPS (JH),  |  |
| 5.2.2 Develop a model for a Homecare Support Pool  | Better support for housebound residentsReduced malnutrition | NN | AOPS (JH), GCC/GIV Network, Age UK |  |
| 5.2.5 Explore potential for targeted provision of cookery clubs  | Increased awareness of ways to eat well on a budgetImproved nutrition & reduced food insecurity |  |  |  |
| 5.2.4 Greenwich Carers’ Centre to distribute PDF of A Taste of Health cookery book or develop ‘Meals in Minutes’ booklet? | Increased awareness of ways to eat well on a budgetImproved nutrition & reduced food insecurity |  |  |  |
| Objective 3 To identify opportunities to teach more practical cookery and budgeting in schools and children’s centres |  |  |  |  |
| 5.3.1 To promote accredited Healthy Eating and Running a Cookery Club training to schools and children’s centres | Staff have knowledge and skills to deliver healthy eating and cookery sessionsIncreased provision of cookery clubs for families, children and young people | All |  |  |
| 5.3.2 Requirement for annual training updates for children’s centres to be added into Healthy Early Years Framework audit | Staff have knowledge and skills to deliver healthy eating and cookery sessions | AH |  |  |
| 5.3.3 To promote Food For Life to schools | Staff have knowledge and skills to deliver healthy eating and cookery sessionsMore cooking in schools | All |  |  |

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| **Aim 6: To ensure adequate cooking, storage and dining facilities in all Greenwich residential accommodation, particularly in deprived areas** |
| Objectives & actions | Outputs & outcomes | Lead | Partners | Timescale |
| Objective1 To create a checklist of food storage, cooking & dining facilities for HMOs Licencing Scheme |  |  |  |  |
| 6.1.1 Food-related recommendations provided in the Health Impact Assessment of the new HMO Licencing Scheme | A licencing scheme that requires landlords to provide adequate storage, cooking & dining facilities |  |  |  |
| 6.1.2 To adopt recommendations in the revised version of the HMO Licencing Scheme | Better facilities in HMOs |  |  |  |
| Objective 2 Identify ways to extend these requirements to other private rented accommodation |  |  |  |  |

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| **Aim 7: To ensure adequate emergency food aid provision across the borough** |
| Objectives & actions | Outputs & outcomes | Lead | Partners | Timescale |
| Objective1  |  |  |  |  |
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| **Aim 8: To monitor and evaluate work to alleviate food poverty in Greenwich** |
| Objectives & actions | Outputs & outcomes | Lead | Partners | Timescale |
| Objective 1 To monitor levels of food poverty annually, using measures identified in the FPNA |  |  |  | Ongoing/annual |
| 7.1.1 Food Poverty Subgroup to review data annually to estimate levels of food poverty in Greenwich and add new indicators as appropriate |  |  |  |  |
| 7.1.2 Evaluating action plan in light of data  |  |  |  |  |
| Objective 2 Progress against the FPAP will be fed back to the Health and Wellbeing (H&WB) Board as part of the wider implementation of the H&WB Strategy for Greenwich |  |  |  |  |
| 7.2.1 |  |  |  |  |
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1. <https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Hungry for Change. Fabian Commission on Food and Poverty. 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Feeding Britain – A Strategy for Zero Hunger* (2014) Report of the All-Party Parliamentary Inquiry into Hunger in the United Kingdom. 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Cooper N, Purcell S, Jackson R. Below the Breadline: The relentless rise of food poverty in Britain. Church Action on Poverty, Oxfam GB and Trussell Trust. 2014. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Good Food in Greenwich* is an alliance of organisations and individuals working together to**make food fairer, healthier and more sustainable in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.** [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Dowler E, Turner S, Dobson B. Poverty Bites - Food Health and Poor Families. 2001. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. <http://www.fao.org/in-action/voices-of-the-hungry/fies/en/> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)