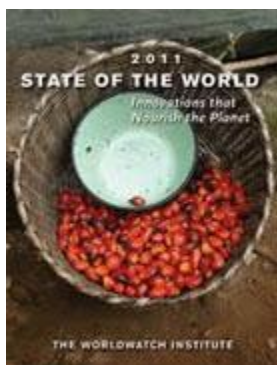


April 2011



The Worldwatch Institute has taken as its theme for this year's volume the topic of worldwide hunger, with a host of contributors offering simple solutions to the problems of delivery, production, and waste of food. The issue, as is made clear in the foreword by Olivier De Schutter, is not a *lack* of food, as most of us would have assumed. This opening statement from [State of the World 2011](#) defines the focus of the Worldwatch Institute's latest report. "We live in a world in which we produce more food than ever before and in which the hungry have never been as many."

Food is plentiful, yet a child dies of malnutrition every six seconds. It seems that, in our single-minded efforts to increase yield, we've overlooked the more important work of making food accessible.

Contributors emphasize the importance of sustainable agriculture and an efficient cooperation from governments and suppliers, as well as encouraging implementation of promising innovations (or retro-innovations) in farming. It is their contention that everyone on this planet could eat and eat well with only a few changes to our food distribution system. It isn't large sums of money or improvements in technology that are needed; sustainable, local, place-appropriate agricultural methods could make a forceful and positive change immediately, with greater yields in each successive year. "By empowering small farmers – particularly women... with simple but transformative innovations," writes Worldwatch Institute President Christopher Flavin, "rapid and productive change is possible."

Communities invested and involved in the process of food production are the key to a successful transition. "Farmers need to be in the forefront in development identifying their needs, assets ... solutions." This sounds so simple, so starry-eyed idealistic, but the authors are not pulling ideas from the clouds. [State of the World 2011](#) provides numerous case studies in which a locally-driven, sustainable approach to food production has been successful, such as

- the One Acre Fund, which allows farmers in Africa to receive an in-kind loan of seed and fertilizer as well as training in land preparation, planting, harvesting, and crop storage.
- The Institute for Sustainable Development program in Ethiopia, which helps farmers learn improved irrigation techniques and effective alternatives to chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- Heifer International in Rwanda, a country still recovering from devastating civil war and genocide, which offers cows along with training to help farmers provide milk for consumption and manure for fertilizing vegetable plots.

These are but a few of the many hopeful and inspiring stories that highlight the sensible and effective approach advocated by the Worldwatch Institute. Contributors Brian Halweil and Danielle Nierenberg suggest a new way to measure success in the fight against hunger; Serena Milano addresses the need for local biodiversity; and Dianne Forte, Royce Gloria Androa, and Marie-Ange Binagwaho collaborate on a chapter that discusses the importance of drawing on the agricultural wisdom and experience of women.

What we need now is a cohesive movement to tackle food production and delivery in a workable manner, rather than operating in a business-as-usual mode that never has and never will address the needs of vast portions of the world's population. [State of the World 2011](#) is a positive and inspiring revelation that gives us a new strategy for strengthening what is arguably the foundation of most of the world's biggest problems.