



# SUMMARY 2023 GLOBAL HUNGER INDEX LAUNCH

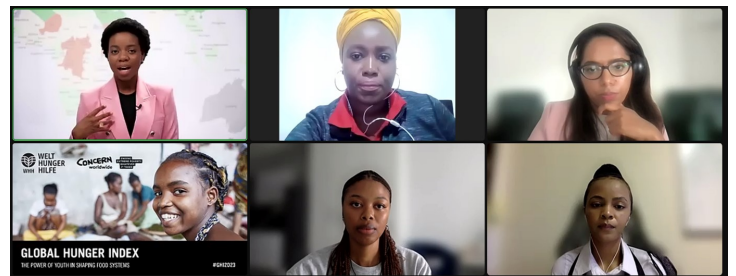
## 12 October 2023

The 2023 GHI report shows that some countries have made significant headway in reducing hunger, but in the face of overlapping crises, little progress has been made on a global scale since 2015: hunger remains *serious* or *alarming* in 43 countries. This stagnation largely reflects the current situation of polycrisis—that is, the combined effects of multiple crises. These include the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine war, economic stagnation, the impacts of climate change, and new and protracted conflicts in many countries.

Young people, especially those living in low- and middle-income countries, are disproportionately affected by these crises. Youth will inherit food systems that are unable to meet the needs of people and the planet, but their participation in making decisions that will affect their future is limited. At the same time, youth have the potential to drive innovations to achieve inclusive, sustainable food systems. Therefore, the 2023 Global Hunger Index (GHI) calls for engaging youth in a meaningful way, investing in their capacity to shape food systems—well beyond 2030—and ensuring that food systems provide attractive livelihoods for young people.

At this year's GHI launch event, Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe (WHH) invited a panel of four distinguished young female speakers to discuss youth and food systems. The speakers were **Sefu Sanni**, Youth Constituency Co-Coordinator of Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSIPM), World March of Women, **Pramisha Thapaliya**, Head of Policy, World Food Forum, **Wendy Geza**, Assistant Researcher, Centre for Transformative Agricultural and Food Systems, University of KwaZulu-Natal, **Mendy Ndlovu**, PhD Candidate, Centre for Transformative Agricultural and Food Systems, University of KwaZulu-Natal. The event was moderated by **Christine Mhundwa**, Deutsche Welle. The

panelists provided insights into the challenges of food insecurity and youth participation in the global context.



### THEY HIGHLIGHTED...

- ...the pivotal role of youth in agri-food systems and the importance of investing in their education and inclusion in policy processes to address food insecurity effectively.
- ...the need for global cooperation, representation from a diversity of youth, and inclusivity in transforming food systems and addressing issues like inequality and climate change.
- ...the importance of accountability, data-driven decision-making, and collaborative multistakeholder partnerships to combat food insecurity and improve the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

The two authors of this year's GHI essay, Wendy and Mendy, began by sharing their insights and experiences from their research on the ground in South Africa.

**Wendy** emphasized the importance of youth participation and empowerment in agri-food systems in South Africa. Her research shows that support for young people has focused mainly on primary agriculture and often excluded support for other areas like microbiology and

food technology. She stressed the need to expand young people's involvement in policy processes so they can help tailor support to their specific needs. **Mendy**, with an environmental sciences background, spoke about building capacities in vulnerable communities and the significance of generating evidence to inform policies.

**Sefu** and **Pramisha**, who have served as youth representatives in various global policy fora, dived deeper into the barriers hindering youth participation in food security and the entry points for youth at various governance levels. Sefu highlighted the lack of access to land, resources, and water for many young people and underscored the importance of addressing the root causes of poverty and hunger, focusing on inclusivity, and advocating for the most affected. She stressed the need for multisectoral approaches that address the intersectionality of food security and human rights. Pramisha shared her experiences with global activism and emphasized the need for more capacity-building and institutional support for young people. Often young people already do transformative work on the ground, but they may lack knowledge on how to connect with public institutions to scale up their ideas. It is important to work from the bottom up and to make space for young voices at all levels.

### Practical Ways to Enhance Youth Participation

The panelists offered several practical recommendations for enhancing youth participation, including creating honest and ethical spaces for dialogue and decision-making, investing in young people's education and skill development, and supporting youth activities and initiatives. Efforts to include youth in a meaningful way should take account of their diversity, address issues of discrimination, and ensure their access to resources. Institutional barriers to youth engagement in policymaking need to be removed, and policies need to adopt a human- and environment-centric approach. Responding to questions from the audience, Sefu discussed the role of the Global North in facilitating food system transformation in the Global South. She emphasized the importance of reducing carbon emissions, ending industrial agriculture, and sharing knowledge and technology. Sefu called for more equality in political and global responses, attention to visa issues, and greater collaboration in seeking solutions. Working at the policy level, Pramisha acknowledged the challenge of policy implementation in the face of corruption and stressed the importance of accountability and representation of marginalized groups. She urged young people to hold decision-makers accountable for the policies they implement.

### Empowering Youth Participation and Visions for Future Food Systems

To meaningfully rethink food systems to make agriculture more appealing to young people, it is important to understand their diversity and socioeconomic contexts. Wendy highlighted the need to collect data on young people's experiences in the food system and advocated for multistakeholder partnerships to address the diverse challenges faced by youth. It is key to include youth in decision-making processes so that the solutions adopted reflect young people's realities and aspirations, she noted. Sefu emphasized the innovation and diversity of young people, advocating for their representation at all levels and for mentoring. Both emphasized investing in human capacities, like skills and knowledge and infrastructure development. Given the complex nature of food systems, a multisectoral, inclusive approach is vital.

### Next Steps and Closing Remarks

In their closing remarks, Mendy highlighted the potential of youth to transform failing food systems with innovative ideas. Pramisha called for collaboration, environmentally friendly approaches, and creating alliances between relevant food systems stakeholders from the local to the global level. Wendy emphasized the meaningful impact of multistakeholder partnerships on young people's livelihoods. Sefu stressed the need for coherence between short-term and long-term responses, especially in the face of global transitions and climate change.

In conclusion, the 2023 Global Hunger Index launch highlighted the critical issues of food insecurity, youth participation, and the role of various stakeholders in transforming food systems for a better future. The panelists' insights and recommendations provide a roadmap for addressing these challenges on a global scale.



“Nothing about us without us! Young people must be involved in making decisions that will affect their future.”

**GHI-Essay Authors**  
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