

EAST AFRICA FOOD CRISIS 2011

In Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia and Uganda nearly 11 million people are struggling to survive as this region (also known as the Horn of Africa) is affected by drought, rising food prices and conflict in Somalia. This is the worst drought in 60 years for the region.

Over 2 million children (under 5) are severely malnourished. This means that these children haven't had enough food to eat, and when they do eat, their diet isn't nutritionally balanced. Some children are so severely malnourished that their bodies are no longer able to digest normal food, so unless they receive medical help and special therapeutic food, they in danger of dying. Children who are malnourished are also at greater risk of dying from diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and pneumonia.



Many families in drought-affected areas are leaving their homes and making the journey to refugee camps in order to receive food and medical assistance. However the refugee camps in Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia are fast becoming overcrowded as thousands of people arrive every day.

Your turn to think: Have you ever experienced drought, or not had access to water or food? How did you feel in this situation? How do you think the drought is affecting children's lives in East Africa? Why do people need to leave their homes and travel to refugee camps?

THE DEADLY CYCLE OF SOMALIA'S FOOD CRISIS



Children under five are most affected by malnutrition.

The damaging cycle of malnutrition in such circumstances often starts from the time a woman is pregnant. Without a source of essential nutrients themselves, malnourished mothers aren't able to pass these onto their growing babies. Babies are born malnourished, and mothers' bodies often aren't able to produce enough milk to adequately feed them.

Out of desperation, mothers try find whatever they can to feed their hungry babies; water or maize (corn) or camel milk. This poor diet can soon lead to severe malnutrition, which if not

treated immediately can lead to death. This cycle contributes to one in every six children in Somalia dying before their fifth birthday – and the numbers are fast getting worse.

Your turn to think: Take a look at the picture of the children walking through a refugee camp in the region. What do you think it would be like living in a place like this? What do you think would happen in a day of this girl's life? How is it different from your life?

WHAT IS UNICEF DOING TO HELP?

UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Fund and it is our job to help affected children and their families.

UNICEF is working in Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia, providing therapeutic food, access to safe water and sanitation as well as in preventing the spread of killer diseases including measles through vaccination campaigns.