

THE SKIPPING MEALS REPORT

A warning to all concerned about refugees, and those who live in poverty.

Mishka Jambor, a teacher based in NSW, frequently travels the world to teach some of the world's poorest children. Last year she went to the Buduburam Refugee Camp for Liberians in Ghana. She observed that people whom she interviewed were skipping meals and only cooking now and then.

It is not difficult to work out why this is happening, the Food and Agricultural Authority of the U.N. reports a world rise in food prices, their price index rose from 140 to 180 in 2007. this causes problems to those earning around 2 dollars a day. The FAO also reports 36 countries are in crisis requiring external assistance, 21 of them are in Africa. World Food stocks are reported to be well down on previous years and due to climate change, prospects are not good.

Cooking and boiling water is done with kerosene burners. They are not good on the lungs but are cheap and convenient. Kerosene is a light fraction of oil also used by aircraft and the price has now risen to \$107 per barrel and is predicted to double in price within 12 months. If the world is hit with a depression then the price will go down, but there will be even less money available for anyone.

The solar cooker is a more practical solution, there are many designs available, some are a DIY project made from cardboard and aluminum foil. These cookers were introduced to Ghana almost 2 decades ago but need much more publicity to really take hold.

All peoples need a basic minimum of food to stay healthy and must also be able to boil water and cook food to reduce those bugs which can be fatal especially in countries with inadequate medical services, and where people are all ready weakened by an inadequate diet.

Today there are millions of people starving to death across the world. Many have blamed the economic system. Up to date reasons include global climate change, peak oil, limited resources, especially water. The world is threatened by more droughts, overpopulation, less oil, all of which will precipitate financial crash.

Supporting the U.N. As of November 30, 2007, members' arrears to the Regular Budget topped \$735 million, of which the United States alone owed \$688 million (94% of the regular budget arrears). Many countries, including Australia have followed the United States lead, and reduced their contributions in recent decades. NGOs, Churches and other organisations need to bring pressure to bear on their governments to increase their U.N. contributions. They will find that it is more difficult to raise donations, and those donations will not go as far as they once did.

3rd world countries must learn how to develop their own country for the benefit of their people. They have already learned that international agreements are made in the interests of the "donor" country. Promises often don't materialise. They must work at improving their water supply and growing food designed for their location and their peoples need. They must encourage all their citizens to grow their own vegetables, provide "allotments" with police protection, as is done in UK, and promote solar cookers.

All peoples, everywhere have to learn how to reduce emission of CO2 to negligible amounts, how to develop alternative power, how to develop an economic system not dependent on unsustainable growth.

Failure will mean the destruction of our civilisation.

Citizens of more affluent countries should first check out the position of their indigenous peoples, those who are homeless, incapacitated and unemployed. (Put pressure on your representative in Parliament for action.) Then they must consider cutting their use of oil. It is the high demand for oil which is increasing the price which in turn affects the cost of insecticides, fertilizers, and all farming operations. Therefore we must go to work by bicycle, build smaller cars than electric cars. To charge electric cars we will need electric generators powered by Solar Towers, Wind, Tidal, Geo-thermal energy, etc. but also beware of sources which are too costly such as Nuclear Power. Bio-Fuels, now being developed in many countries, increase the price of grain, reduces the food acreage and in present circumstances should be regarded as a sin.

Bankers and Financiers should be aware that if we continue present systems then as the oil supply becomes too expensive and intermittent the whole system will collapse - the worst depression in history. Reforms are needed to introduce a new economy, one with less competition, less greed, less consumption, more akin to Keynes, with improvements to the commons, involving more people. Bankers should call conferences, examine the reforms available on Google and select reforms that help people rather than money.

All People Everywhere need to realise that this is a world crisis of immense proportions. Governments everywhere do not know what to do. They are afraid to offend the industrial giants who will soon collapse if the government themselves, take no action.

One simple thing we all can do, take this piece of paper to your newsagent or Library, duplicate and distribute widely.

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Dick Clifford