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Latin America's Lack of Food and Nutrition Security

Many regions in the world are secure with their food and nutrition security, but some are not. One of those regions is that of the urban areas in Latin America or commonly known as Central America and Mexico. Latin America consists of those countries of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. As you can see they are all Hispanic cultured countries and are all civilized, but they have long been in poverty because of its population growth, rapid urbanization, and gender and cultural discrimination. Latin America's population has been sky rocketing over the past few years as immigrants decide to settle further West. Along with that comes rapid urbanization because all the immigrants want cheap, affordable livings to accommodate to and average lifestyles to live by. One main key point is that the gender and cultural discrimination there is dangerously increasing because of the immigrants coming and not being accustomed to the Hispanic culture and their ways of living, so they react with discrimination against their culture and gender. The domestic policy in Latin America needs to be resolved, but first you need to know how Latin America food and nutritional security is insecure. Food and Nutrition insecurity can be dangerous and life threatening. It can cause a country to become uncivilized and can spread world epidemics. Malnutrition is a major contributor to food and nutrition insecurity. It counts for over a million casualties in Latin America every 2 years. Many people go hungry and starve to death, many others are homeless and can not get nutritional and well-balanced meals as those with money, and many have just enough money to pay the bills let alone being barely able to pay for a well-balanced and nutritional meal for their whole family. In the United States, we never think twice before we waste our food or eat something that is bad for us. Starvation is not the only thing contributing to the casualties, but there are many others. People can get really sick from eating the wrong thing, from not eating well-balanced meals, and from eating things that are unsanitary and decayed, which then lead to world wide epidemics and so on. As you will see, food and nutrition securities in the urban areas of Latin America are influenced by many harmful factors.

Latin American population is now very urbanized. Seventy-two out of one hundred people in the urban areas of Latin America were living in cities in 1990. It is estimated that the urban population could possibly reach up to eighty-three out of one hundred people in 2020, with that increasing number of urbanization, urban areas in Latin America face problems such as poverty, nutrition, and health, which is different from back when the population was mostly rural. Therefore, thirty-five out of one hundred people in the cities are or are going to be poor.

Changes in diet and lifestyles that are effectively affecting many people's health are being brought through the increasing population of the urban areas. More urban people are more prone to experience more stress, and to consume more drugs, such as alcohol, tobacco, and fatty processed foods, than those of people in rural areas are. Therefore, urban people are more likely to contract an increase in the risk of contracting severe and uncontagious illnesses such as cancer, stroke, or heart disease. Latin America's disease record is going from a highly common infectious diseases and malnutrition to that of an increasing occurrence of chronic diseases. Guatemala is one of the poorer countries to experience this, as well as higher income countries, such as Uruguay or Argentina.

Not only that, but Latin America is facing many definite demographic changes as well. All together the rates of malnutrition has steadied out or decreased over the past ten years, with the most improvement among children who are very malnourished. Malnourishment occurs from deficient irons, iodines, and the vitamin A, that remain high. From this, infant mortality and fertility rates have

decreased. Like wise, the population consumed of adults will grow more than any other age group in the next 25 years. With that, it will force policymakers and program administrators to focus on the health issues of the population that will be aging over the years. Also, it will help the population that is at a higher risk of malnutrition such as moms and kids.

As a result of demographic changes, raised urbanization, and the poverty levels that are at an all time high, under nutrition of developing and uncivilized countries helps with the spread of occurrence of chronic diseases that are most typical among industrialized societies. The urban population of the poor seems to suffer the worst from all sides. That is why, policies and programs must gear up together to contradict all sides of this problem. Nutrient security does not only mean that people can only eat enough calories and nutrients, just that their eating lifestyle be a well-balanced, a good quality one, and to use nutrients effectively because they must be well maintained and close if not free from disease. In order to do so, you must achieve nutrition security for the urban population of Latin America. Policymakers must also consider their part and consider all factors of it such as food security, disease prevention and control, health care, and household and community support for plenty of conditions to run smoothly.

Plenty of food is available and easy to get to in Latin America, especially in urban areas. The only problem to that is that many households lack the money to buy enough food at present costs to meet their families needs.

In plenty of countries, such as Bolivia, Guatemala, and Haiti, there are high levels of malnutritional kids. The rates for malnutrition in urban areas are usually lower than that of rural areas because of the bigger differences in malnutrition rates that happen among different socioeconomic groups within those areas. Research has shown that kids in the lowest-income households are two to nine times more likely to become malnourished than that of those in upper-income households.

Another factor that is also affected by food security is that of dietary quality. Even though the poor spend a bigger share of their money on food, they eat lesser calories and nutrients than those of richer families do because households substitute more expensive foods for lower-quality foods as their incomes increase. An example of this would be is if higher-incomed urban families tend to eat more fruits and vegetables rather than that of lower-income families. In conclusion that could be a factor for disease prevention.

Up to thirty-three out of one hundred average urban food budgets go to foods that are prepared outside of the house such as restaurants or buy things from street sellers. In these urban areas, procedures must be taken to be sure that these kinds of foods are nutritious and safe to eat.

Ninety-six out of one hundred of the population in Latin America is covered in Costa Rica while only thirty-four out of one hundred is covered in Bolivia. As you can see, Latin America's health care coverage varies from country to country. Therefore, their access to plenty of health care and sanitation services affect their nutrition security, especially when they are poor.

Today private income pays for more than half of all the health care. In the beginning of the 1980s, the government lowered health care by twenty-two out of one hundred in Latin America. It was lowered from nineteen dollars per person to fifteen per person from 1980 to 1990.

Most of the countries began to reform their health systems, reorganize more effective financing and management practices that soon after reduced the financial hassled of national governments. This process was gradual because of the surrounding communities that had limited experience in partaking in health care occurrences.

The urban population soon began to expand and grow. People were forced to the peripheral areas of the city where access to clean water and sanitation facilities became nonexistent. Overcrowding and the lack of housing added to the many health care problems that were already occurring. Usually only sixty-eight out of one hundred of the urban areas in Latin America had homes that had drinkable water and only forty-three out of one hundred people had services to get rid of their wastes or commonly know as a toilet and a plumbing system. Therefore poor hygiene and the contamination of foods were unacceptable and common.

With all the chaos of the combined health and sanitation issues going on in Latin American cities, the cities started to threaten to override the response of the capacities of the health systems. At the same time they had to pay attention to their nutritional deficiencies. Successful communities met their goals by serving as role models that had adapted to local conditions from other communities and raised up to many different levels of humanity.

Nutrition Security depends on people's ability to care for themselves and their kids. If you learn and become educated on the health issues of that, then it will help them become a crucial part in maintaining good health. Many people in Latin America are not well informed about the health matters surrounding them that affect their lives everyday. Health and nutrition education should be given a high necessity in everyone's life, no matter where you live.

As the labor force grows among the widespread of women who partake in that, they may better be able to control resources within the home, which will increase their kid's nutrition, health, and education. They may spend less time on direct childcare that will result in negative effects on the health and nutrition of kids. The availability of local public and private organizations that promote the well being of kids and provides plenty of care that is vitally importance.

Also, community organizations can help and encourage food security. In urban areas such as Argentina, Mexico, and Peru public dining rooms offer food services. Poor and pregnant and lactating women with little kids can also attend these special feeding programs.

Latin America faces many severe challenges about the concept of urban nutrition security. Some of those challenges are those of: inadequate quality and quantity of urban diets; members of a household such as pregnant or lactating women with little kids are more easily drawn to the effects of a poor diet than others; chronic diseases and obesity are often existing with the other concept with an infectious disease and an undernourished diet in a poor urban household; the health systems seem to focus on cures rather than preventing something or under serving the poor; many of the urban population that is poor has limited access to clean water, sanitation and sewerage services, and plenty of housing room; and that it also has little information about how to improve health and nutrition.

In order to achieve those things and that of nutritional security in urban areas, local capabilities must become stronger and their resources need to become available at the household, community, or institutional levels must be envisioned. The actions they could take to achieve that is to: educate the public about health, nutrition, and hygiene; increase local participation in activities to improve their health, food, and nutrition security; mobilize local researchers to improve the design and implementation of activities to promote food, health, and nutrition security; and improve the analysis, evaluation, and research in health and nutrition by strengthening urban data collection systems.

By paying special attention to the way malnutrition interacts with health and involving individuals and a community in developing a new local level network for provision of care. Latin American cities can make a great amount of progress toward the extinction of malnutrition and food insecurity by the year of 2020.

There are economically developed countries that greatly benefit from the moderation of food science. They can be protected from food contamination, have access to a variety of great food, and preparing does not take them that much time at all. The poor in these developing countries enjoy the few benefits of food science. Their diets are often nutritionally deficient and they love to spend hours preparing and processing their food. They even search for wood to cook it on.

World hunger and poverty will require the vast development of each low-income country from a broad spectrum of technology based from the sciences. It will vary from improving cropping systems for farmers to small labor-intensive enterprises to a nationwide transportation and communications systems with power grids and other distribution and marketing capabilities. In other words it will go from small and beautiful to big and beautiful. Forceful and assertive action through a combination of commodities such as campaigns, development efforts, and agencies offer the outcome for the end for both hunger and poverty in Latin American urban areas.

The growing of agricultural, the lasting supply that is left of the natural resources, and the poverty that takes place in the Latin American hillside regions are under some major renovations to resolve their problems they have with each. Some of the ideas they have thought of to try to level with these problems are to: overlook the current problem from the regards of the growing of agriculture, the lasting supply that is left of the natural resources, and the issue of poverty; examine the development of the hillside regions; suggest some ideas the will help resolve these issues; develop a priority list for research that will promote the lasting development of the hillside in Latin America; take action to activate national and international research; and promote interaction among all the participants of this issue.

One of those major programs that assist in that, is that of the United States Agency for International Development or commonly known as the USAID. This program mostly assists in Honduras. Their goal is to reach a more democratic and influential region that will share a lot of the benefits of the trade-led growth to be shared among their citizens. They plan to help and assist Honduras with their economic growth, environmental and disaster catastrophes, their health among their families, their education, and their democracy.

The USAID wants to help Honduras on their trade, investment, and participation in trade agreements, which will give them a higher quality of agricultural production and linkage to businesses. Small micro enterprises in Honduras receive their support for financial aid services, while farmers receive their help for assistance of crop improvement and diversity. The USAID works in association with the Honduras Government to build up their economic policies and business buildings.

Most of the USAID's hard work goes toward controlling watershed and to help protect certain areas in Honduras. They start projects that involve adults who believe in helping their environment and systems that like to control the decrease of pollution and the unnecessary use of natural resources. Their program helps fund all the developmental procedures that take place to resolve problems such as creating information systems to help with the controlment of natural resources and it helps train local officials for disaster awareness, too, such as watching the river and stream flow data to protect from and be aware of floods. The projects they start focus on the development and the helping to strengthen the environment at the national level. Those projects mainly focus on the areas of the sectors of water.

The USAID helps the Honduras Ministry of Health and the non-governmental organizations that want to improve their health services, particularly for the survival of children and for the controlling of diseases and HIV. Assistance to family planning organizations improves the reproductive services. The USAID also provides an ample supply of food assistance and to address the emergency situations of malnutrition that partake in Honduras.

The USAID helps to improve the quality of and to widen the access of basic and developmental technology, such as those alternative delivery systems for pre-school and secondary education. It focuses on the youth and young adults from lower income families that live in rural and on the edge of urban areas. It also assists the Honduras Ministry of Education of which fulfills the educational standards, testing and the analysis of study strategies, and to not only offer education at a local level.

The USAID also focuses on the replenishing and growing of justice sector institutions, the improvement of the municipal capacity, and the increasing civil society participants. They promote projects that focus on improvement, especially in municipal governments, for the citizens to respond to their needs and the covering of their basic services such as that of water, sewage, and garbage collection. The program continues to work on the continuation of the Honduras Criminal Procedures Code or CPC. It also assists in the justice sector reform, too. The justice sector reform is focused on the improvement of court administration and the training and legal support of professional on the CPC. Support of these programs goes toward the independent anti-corruption authorities that raise public awareness and the transparency and accountability in the controlling of public funds and matters at hand.

Overall the USAID's funds for Honduras has been a gratitude to the citizens there. When the USAID program first started in 2005 there, their total program funds were 48,086,000 dollars. Currently in 2006, the total program funds are set at 42,349,000 dollars and in 2007 they request to have a total program fund of 41,460,000 dollars. As you can see the average cost is plummeting more each year that goes by, which means that Honduras is becoming less dependent on agencies such as this one and is becoming closer to being how the United States is.

In conclusion, many influential factors are part of Food and Nutrition security in Latin America's urban areas. Those factors are that of domestic policy and need to be resolved. Domestic policy is combined of those reasons that poverty exists in urban areas in Latin America, such as those of the growing population, the fast advancement of urbanization, and that of the gender and cultural discrimination that takes place there due to the inclination of immigrants going west for a better way of living. With this comes, poverty, malnutrition, and starvation that draws away from other countries, only to cause them to become of those, too, but if we all work together as one world we could all be equally factored. If we don't resolve these reasons now, they will become more hazardous and less secure for this region. Those reasons could then lead to worldwide epidemics or kill off a majority of the world's population. That is why, it is vitally important for all the corporations and citizens in the United States to assist and encourage food and nutrition security for world. In the end, it will benefit the entire world and its citizens. It will also create a less tension filled Latin America, as well as those other regions that are insecure. The USAID is one of the vast majorities of corporations that help out and I proud to say that it originated in the United States of America. The USAID changes and make the lives of people easier to live, just to benefit their world because we all live in it and so we all have to take care of it together. I think that with the helping of giving what you have to help another country it will help make you feel good, knowing that you put your time, effort, and even money to contributing to the world you live in. Just to see that smile on someone's face, shows you that you changed someone's life forever and they can never repay you for that, and that is a big honor. I know that you can't do everything or be superman, but I know if you can change one person's life forever, you will die happy. Just think if that was you down there, how would you like if no one helped you. All I'm saying is that you can make a difference in society. All in all, it will make the world a better place for everyone.

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