

A night-time photograph of the Tower Bridge in London. The bridge's towers are illuminated, and a large light projection is cast onto the central tower. The projection reads "HUNGER IS HUMAN-MADE" in white, blocky capital letters. The bridge's suspension cables and walkways are visible on the right side. In the foreground, the silhouettes of people are visible, some looking towards the bridge. The sky is dark blue.

HUNGER
IS
HUMAN-
MADE

HUNGRY FOR ACTION

**Impact Review
(2021-2025)**

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Background and Scope

Born out of the acute global food crisis triggered by COVID-19, conflict, climate shocks, and economic instability, Hungry for Action (H4A) was established to respond to a clear gap in political urgency, coordination, and public pressure. Despite rising hunger and malnutrition, global attention remained fragmented and insufficient, with limited accountability on decision-makers to act at the scale required. A campaign was therefore necessary to elevate the food crisis as a top-tier political issue, unify the humanitarian response and development actors alongside other diverse actors behind common asks, and mobilise pressure on key power centres such as the G7, G20, and international financial institutions.

Across three and a bit years, H4A has maintained a consistent presence across major global advocacy and political processes, including G7 and G20 summits, UN General Assemblies, international financial institution (WB/IMF) meetings, climate negotiations, and nutrition and food systems forums.

This review examines what the H4A Campaign achieved, where it stalled, and lessons learned for global food-crisis campaigning more broadly. Three years on from its inception, the review assesses how H4A campaign activities and advocacy priorities featured across major global political and financing moments, the traction achieved, and the constraints encountered.

The main audience for this paper is H4A stakeholders, but it is hopefully of use for all those advocating on Food System issues, to reflect honestly on the campaign's contribution and limitations. It does not seek to recommend a future model for H4A or for global food-crisis campaigning. It instead provides lessons to inform strategic decisions about future advocacy and campaigning efforts on the global food crisis and other efforts towards the achievement of SDG2.

The review is structured to support reflection and learning rather than provide a full activity report, although the annexes provide links to key activities year on year. The paper begins with H4A's evolution from its origins in 2021 to the end of 2025 (Section 2- with supporting annexes). It then sets out the broader political, policy and financing landscape within which the campaign operated (Section 3), before assessing H4A's areas of contribution (Section 4) and the key limitations or where its constraints intensified (Section 5). The review then reflects on how the context for influencing political action has shifted over time (Section 6), and ends by distilling the lessons learnt and implications for future global food crisis campaigning (Sections 7-8).



2021-2025: A Brief History of the Campaign's Evolution

2021: Coming together to make the global food crisis famous

By 2021, the polycrisis of COVID-19, conflict, climate shocks, rising food prices and debt distress had converged to push hunger to historic levels, while political leadership and financing remained fragmented and insufficient. The war in Ukraine was also front of mind, with the direct impact on food prices and systems, fertiliser price hikes as well as the impact on aid allocations increasingly diverted to support the people of Ukraine, refugees and the war effort.

In direct response to the food price crisis, a small group of funders and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including AGRA, Gates Foundation, GSCC, OSF, the SDG2 Advocacy Hub, Global Citizen, Rockefeller Foundation, ECF, E3G, ONE, Rockefeller Foundation, Sharing Strategies, Save the Children, Power of Nutrition, and Climate Works Foundation came together.

They mobilised funders and civil society actors across hunger, nutrition, agriculture, climate, debt and development to support a new coalition.

They identified a persistent gap: solutions were known, but political will, coordination, sustained attention and financing at scale were lacking. Despite numerous advocacy efforts, they were dispersed across institutions, issue silos and moments, limiting their collective influence. This new coalition would seek to change this by creating a new inclusive campaign through which partners could coordinate and find the basis for combining their efforts.

H4A positioned itself as a unifying civil society campaign platform rather than a standalone campaign/organisation. The early strategy focused on agenda-setting and building consensus amongst both CSOs and targets, aiming to elevate hunger and nutrition in high-level political discussions.

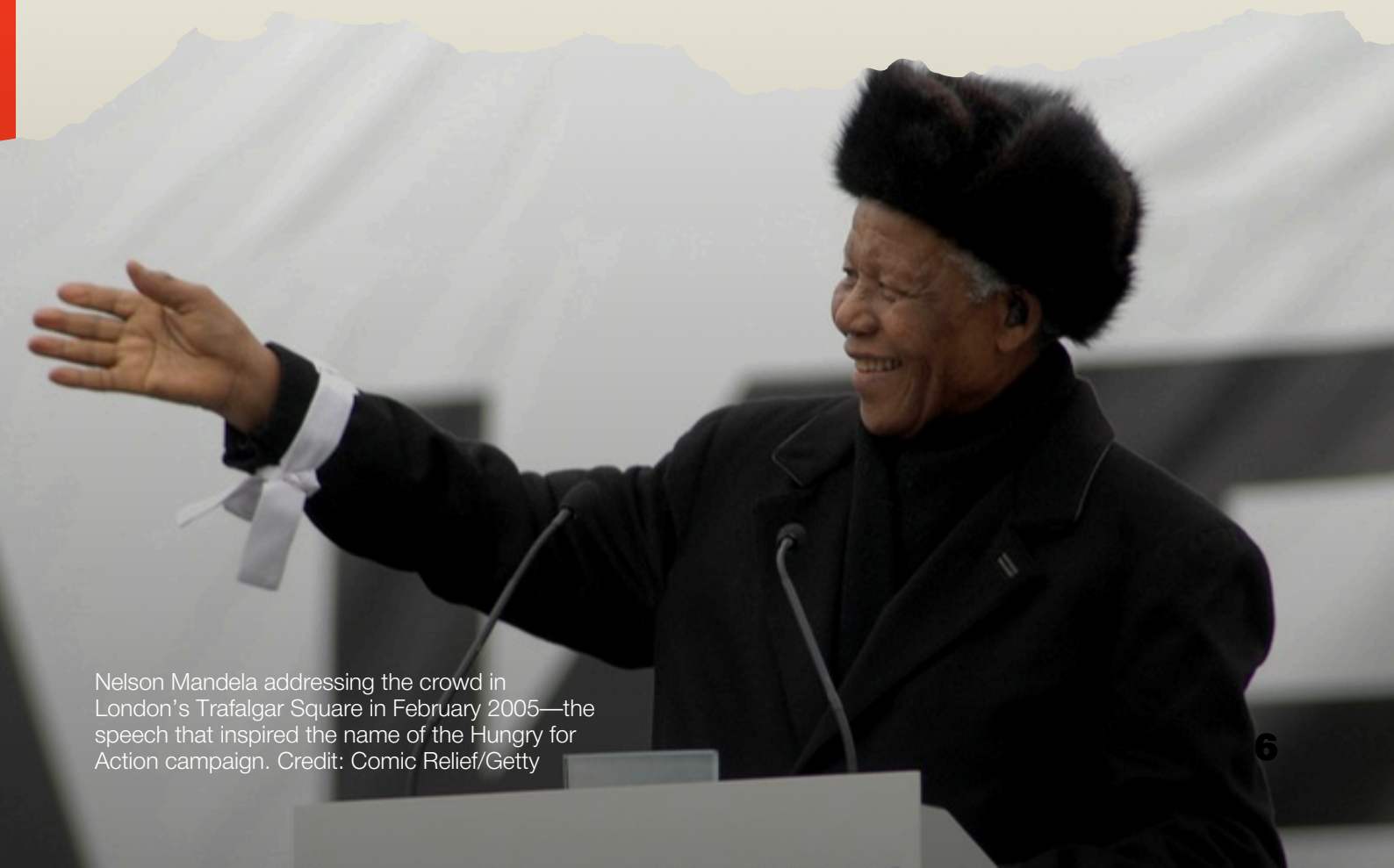
2022: Hungry for Action established

In early 2022, funding support was secured from the Gates Foundation, ClIFF and OSF for a two-and-a-half year time frame, with the SDG2 Advocacy Hub being made the home for the campaign. Taking both its name and inspiration from Nelson Mandela's famous Make Poverty history speech in Trafalgar Square in 2005, "The world is hungry for action, not words", Hungry for Action was officially launched in June 2022, in the build-up to the G7 Summit in Elmau, Germany. Its original aim was to make the 'global food crisis famous', driving a collective call to action for the world to respond to the rapidly escalating global food, hunger and nutrition crisis, making it as relatable to the experiences of a mum in Manchester to that of a caregiver in Mozambique.

It led with the following clear approach and outcomes:

Through sustained political visibility of the global food crisis as a global priority, we will achieve:

- **Stronger political leadership** from the G7 and G20 on rising hunger and malnutrition;
- **More finance** through increased ODA allocated to tackle the global food crisis (from 2023 onwards - innovative financing, including through debt relief, SDRs and international financial institution reform).

A photograph of Nelson Mandela speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark jacket and a fur hat, and is gesturing with his right hand. The background shows a blurred crowd and a building.

Nelson Mandela addressing the crowd in London's Trafalgar Square in February 2005—the speech that inspired the name of the Hungry for Action campaign. Credit: Comic Relief/Getty

Throughout 2022, H4A focused on establishing itself, building consensus around these core asks and applying pressure around the main multilateral moments. In August, the Hungry for Action white-label brand and messaging was created, with the support of the creative communications agency, Weber Shandwick, around an urgent and demanding tone.

The rest of the year saw the building of a coalition across sectors who were then mobilised around key global moments, including the G7, UN General Assembly, World Bank and IMF Spring and Annual Meetings, COP27 and the G20. Activities included delivering empty plates to G20 missions; a 1000 plate stunt in front of the UN with Global Citizen; an open letter to UN member countries on the sidelines of UNGA; an advocacy letter to US Secretary Yellen ahead of the Annual Meetings; and a FT/ Economist ad placed around COP27 calling out the lack of leadership from G20 countries.

2023: Establishing urgency and voice

In 2023, H4A focused on breaking political silence around the food crisis and establishing itself as a visible and credible advocacy platform. After the first year, the campaign realised that mass mobilisation of the public at scale was not a realistic route to change with the resources it had, instead shifting to more targeted mobilisation approaches, providing a sense of public support through ‘smoke and mirrors’, focusing on engaging strategic audiences, champions and targets alongside its partners.



Credit: Weber Shandwick /
Hungry for Action

As the campaign developed, three clear and enduring objectives have influenced its strategies since 2023-2025:

- **Save lives** now through urgent humanitarian action
- **Build resilience** by transforming food systems and national capacity
- **Secure the future** through systemic reform and sustainable financing

This framing has been widely adopted by partners, and has aided the campaign in bridging the short-term humanitarian action needed with longer-term sustainability, resilience and reform agendas.

The “Elephant in the Room” creative brought together political leaders, public figures and influencers to state a simple but often avoided truth: a global food crisis was unfolding at scale, solutions existed, and political action was lagging.

This framing helped cut through technical debates and reposition hunger as an urgent political failure, whilst granting a more public-facing campaign wrapper.

Throughout the year, H4A cultivated a diverse group of champions, including the President of Sierra Leone Julius Maada Bio, former President of Malawi Joyce Banda, UN Famine Prevention Coordinator Reena Ghelani, Sabrina Elba, Chef Andrew Zimmern, Vanessa Nakate, Octopizzo, and youth leaders in Kenya and Tanzania working with Restless Development. These voices strengthened the campaign’s reach across geographies as well as political and cultural audiences.

Early policy shaping and agenda-setting

In the early phase of the campaign, policy-focused partners played a key role in shaping and sharpening H4A’s advocacy positions. Organisations such as ONE contributed analysis and policy insight that helped inform early calls on financing, debt and international financial institution reform. This joint policy work strengthened the ability and coherence of H4A’s asks at global moments whilst bringing in a broader set of partners to focus on MDB reform. The value of this contribution lay less in discrete outcomes and more in aligning advocacy narratives with emerging policy debates and institutional reform agendas.

The campaign also convened faith-based organisations to join the campaign, including World Vision International, CAFOD, Caritas, and Islamic Relief, to engage in the campaign. A few of these partners engaged throughout, such as World Vision, who have embedded H4A asks and messaging within its broader ENOUGH campaign and Global citizen who ran Empty Plates activations at their Global Citizen NOW Concerts in New York and Paris.

H4A invested heavily in coordination, convening stakeholders across regions through monthly virtual meetings and in-person gatherings in London, Paris, Kigali and New York.

Media advocacy played a central role, with coverage across outlets including the BBC, DevEx and regional African media, alongside op-eds from senior political figures. Creative stunts and toolkits helped amplify messages around the G7, the IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings and the Paris Summit for a New Global Financing Pact.



Credit: Eric Bond/Hungry For Action

2024: Mobilisation and alignment around global leadership

In 2024, Hungry for Action shifted towards mobilising collective pressure for political leadership and coordination, with a particular focus on the Brazil G20 Presidency.

To capitalize on President Lula’s intention to put global hunger and poverty at the center of the G20 agenda, campaign partners drafted a public brief calling on G20 leaders to agree on a global plan to end the food crisis, aligned around evidence-based policy priorities, and advocating high-level leadership and coordination, adequate financing and accountability mechanisms. An accompanying financing brief laid out the resource mobilisation options that could help to tackle the crisis and deliver on the plan, including increasing ODA, a robust IDA21 replenishment and debt relief. An open letter penned by 40 World Food Prize Laureates, joined the call for a plan and adequate financing, providing a powerful anchor for advocacy throughout the year.

H4A also played a central role in mobilising the SDG2 community behind Brazil’s G20 Presidency and the launch of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty (GAAHP), helping to raise awareness about the GAAHP, align civil society messaging and build political support. H4A launched an open letter, signed by 118 organisations across the globe calling for action on the global food crisis and urging governments to join the GAAHP. At that year’s UNGA, the campaign came together with World Vision International, the SDG2 Advocacy Hub, BRAC, Ação da Cidadania and the Government of Brazil to convene a side-event spotlighting the global food crisis and its impacts on child hunger and malnutrition, showcasing successful partnerships as well as opportunities to unite stakeholders. Joined by Her Excellency, the First Lady of Brazil Janja Silva, UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed and many other dignitaries, the event called on world leaders to endorse the GAAHP.

Credit: World Food Prize



**LAUREATES
CALL FOR
ACTION TO
END GLOBAL
HUNGER AS
FAMINE
WARNINGS
RISE**



The #EmptyPlates campaign also served as a main mobilisation vehicle. With activations in Rio, London, New York and Kigali, alongside digital activations on social media, Empty Plates symbolised the 733 million people facing hunger globally, creating a strong visual link between those experiencing hunger, the symbolism of an empty plate and political responsibility.

The campaign connected advocacy moments, including the G20 Summit, UNGA, the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings, and the African Food Systems Forum. The mobilisation also evolved in subsequent years into a flexible, white-label action that partners could adapt within their own campaigns and national contexts, increasing its usability across organisations and around moments such as World Food Day.

Alongside global advocacy, H4A supported regional and sectoral activations. This included calls for an ambitious IDA21 replenishment centred on food security and SDG2, as well as engagement ahead of the IDA for Africa Heads of State Summit. Cultural mobilisation, including a concert with Doctors for Human Rights in Sudan and Kenyan artists, helped to highlight the links between conflict and hunger.

The campaign also experimented with new storytelling approaches to engage decision makers and wider audiences, including 'Back from the Brink', a virtual reality film developed with Save the Children. The film launched at an event on the South Bank London and young food influencers/activists attended to help galvanise its dissemination. The film also served as a powerful tool for partners to use for wider advocacy purposes, such as being shown to MPs at parliamentary events in the UK.



Distributed partner-led amplification

As a campaign platform, Hungry for Action provided the brand, narrative and moments that partners then adapted into their own campaigning, policy influencing and mobilisation efforts. World Vision International, for example, embedded H4A framing into its broader Enough campaign, translating global advocacy narratives into national-level mobilisation. In the UK, partners used the H4A brand to convene parliamentary engagement and public-facing actions on the East Africa hunger crisis, while chef-led engagement coordinated through the Chefs' Manifesto extended the campaign's framing beyond policy audiences into cultural and public spaces. This distributed, franchise-like model granted the campaign wider reach across regions and sectors, strengthening coherence and timing across otherwise fragmented efforts.



2025: Narrative reframing and defensive advocacy

In 2025, amid growing aid cuts and political retrenchment, H4A focused on narrative reframing and defensive advocacy to protect life-saving nutrition and food security programming and financing.


The campaign launched an updated narrative: “Hunger is human-made, but so are the solutions.” This framing challenges scarcity-based explanations and directly confronts political decision-makers with the question: “Who do you serve?” Public projections in Seville, London and New York reinforced this message around key moments throughout 2025.

H4A refreshed the global #EmptyPlates mobilisation alongside partners, amplified the Standing Together for Nutrition and Nature findings, and supported coordinated communications on the human cost of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) cuts.

This included working with the US, UK, and France advocacy communities on responding to the aid cuts; on media with UN agencies such as the World Food Programme and humanitarian focused INGOs like the International Rescue Committee; on thought leadership events; and on analysis about the impact the aid cuts were having on food crisis programming.

The campaign deepened partnerships with African networks to influence South Africa’s G20 presidency and highlighted evidence from the SOFI 2025 report to sustain attention on hunger and malnutrition within the G20, UNFSS+ and other key multilateral moments.

Credit: Eric Bond/
HungryForAction



**HUNGER
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To support efforts to influence the G20, H4A provided partners with coordinated advocacy letters ahead of the G20 Finance Ministers' meetings and the G20 Leaders' Summit, enabling direct engagement with finance ministers, foreign ministers, and heads of state across the G20 and invited countries. H4A also provided briefing materials to support advocacy efforts for a successful 17th Replenishment of the African Development Fund.

H4A also played a key role in incubating and supporting the Forests4Food campaign with Ação da Cidadania. Through H4A, additional partners supported Forests4Food, launching a joint open letter and getting close to 60,000 signatures on a petition ahead of COP30 in Belém to ensure food systems were meaningfully included on the main agenda at COP30.

2022-2025: Shifts in the Policy and Political Landscape

This section maps how the wider political, policy and financing context has evolved during the campaign's lifecycle, in relation to H4A's core advocacy asks. It provides context for understanding both the campaign's areas of contribution and limitations, and helps frame the strategic choices now required.

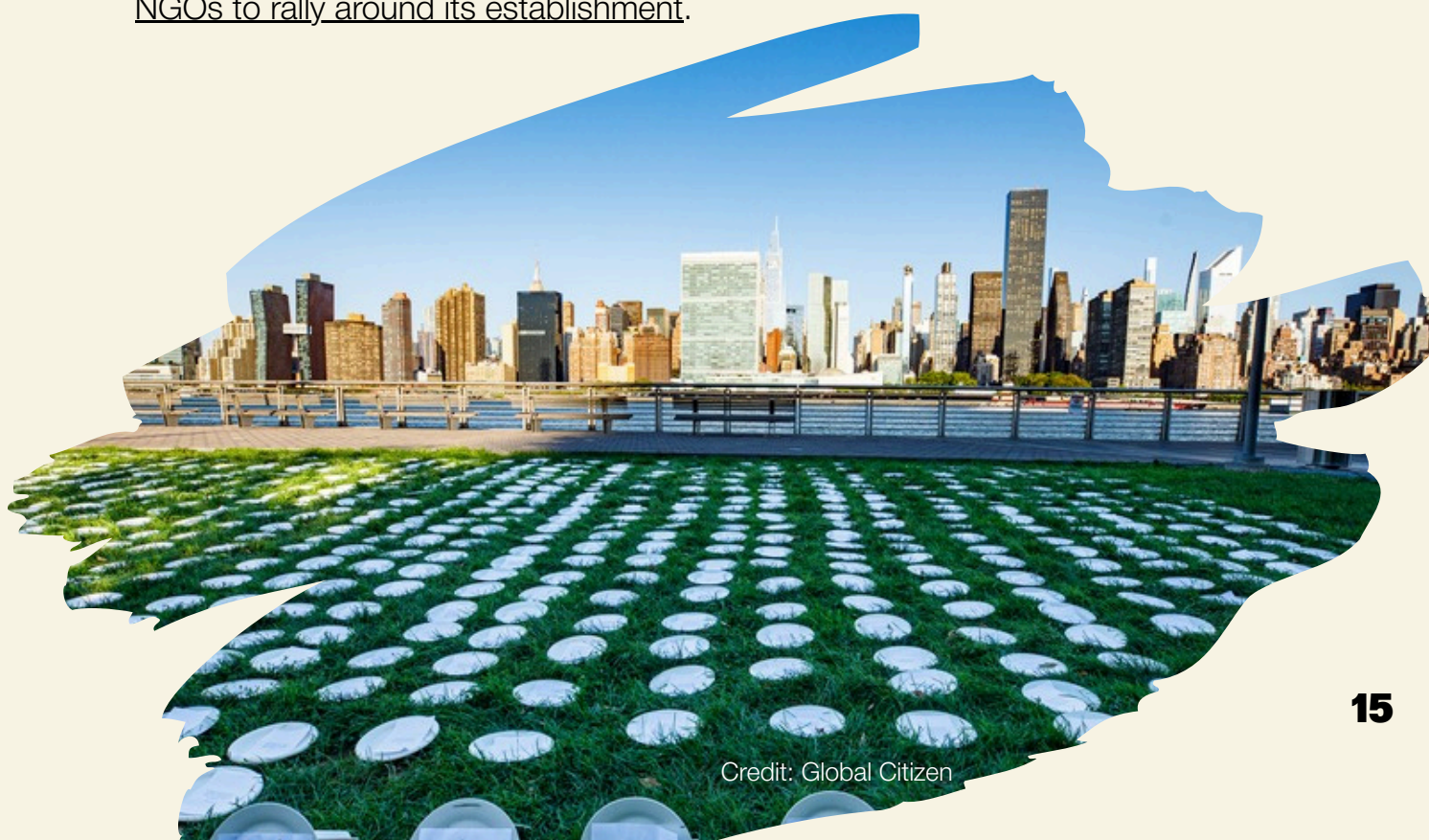


Political leadership and coordination on hunger

Over the period 2022–2025, hunger and food insecurity gained greater rhetorical recognition within global political forums, particularly at the G20 and UN levels. The German G7 in 2022 launched the Global Alliance for Food Security, within which H4A participated in the steering committee, leading to the creation of the Global Food Security Dashboard and Food Security Crisis Preparedness Plans.

Later, the establishment of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty (GAAHP) under Brazil's G20 Presidency in 2024 marked a notable step towards greater coordination, the recognition of the vital role of systems strengthening at the national level and brought together efforts on hunger and poverty reduction. H4A played a key role in civil society engagement around the establishment of the GAAHP, including getting 118 NGOs to rally around its establishment.

The global food crisis has also featured more consistently in leaders' statements and international summit processes. At times, narratives and framing developed by the campaign - 'Hunger is Humanmade', 'Empty Plates' and 'Elephant in the Room' - echoed or aligned with language used by political leaders, demonstrating the campaign's potential cut through. However, this increased recognition has been uneven and fragile. Political leadership often stopped short of binding commitments, the needed financing, clear accountability mechanisms or sustained follow-through. As global attention fragmented and geopolitical tensions intensified, the global food crisis has competed with, and been frequently deprioritised relative to other crises.



Credit: Global Citizen

Financing for hunger, nutrition and food systems

Financing remains the most significant gap between ambition and delivery. While the global food crisis prompted temporary increases in emergency and crisis-related funding by donors from 2022 through 2023, these did not translate into sustained or scaled financing for hunger, nutrition and food systems transformation. Unsustainable debt burdens and increasingly frequent shocks continue to limit countries' abilities to respond to rising food insecurity and malnutrition as well as invest in long-term solutions that could address the root causes of these crises. Whilst there has been some progress made, with a stronger focus on food security and nutrition in replenishments such as for IDA21, and advocacy momentum around multilateral development bank reform, debt relief and innovative financing mechanisms, tangible outcomes have lagged behind the scale of need.

From 2024 onwards, the context deteriorated further as Official Development Assistance to humanitarian and development efforts declined and several donor governments reversed or reduced prior commitments. Nutrition and food security were disproportionately affected by these cuts, reinforcing the structural vulnerability of financing for SDG2. As a result, the overall financing environment moved backwards relative to the campaign's core asks, despite heightened awareness and policy debate.



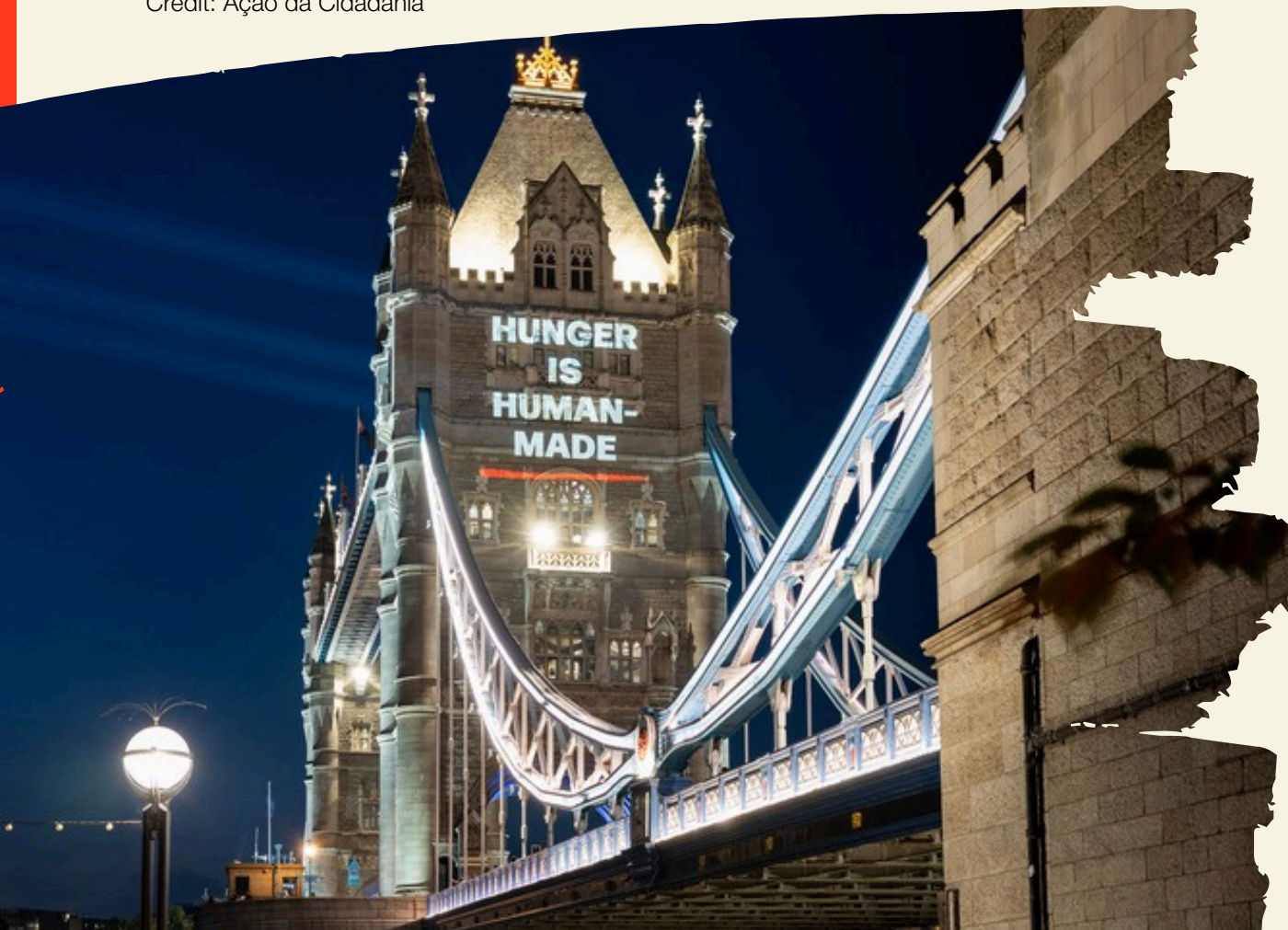
Hungry for Action youth campaigners developed a policy advocacy paper addressing the critical issue of childhood stunting in Tanzania

Sustained visibility for the global food crisis

Across the campaign period, the global food crisis became more visible within political and societal discourse, as the scale and persistence of food crises intensified. Advocacy, media coverage, and summit moments helped to sustain attention at key political moments. Whilst this visibility has contributed to advocacy momentum for key replenishments, including IDA21, and new initiatives such as the GAAHP and Belem Declaration, it has not led to binding frameworks, delivery plans or long-term financing. Attention has proved cyclical and reactive, rising during crises and receding thereafter.

This pattern has exposed a structural challenge: visibility alone is insufficient to secure durable policy change in a context of weakened multilateralism and constrained financing within donor countries. As the 2030 SDGs deadline approaches, the gap between recognition and implementation has widened, underscoring the limits of awareness-led advocacy in the absence of sharper leverage and power alignment.

Credit: Ação da Cidadania



Areas of Contribution

Hungry for Action operated through one of the most volatile periods for global food security in recent history, shaped by overlapping crises in conflict, climate, debt and aid. Against that backdrop, this section outlines where H4A made a distinctive contribution, and how the world around it changed.

H4A's role was always to act as a platform: convening partners, sharpening narratives and mobilising collective action around the moments where political decisions were being made. Working alongside a wider ecosystem of governments, institutions and civil society, the campaign helped move the global food crisis up the agenda, align voices across sectors and keep the crisis visible when attention could have easily drifted elsewhere.

The following analysis outlines where the campaign's contribution mattered most, alongside the structural limits that constrained its ability to convert visibility into sustained political and financial action.

Unifying a global advocacy voice

H4A positioned itself as a unifying voice that connects global, regional, and national advocacy efforts under one banner. It has provided an unifying platform for a fragmented advocacy ecosystem, bringing together 60+ organisations and around 200-300 actors as partners across hunger, nutrition, agriculture, the environment, climate, debt and development.

Key achievements include H4A playing a central role in mobilising the SDG2 community behind Brazil's G20 Presidency and the launch of the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty (GAAHP), raising the visibility of this innovative coordination mechanism as a critical tool for addressing the root causes of the global food crisis.

H4A helped to align civil society messaging and political engagement around the formation of the GAAHP.

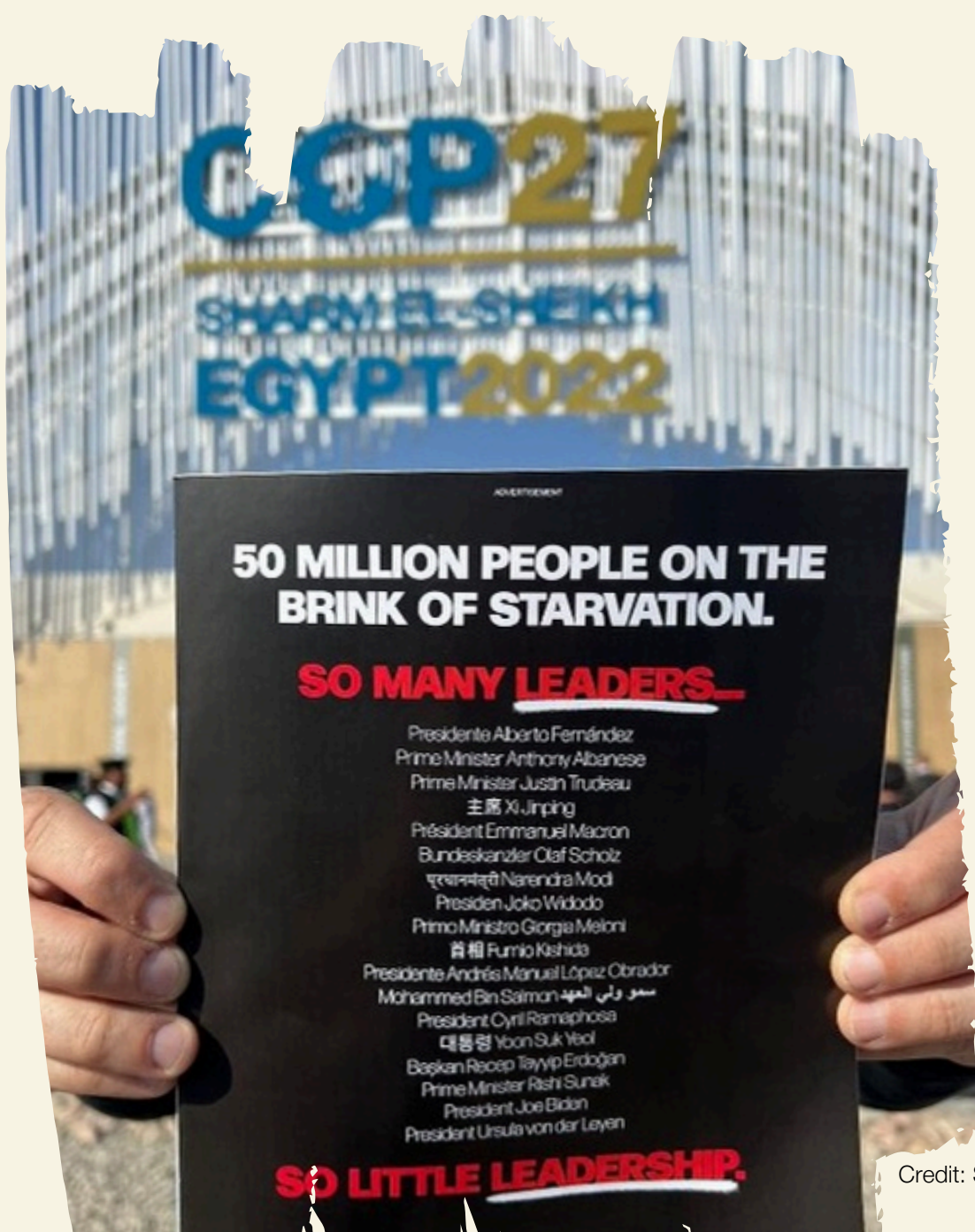
The campaign also contributed to broader pressure on the World Bank to adopt a more holistic approach to overcoming the global food crisis, focusing on both the short-term humanitarian response alongside a longer-term resilience-building approach.

Credit: Hungry for Action



Elevating hunger in high-level forums

The campaign helped sustain visibility of hunger and malnutrition in high-level political forums at a time of polycrisis. Creative activations, media advocacy and champion-led engagement framed hunger as a political failure rather than an inevitable outcome. The campaign contributed to heightened global awareness (e.g. [Elephant in the Room](#), [Empty Plates](#) & Hunger is Human Made campaigns) and this rhetoric has sometimes been echoed by leaders at key summits, demonstrating the power of agile, coordinated narratives in times of crisis. This public campaigning granted legitimacy to other organisations and partners to do their own insider advocacy activity whilst the more creative approaches also played an important role not only in building partners' experience with more visual, public facing campaigning approaches.



Thought leadership and resourcing the community

H4A strengthened alignment across sectors, supporting greater integration of hunger, nutrition, climate, agriculture and financing agendas. Its cross-sector coalition was a distinguishing feature, helping to break down traditional divides between humanitarian response and longer-term nutrition, climate and development reform.

The campaign consistently provided thought leadership, developing messaging and resources for its partners to coalesce around advocacy opportunities, articulate what the data on the global food crisis was showing, build toolkits of assets and host events for research reports such as SOFI and Hunger Hotspots.

H4A's core asks of Save Lives Now, Build Resilience, Secure the Future have been a useful narrative framing to hold the short and long-term food systems policy asks and bring together the humanitarian, nutrition and food systems advocates.

Additionally, H4A helped to fill a gap in financing and the global food crisis, developing a set of recommendations that laid out how existing mechanisms and initiatives could be leveraged to address rising food and nutrition insecurity.

The campaign also provided a trusted shared space for experimentation, allowing partners to explore emerging advocacy approaches, narratives and tactics without a single organisation carrying reputational or delivery risk. This included creative activations (e.g. projections and stunts), digital engagement strategies and emerging influencer-led approaches. Whilst this model contributed to both innovation and learning, it also reinforced distributed ownership, with partners increasingly integrating H4A assets and messaging into their own campaigns whilst reinforcing shared advocacy objectives.



A broad and diverse coalition

The H4A campaign built legitimacy through its diverse partnership of over 60 organisations, foundations and funders as of 2025, including both large international INGOS, such as World Vision International, and Save the Children, alongside regional organisations such as PACJA and domestic organisations such as the UK’s Mother’s Manifesto. Alongside traditional advocacy approaches, H4A also explored collaborations with cultural voices, young activists and influencers in food and climate spaces, seeking new ways to bring the issue of hunger into wider public conversations.

The campaign created a broad space for knowledge sharing, collaboration around key moments and —where done right— an effective umbrella to drive action around consensus asks amongst a diverse set of CSOs. The diverse partnerships and coalition model has enabled H4A via its partners to, at times, operate at speed and scale, as well as across multiple agendas during moments of shared interest. This distributed model also allowed partners to engage at varying levels of intensity, lowering barriers to participation and enabling broader but more flexible coalition involvement.

However, whilst enabling reach, legitimacy and moments of speed, at times this coalition model also constrained decisiveness. Consensus-based approaches sometimes limited the campaign’s ability to narrow its focus, sustain much-needed critical stances, and/or pursue a small number of more strategic objectives. These trade-offs became more pronounced as the campaign grew to incorporate a broader set of partners focused on different elements of the global food crisis and as political momentum around SDG2 has weakened.



Credit: SDG2 Advocacy Hub

White-label campaign brand granted urgency and cover

The H4A white-label campaign brand and narratives (such as Empty Plates) were designed to speak with urgency, challenge complacency, and demand accountability from political leaders. This international campaign brand, unaffiliated to any programmatic or national constraints, allowed the tone of comms to be edgier, demanding and urgent.

This model provided both a useful convening umbrella as well as cover for organisations that could carry these asks under their own brand. This has also allowed the campaign to hold certain pieces of work (particularly in the context of the ODA cuts) that other organisations were reluctant to do.



720M
people are
experiencing
hunger

#SOFI2025

Credit: Hungry for Action

Areas of Stagnation and Constraint

A diffuse sector under strain lacking investment in campaigning and comms elements

Whilst H4A did have broad partnerships, it lacked consistent investment in terms of engagement by partners and funders in ongoing campaigning and communications elements.

Global food crisis campaigning has not been resourced in the same way as global health or education campaigning. Whilst there is considerable comms and campaigning efforts on Global Health (GAVI and/or Global Fund replenishment), the same cannot be said for nutrition and hunger, where resource has been placed mostly in policy, humanitarian response or fundraising. This challenge is further exacerbated by the diffuse nature of the food systems sector, divided into silos and without clear replenishments or political milestones to coalesce around.

At times, partners also held differing views on the most effective public framing of hunger, with some questioning whether certain visual narratives - such as empty plates - risked reinforcing negative and unhelpful charity-based perceptions, rather than emphasising the structural or systemic drivers of hunger.

During the period of the campaign, many of the H4A partners were undertaking their own restructures and re-strategisation processes, often prompted by the changing financing landscape, restricting their ability to meaningfully engage in joint coalitions or campaigns such as this. H4A also struggled to maintain the same energy from partners year on year, as their priorities shifted to focus on other development issues alongside funding.

This was also the case in terms of H4A funding, which was not to the scale to allow the campaign to run large-scale advocacy campaigns, target public audiences, influence media or work consistently with broader influencers in order to raise the global food crisis up the agenda. The campaign has mainly been an advocacy and policy instrument (insider activity), with the campaigns and comms element (outsider track) providing some sense of outside pressure, without it being scaled.

The strong messaging and narratives developed through the campaign might have had more impact or public cut through if more resources and support had been given to the communications and campaigns delivery elements of H4A.

Conflict as a driver of hunger

As food insecurity is increasingly shaped by protracted conflict and instability, progress has been hindered by heightened geopolitical polarisation, weakened multilateral cooperation, and shrinking humanitarian and development access. In many contexts, hunger is no longer framed as a solvable policy failure but as an inevitable by-product of war, diluting political responsibility and urgency. This dynamic complicates collective action, restricts access to affected populations, and narrows the space for principled advocacy, providing a real challenge for the campaign in its current guise.

Furthermore, H4A partner capacity is needed to respond to these crises, focusing on access, programming, fundraising and human rights abuses, leaving little space for global food crisis advocacy. Together, these factors have blunted momentum for coordinated solutions at precisely the moment when political leadership and cooperation are most needed.



Credit: World Vision DRC

Political headwinds and diminishing political momentum

Over time, political momentum around the global food crisis has weakened. Early urgency gave way to fatigue, competing priorities and a broader retreat from multilateral ambition. In the face of crises, leaders increasingly acknowledged hunger rhetorically without committing to decisive or sustained action. Civil Society partners facing a polycrisis and funding crisis, struggled to commit advocacy capacity to food crisis campaigning, with their usual routes to influence advocacy outcomes being increasingly less effective.

Declining public support for development and ODA

H4A's influence was further constrained by declining public support for ODA and a wider erosion of confidence in multilateral action. In many donor countries, aid was increasingly framed as discretionary and politically expendable amid cost-of-living pressures and populist narratives. This limited governments' incentives to act beyond rhetorical acknowledgement of the hunger crisis and weakened the impact of public-facing advocacy. With limited resources to sustain large-scale mobilisation or counter sceptical narratives about aid effectiveness, public pressure on decision-makers remained shallow and episodic—reinforcing a broader pattern of visibility without conversion into decisive political or financial action.



Signs of plateauing influence of the campaign model

While H4A contributed to sustaining visibility of hunger across major political forums, this awareness has not consistently translated into new financing, binding commitments or accountability. Repeated advocacy moments, even when well-framed and widely supported, struggled to shift entrenched positions.

A good example of this is that despite sustained advocacy, progress on large-scale financing and systemic reform has remained limited. While hunger featured more prominently in political statements and processes, this visibility has not yet translated into considerable new or additional financial commitments or binding policy change.

This pattern reflects a broader structural dynamic affecting many global campaigns. In an environment of weakened multilateralism and fragmented political authority, summit driven visibility and coalition alignment alone are increasingly insufficient to generate policy change. Without clearer leverage over decision makers or stronger political incentives for action, awareness often plateaued at rhetorical recognition rather than translating into sustained commitments. This suggests that campaigns like H4A may be approaching the limits of their current model.

Shifting Context for Influencing

Rather than restating the constraints as outlined above, this section considers what they mean for H4A and global food crisis campaigning more broadly.

Since Hungry for Action's launch in 2022, the conditions for influencing political action on the global food crisis have shifted considerably. Global political attention has become increasingly fragmented. Leaders are contending with overlapping crises, including conflict, climate change, economic instability and rising inequality. At the same time, multilateral ambition has weakened, constraining the scope for the large-scale collective commitments needed. Together, these dynamics have constrained both the scale and durability of political action on hunger and malnutrition.

Influence over food systems outcomes are now more dispersed across national governments, regional institutions and specific financial actors, rather than concentrated within global summit processes alone. As a result, advocacy approaches that rely primarily on high-level moments and broad coalition alignment face growing limitations in converting visibility into decision making leverage.

Concurrently, declining public support for development cooperation and mounting pressures on civil society capacity have narrowed the space for sustained global campaigning. Many organisations are increasingly absorbed by the humanitarian response to rising needs and fundraising pressures, reducing the bandwidth available for sustained collective advocacy that bridges the humanitarian development nexus.

As the 2030 deadline for achieving the SDGs approaches, the window for meaningful influence is narrowing. In this context, continuing the campaign 'as is' would itself represent a strategic choice. This moment demands a deliberate assessment of whether —and under what conditions— food crisis campaigning can continue to exercise influence and add distinctive value within a changed global landscape.

Credit: SDG2 Advocacy Hub

Hunger is one of the worst experiences you can suffer. It happened to my family, we have no money to buy food but only drinking garri and the lack of nutrition has affected my wife eyes. When you don't eat it can cause many sicknesses.

Adekunle.

Lessons for Future Global Food Crisis Campaigning

The Hungry for Action campaign offers a set of lessons for global food crisis campaigning in an increasingly volatile political and financing environment. These lessons reflect not only the campaign's choices, but also the structural constraints within which it was conceptualized and operated between 2021-2025.

They suggest that future efforts will need clearer leverage, more selective partnerships and stronger narrative strategies if advocacy on hunger is to convert visibility into sustained political and financial action.

Visibility is necessary but insufficient

Sustained campaigning helped keep the global food crisis on political agendas during periods of acute competition for attention. However, visibility alone did not consistently convert into additional financing, policy commitments, or accountability. In a weakened multilateral context, awareness-led advocacy reached diminishing returns without sharper leverage over decision-makers and clearer power alignment.

Implication: Future campaigning must pair visibility with more targeted influence strategies focused on where decisions are actually made.

Broad coalitions enable reach, but constrain focus

H4A's strength as a unifying platform enabled alignment across a fragmented ecosystem and amplified shared asks at key moments. However, consensus-driven coalition models limited the campaign's ability to narrow priorities, sustain harder political positions, or pursue a small number of decisive outcomes over time. As partners' own priorities and capacities shifted year on year, energy dwindled and maintaining the same active and wide-reaching partnership was unsustainable.

Implication: Coalition campaigns still require deliberate selectivity. Clear choices need to be made about what to prioritise, what to amplify, and what to let go. Keeping all partners engaged year on year is not sustainable. Efforts should be made to work with a smaller core of aligned partners on shared and targeted asks rather than trying to appeal to the broader partner base.

Narrative framing can shape agendas, but are not a substitute for power

Campaign narratives such as 'Save Lives Now', 'Build Resilience', 'Secure the Future' and 'Hunger is human-made' helped reframe hunger as a political failure and bridged humanitarian and systems change agendas. These frames were adopted by partners and echoed in political discourse, demonstrating narrative influence. However, narrative alignment did not overcome entrenched political or fiscal resistance.

Implication: Narrative change is most effective when paired with credible political pathways and institutional leverage.

Financing advocacy requires long-term political investment

Advocacy on financing, debt, and multilateral development bank reform helped build shared understanding and coherence across civil society. Yet progress was slow and vulnerable to political reversal, particularly as ODA declined and geopolitical tensions intensified.

Implication: Financing reform campaigns demand sustained, multi-year political strategies, deeper national-level engagement, and stronger links to domestic political incentives.

External shocks reshaped what was politically feasible

Conflict, climate shocks, economic instability, and declining public support for development fundamentally altered the operating environment. As hunger became increasingly associated with conflict, advocacy space narrowed, access declined, and responsibility was often diffused or securitised. Civil society capacity was simultaneously stretched by humanitarian response demands and funding pressures.

Implication: Campaign models must be adaptive to geopolitical realities and realistic about the limits of global advocacy during periods of crisis convergence.

Campaign models must evolve or die as contexts shift

H4A adapted over time—from agenda-setting, to mobilisation, to defensive advocacy—but the underlying campaign model remained largely unchanged. As power over food system outcomes became more dispersed and summit-centric advocacy lost traction, the limits of the existing approach became more apparent.

Implication: Campaigns must periodically reassess not only what they are asking for, but how and where they seek to influence. As ‘how change happens’ evolves, so must the makeup of campaign coalitions. The campaign’s core international INGO partners and holistic global focus, has constrained its ability to shift approaches, including running more domestic focused campaigns, or to effectively influence different types of actors such as MDBs or the private sector.

Attribution in complex systems is inherently limited

H4A contributed to shaping discourse, alignment, and coordination, but could not credibly claim direct causality for policy outcomes. This reflects the reality of campaigning in complex, multi-actor systems rather than a failure of the campaign itself. However, more investment into monitoring and evaluation of the campaign would allow better capturing of impact as well as informed planning.

Implication: Future efforts should prioritise contribution, leverage, and learning over narrow attribution claims, supported by clearer theories of influence and proportionate monitoring.

Sustained public engagement requires long-term narrative investment

The campaign's challenges to date have demonstrated the importance of sustained public narrative building beyond major summit moments. While advocacy activity often concentrates around global political milestones, maintaining long-term public awareness/ engagement on hunger remains a critical but underinvested component of global advocacy.

Implication: Future campaigning should invest more consistently in narrative development, storytelling and cultural engagement that sustains attention between political moments and strengthens public and political support for action on hunger.



Conclusion

Hungry for Action has made a meaningful contribution to global food crisis campaigning during a period of profound volatility. It helped keep the crisis visible across summit cycles, brought a fragmented advocacy ecosystem into closer alignment, and gave partners a shared brand, narrative and set of moments through which to push for action.

In an era of weakened multilateralism, constrained financing, and geopolitical fragmentation, broad coalition-driven advocacy around summits is no longer enough on its own to convert recognition into commitments. Without strategic adjustment and the resourcing to match, campaigns like H4A risk becoming respected platforms that document the deepening food crisis rather than catalysts that shift its trajectory.

The choice now is not whether to campaign on the global food crisis, but how. Future efforts will need sharper focus, clearer leverage, and models that align more closely with where political will, public energy and financial power now sit - at national level, across new financial actors, and in the cultural and digital spaces where public attitudes are formed.

Credit: Hungry for Action



Annex 1: H4A Channels

Website: [Hungry for Action homepage](#)
H4A Partners: [We Are the Allies](#)
Instagram: [@hungryforaction](#)
X: [@hungryforact](#)
H4A Hero video: [H4A Elephant in the room](#)

Annex 2: Key activities, 2021-2025

2021-2022

Moment / Activity	Purpose	Format	Partners / Voices	Link
H4A website established	Establish shared platform	Convening	SDG2 Advocacy Hub	<u>Website</u>
Campaign launch	Public launch ahead of G7	Launch	Civil society coalition	Hungry for Action launch overview (June 2022)
Open letter to UN Member States	Raise urgency at UNGA	Open letter	CSO partners	<u>Open Letter to UN Member States on the Global Food Crisis</u>
Chef's Empty Plates activation	Event / Champion mobilisation	Event	Chef's Manifesto	<u>Event write-up of UNGA side event</u>
OP Ed in Mail and Guardian to launch campaign	Raise urgency ahead of UNGA	Earned media	Oped: <u>Hungry for action campaign: Time for a food and finance revolution</u> by Graça Machel founder of The Graça Machel Trust and the Foundation for Community Development. Mary Robinson - former president of Ireland and the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights.	<u>OP Ed in Mail and Guardian</u>

2023

Moment / Activity	Purpose	Format	Partners / Voices	Link
Elephant in the Room campaign creative	Reframe hunger politically	Creative campaign	- Elephant in the room campaign page Various Public figures - Trello assets	Elephant in the room room press release
IMF/WB Spring meetings webinar	Thought leadership: Freeing the funds to tackle the food crisis	Events	ONE, WFP, Jesuit centre Zambia, Shamba Centre, Food and Land Use coalition, World Bank,	Global food crisis on SDG2 website
Emergency meeting on sidelines of UNGA	Political visibility and pressure	Events	The SDG2 Advocacy Hub and Ertharin Cousin hosted an “Emergency Meeting” which included leaders from across sectors to think together about how to elevate the global food crisis as a political priority.	UNGA 2023 H4A event summary.
Champion engagement/ Media advocacy	Narrative pressure	Op-eds / social media engagement	Elba, Nakate, Reena Ghelani, Opinion: Restructuring our debt will help us fight the food crisis by Julius Maada Wonie Bio Commentary: Malawi's former president: ‘Africa’s food systems are in danger of failing due to high debt and climate change. A new financial pact can reverse this. by Joyce Banda	See links on left

2024

Moment / Activity	Purpose	Format	Partners / Voices	Link
G20 global plan call	Push leadership	Advocacy	Call for a Global Plan to End the Food Crisis CSO coalition	<u>Call for a Global Plan to End the Food Crisis</u>
WFP Laureates letter	Anchor pressure	Open letter	Call for action to end global hunger as famine warnings rise: 40 World Food Prize Laureates	<u>Open Letter from World Food Prize Laureates</u>
UNGA Side event	Partnerships to catalyse action to end Hunger and Malnutrition	Coalition advocacy	Roundtable: World Vision, Hungry for Action, The World Food Programme, BRAC, SDG 2 Action Hub, Ação da Cidadania, and The Government of Brazil as the Chair of the G20	<u>UNGA Side event</u>
GAAHP mobilisation	Support alliance launch	Coalition advocacy	Civil society letter supporting GAAHP 118 CSOs	<u>Civil society letter supporting GAAHP</u>
Food crisis alternative financing webinar	Thought leadership	Coalition convening	IMF/World bank, OXFAM, ROPPA, Global Citizen, GAFS	Webinar: <u>Breaking the Cycle of Food Crises: Exploring the Financing Landscape</u>
Restless partnership & youth champions trainings	Youth voice	Coalition activation	Restless development - youth champions training people in (Kenya and Tanzania)	Blogs from <u>Kenya</u> and <u>Tanzania</u>

2024 continued

Moment / Activity	Purpose	Format	Partners / Voices	Link
C7 side event, May 2024 in Rome	Pressure and convening	Event	C7, Brazil, WVI, GAFSP, Caritas, MVIWATA	Event: Coordinated action against the global food crisis – how the G7 and G20 can save lives, build ...
#EmptyPlates mobilisation	Visual action in UK, Brazil and US	Global activation	H4A Partners	Empty Plates report
G7 media influencing	Media	Web media	How G7 leaders can Unlock Financing for Africa - William Ruto, President of Kenya	Media link
Sudanese Artists Resilience concert	Event	Sudan activation	Salaam Artists Group	Sudanese artists resilience concert, Salaam Artists Group
VR Film premier - 'On the Brink'	Public pressure/ champion engagement	VR film	In partnership with Save the Children, we launched a new Virtuality film with Sabrina Dhowre Elba and Oscar nominated director Misan Harriman to put a spotlight on the hunger crisis in East Africa	VR Film
IDA21 advocacy	Influence financing	Briefings	Policy partners	IDA21 food security briefing Policy product: -Blog Unveiling the Impact: Food and Nutrition at the IDA for africa Heads of state summit

2025

Moment / Activity	Purpose	Format	Partners / Voices	Link
Narrative refresh	Challenge scarcity framing	Messaging	H4A Partners	<u>Hunger is Human-Made narrative toolkit H4A partners</u>
Public projections	Maintain visibility at key moments	Visual actions	H4A Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Seville - Financing for Development Conference with Global Citizen</u> • <u>London</u> • <u>New York</u>
G20 advocacy support	Enable influencing	Letters	<u>Blog on G20 action G20 partners</u>	<u>G20 advocacy letter pack</u>
Forests4Food incubation	Extend agenda	Campaign support	Ação da Cidadania	<u>Forests4Food website</u> campaign overview -
Adf-17 replenishment advocacy	Enable influencing	Policy products and Social assets	H4A Partners	<u>Explainer and policy products</u>

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