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OPINION L.A. OBSERVATIONS AND PROVOCATIONS FROM THE TIMES' OPINION STAFF

To curb global hunger, think insects and seaweed

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Children at Dadaab receive a supplemental meal in an effort to give them the caloric intake they need to grow and survive. (Rick Loomis / Los Angeles Times / July 12, 2012)

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Photos: Hunger in Africa

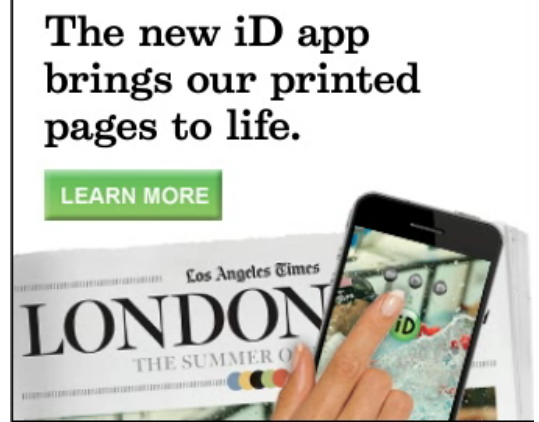
By Alexandra Le Tellier
July 26, 2012 | 4:53 p.m.

In a powerful [piece about global hunger](#), Kenneth R. Weiss shows readers the landscape in Dadaab, Kenya, where people are suffering and dying from chronic undernourishment and hunger-related conditions.

In this third installment of a [five-part series](#) about the global population explosion, Weiss writes: "Across Africa and in

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Dan Turner has been an editorial editor or writer with the Times since 2004.

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parts of South Asia and Latin America, hundreds of millions of people live on the edge of starvation. A drought, flood or outbreak of violence can push them over the brink."

It's an especially cruel fate when you consider that, "on paper," the world's farmers produce enough food to go around. "People go hungry in developing countries because they can't afford to buy food and can't grow enough on their own," writes Weiss of the issue also plaguing parts of South Asia and Latin America. "Inadequate transportation and storage aggravate shortages."

And then there are the environmental issues, among them land that's no longer able to produce crops, climate concerns over cultivating new land, and severe droughts in parts of the world that punish its inhabitants in a variety of ways, including killing its livestock and preventing crops from growing.

SPECIAL REPORT: Beyond 7 billion

"Major international research projects are underway to develop hybrid crops to withstand these challenges. But such efforts take decades, and there is no guarantee of success," writes Weiss.

There are other solutions, of course, that should be employed simultaneously. I [listed a few ideas](#) last summer after U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon wrote a plea in our pages, "[We can't allow Somalia to starve.](#)" Some of the ideas included fostering peace and stability, and establishing a government that cares about basic human rights.

Here's a new one I came across this summer: broadening our appetite. In [an article for Slate](#), Josh Schonwald wrote: "Much of the conversation about how to solve the coming food crisis caused by soaring population, diminishing resources, and a warming planet focuses rightly on technology, reducing waste, and improving food access and distribution methods. But equal urgency needs to be devoted to simply broadening our appetites. Two food sources that strike many as unpalatable -- insects and seaweed -- could play a critical role in not only feeding the 2.5 billion extra humans expected by 2050, but doing so in a green, climate-friendly way."

PHOTOS: Hunger leaves parts of Africa in misery

Lobsters were once a gross-out food, he reminds, saying that the same could one day be true of insects. Ditto seaweed, which is rich in nutrients and, among macrobiotic eaters at least, the ultimate superfood. Says Schonwald: "Oceans are the slackers of food production -- they cover more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface, yet yield 2 percent of our food. Two percent. And it's not because we haven't done a good job catching or growing fish."

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Olympics Medal Count

Country				Total
1. China (CHN)	9	5	2	16
2. United States (USA)	5	6	5	16
3. Japan (JPN)	1	4	5	10
4. Italy (ITA)	2	4	2	8
5. France (FRA)	3	1	3	7



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HarveyPearson at 4:37 PM July 28, 2012

If anyone besides myself is interested in slowing our own, total U.S. population growth/race to one billion people (almost a tripling of our current, already over-crowded population) say, the next time you're stuck in an "All-American" (read, like on many L.A. freeways!) traffic/people jam by 2100-2110, you should notify your congressional represe toontive (mine-to-be, Adam Schiff, for example) to please support the "Nuclear Family Priority Act", HR 692. This will slow our population growth from chain migration (adult siblings and adult children) by an estimated 110,000 per year. Yet it will expedite the reunification of married couples and of parents with their young children. Sounds fair, balanced and sensible to me!

philpy at 10:43 PM July 27, 2012

To curb world hunger, think capitalism.

Concernedcitizen53 at 12:26 AM July 27, 2012

While trying to feed millions who migrate across borders to escape from drought and famine, why not also offer sterilization to those who are willing to stop having more babies? It might be the best way to use 'aid' to free women and men from the burden of too many mouths to feed. Men and women of child bearing age will benefit. Less babies will be born into a cycle of starvation and death.

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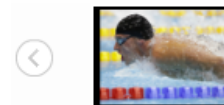
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