“So long as freedom from hunger is only half achieved, so long as two thirds of the nations have food deficits, no citizen, no nation can afford to be satisfied. We have the ability, as members of the human race. We have the means, we have the capacity to eliminate hunger from the face of the earth in our lifetime. We need only the will.”

J. F. Kennedy
The Problem

The real facts about malnutrition in the lush tropical archipelago of 7,000 islands called the Philippines surprises not only visitors to Manila but also well-educated Filipinos. They are surprised to learn for example, that the Philippines is a food deficit country and, after Indonesia, it is the largest importer of rice in Southeast Asia. They are further shocked to learn that the Filipinos have one of the lowest protein and calorie per capita intakes in all of Asia including India.

Despite some impressive technological advances in agriculture research, food production in the Philippines has barely kept pace with its rapid population growth: the total land area of the islands is approximately equal to the State of Illinois, but there is three times the population. The number of people in the islands has increased by almost 600% since 1900, and today it is continuing to increase at a rate of 3%.

The problem of inadequate food supplies is compounded by inadequate income for the normal person. Nutritionists estimate that 60% of the population cannot afford diets which meet full "Recommended Daily Allowances", and 35% of the population cannot even afford "adequate" diets. The reasons for this are many. The average size family is 7.8 and close to 50% of the entire population of 44 million are dependent children below the age of 15. As a result per capita GNP is low at $250 per year compared to over $3,000 in Japan. Distribution of wealth reveals another side of the problem: 20% of the population receives close to 60% of the national income.

Poor food habits, a general unawareness of good nutrition practices, and inadequate health protection at the village level contribute to the overall Philippine malnutrition problem. Studies have shown that poor weaning habits and taboos during pregnancy, lactation, and childhood illness severely retard the growth of many young Filipinos.

The combination of these three factors—lack of food, inadequate income and lack of nutrition education—has created a grim nationwide problem of malnutrition. The infant mortality rate is high at approximately 7 per 100 babies compared to 2 per 100 in the U.S. The number of deaths among the children in the 1-4 year range is 12 times as high as in the U.S. Of some 9 million Filipino pre-school children, over 3 million suffer from some form of malnourishment. And children that survive the first few difficult years still face the specter of malnourishment through their elementary school years.
The Strategy

These facts and figures are both surprising and grim. However, the Philippine Government, with the help and advice from A.I.D., the U.N. Agencies, and American Voluntary Agencies, are meeting the challenge head on. The lead was taken by the Philippine government in 1971 when it launched a nationwide "Targeted Nutrition Program", which involves the Philippine Government, American Voluntary Agencies, A.I.D., and other organizations in working together to overcome undernourishment and its bitter harvest. The goal of the program is a simple but challenging one: eliminate malnourishment in the Philippines as a major problem within 10 years. This accelerated program, now under the direct leadership of the nation's dynamic First Lady, Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos, has led to 1) an intensive nationwide nutrition education program, and 2) increased emphasis on locating the severely malnourished child and providing it with food.

A.I.D.'s Food for Peace program has been designed to support these two strategies and has become an integral part of the total effort to eliminate malnourishment. A.I.D. accomplishes this by channeling all of its donated Food for Peace commodities through American Voluntary Agencies such as CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and Church World Services (CWS). These voluntary agencies, which are also supported financially by the Philippine government, are well equipped with organizational structures in the poor rural and urban areas so they can efficiently distribute PL-480 foods and provide the much needed nutrition education at the same time.

Although feeding programs vary from village to village, the emphasis of the Food for Peace/Voluntary Agency programs is placed on three priority areas:

1) Maternal Child Health
2) School Feeding
3) Food for Work
President Marcos and U.S. Ambassador William H. Sullivan lead officials of the Philippine and United States Governments in signing a project agreement providing joint support to the Philippine Food and Nutrition Program. The First Lady, Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos, signs the document in her capacity as Chairman of the Nutrition Center of the Philippines.
1. Targeted Maternal and Child Health Program (TMCH)

The major objective of the Philippine government's nutrition program is to reduce the prevalence of severe and moderate infant and pre-school malnutrition by channeling food commodities to these vulnerable groups through nutrition centers. A second objective is to provide nutrition and family planning education at each of the designated TMCH centers.

Program mechanics are simple. Any community or local organization can apply through community leaders or local government authorities to be included in the TMCH program. But before applying the community arranges to have its malnourished children identified by weighing which is conducted on a barrio-wide basis by trained nutritionists.

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the TMCH program is "Operation Timbang." In the local language of Tagalog "Timbang" means "weigh" and at the TMCH centers the enrolled child is weighed by the nutritionist in the presence of the mother so she can see its nutritional status on the weight charts. Through the government's efforts to popularize their nutrition program "Timbang" has become a household word synonymous with good nutrition.

Underweight infants from 6 to 11 months are enrolled, and children aged 12 through 60 months can also be enrolled if their body weight is 75% or less of normal weight. If a community application for food assistance is approved, a TMCH center is set up by nutritionists and nutrition aides, and nutrition classes begin as the food arrives. CRS, for example, has over 100 well qualified Filipino nutritionists who work out of these centers. Many of these dedicated young specialists provide nutrition and family planning education and food aid to thousands of children and their mothers. In Fiscal Year 1975 about 55 million pounds of PL-480 commodities, such as Corn Soy Blend (CSB) and Rolled Oats were distributed at 1,500 TMCH centers to 500,000 malnourished children and over 100,000 mothers. In addition, the Philippine government is operating more than a thousand other TMCH centers without direct U.S. food assistance.
TMCH programs are nationwide. Here pre-school feeding and mother education classes are taking place in the province of Laguna.
2. Targeted School Feeding Program

Special studies have shown that the majority of Filipino elementary students are either underweight or frankly malnourished. The current average elementary school child caloric intake is about 30% less than the desired Philippine national standard. Teachers see the results of this shortcoming in poor attendance and drowsiness in class.

Thus the School Feeding Program was designed to correct this deficiency. Home Economics teachers and principles of schools organize school children in the less prosperous areas such as city slums or depressed rural areas. A weight survey of children in grades one to four is made to identify the undernourished who are eligible to participate in the program. Once the screening is completed, the school officials make a formal application through their Department of Education to receive supplemental food each day through the School Feeding Program. This food generally takes the form of the “nutribun,” the nutritious bread food developed by AID Food for Peace and nutrition officers. The basic ingredient of the nutribun is PL-480 soy fortified flour which is supplied to the qualified schools through CARE and CRS channels. The Government of the Philippines pays for all inland transportation costs of the Food for Peace flour to the schools.

Nutribuns are baked in school ovens or at local commercial bakeries. A small token charge is made for each participating pupil (the equivalent of 1½ US cents) to cover the cost of non-Food for Peace ingredients such as yeast, sugar, and oil. This token payment also helps pay for baking and delivery costs.

The nutribun is not a substitute for regular meals, but a supplement to their present diets. With each bun supplying 17 grams of protein and 500 calories, it provides about 25% of the daily recommended calorie/protein standard. In simpler terms, the protein content in a nutribun is equivalent to nearly three eggs or a small can of evaporated milk, and the calorie content is equivalent to 2½ cups of cooked rice or six cobs of corn.

In Fiscal Year 1975 over 100 million nutribuns were delivered to over 1 million Filipino students participating in this unique program.
3. Food For Work

The PL-480 Food for Work program is technically not part of the Philippine Targeted Nutrition Program. However, it is an integral part of the Philippine National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) program. The thrust of the Food for Work program is aimed at improving social and economic conditions in the rural sector by encouraging self-help endeavors and by employing the unemployed and underemployed. In accordance with NEDA priorities, emphasis is placed on those projects which directly help expand food production, such as irrigation, bench terracing of rice land, and farm-to-market road projects. Other projects may include small bridges, construction, reforestation, land reform, attendance in cooperative seminars, vocational training, family planning seminars, and many other local self-help community development activities.

Any community or organization may participate in this diverse and flexible program. In most cases barrio people themselves and local civic organizations survey the needs of the community and decide on a particular project. Projects may also be developed by similar groups in the towns and big cities.

After a community has selected a particular project, it then makes detailed plans and arranges for the necessary non-labor inputs such as building materials. Once evidence can be shown that this “capital support” is forthcoming, the community submits a Food for Work proposal to the American Voluntary Agency representative in the meantime, closely monitors each food distribution to ensure fair distribution.

The success of the program has made “Food for Work”, like “Timbang”, a familiar term in the Filipino vocabulary. Since the beginning of the program over 20,000 projects have been successfully completed. Each year thousands more are developed locally throughout the Philippines to improve conditions in the cities and barrios.

This is one form of U.S. foreign assistance to the Philippines which is directly and easily available to ordinary citizens who have worthwhile ideas for helping their community help itself.

Workers on these projects usually receive 5 pounds of nutritious Food for Peace foodstuffs per worker for each day of the community project. The Voluntary Agency representative in the meantime, closely monitors each food distribution to ensure fair distribution.

The success of the program has made “Food for Work”, like “Timbang”, a familiar term in the Filipino vocabulary. Since the beginning of the program over 20,000 projects have been successfully completed. Each year thousands more are developed locally throughout the Philippines to improve conditions in the cities and barrios.

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Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation

Perhaps the Nutrition and the Food for Work programs found their greatest usefulness after disastrous floods wrecked havoc in July of 1972. Continuous torrential rains fell for the proverbial 40 days, crippling the nation’s economic life and causing death and destruction. The low flat Central Luzon plain of the Philippines became an extended lake covering more than 2,000 square miles. The flood waters eventually receded after 30 days, but the losses had been immense.

- 653 dead
- 400,000 homeless
- 230,000 hectares of rice land inundated
- 100,000 farmers lost their crops
- over 3,000 kilometers of roads, 200 bridges, and 21,000 school classrooms damaged or destroyed.

Shortly after the floods began, President Ferdinand E. Marcos declared a state of national emergency, and many international agencies and nations pitched in to help the Philippine people recover from this calamity.

The people of the United States, through the Voluntary Agencies and government agencies responded immediately by transporting by helicopter relief medicines and foodstuffs, principally the ready-to-eat nutribuns. Over 30 million nutribuns were distributed during the initial relief effort. Later, as the flood waters receded, rehabilitation efforts got under way, and once again Food for Peace helped to quickly increase the food supply for thousands of families. Supplemental food was provided to flood victims until farmers and workers earned a daily ration of Food for Work food by helping in emergency repairs to damaged flood control levees and irrigation systems. Food commodities distributed through the program reached up to 250,000 family members daily. Existing Nutrition Programs were expanded to reach an additional 800,000 children with PL-480 foods.

And even today, after the flooded regions of Central Luzon have returned to normalcy, continued improvements are being made by people helping themselves through Food for Work projects.
Participating

Persons interested in learning more about any of the programs mentioned in this pamphlet should contact the concerned U.S. Voluntary Agencies listed below or the Food for Peace Division, USAID/Philippines, Magsaysay Center, APO 96528.

The Voluntary Agencies concerned and their Manila addresses are:

1. Cooperative for American Relief Everywhere, Inc. (CARE)
   FGR Building, Buendia, Makati
   P.O. Box 1810 Makati Commercial Center
   Republic of the Philippines

2. Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
   2655 F.B. Harrison Street, Pasay City
   P.O. Box 1160, Manila
   Republic of the Philippines

3. Church World Services (CWS)
   879 Epifanio delos Santos Avenue
   Quezon City
   P.O. Box 1767, Manila
   Republic of the Philippines

PHILIPPINE CALORIE AND PROTEIN INTAKES
COMPARSED TO OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES*

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<th>Country</th>
<th>Year of Survey</th>
<th>Year of Survey</th>
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<th>Per Capita Calorie</th>
<th>Per Capita Protein (grams)</th>
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