

1

intermediate level

lesson 1

What are Hunger and Malnutrition and Who are the Hungry?

The lesson has been designed to be covered in 45 – 60 minutes, but it can be covered in greater or less detail to fit the needs of the class.

Teachers are encouraged to cover all objectives and content areas.

For each objective, a variety of activities and discussion points are provided from which teachers can select those most appropriate for their students.

The materials for each lesson can be found in the Materials section beginning on page 75.



Information for teachers

To begin their study of world hunger, it is important that students understand the main functions of food and the importance of food for good health, growth and development. They should know that all countries and regions have people who are hungry, some more than others, and that we are working together to solve the problem of hunger in the world. The topic of hunger should be presented in a manner that encourages hope for a better future where we all have the food we need for an active and healthy life.

Objective 1 provides an overview of the importance of getting the nutrients we need. Nutrition is presented simply, as providing energy and nutrients to maintain health and life and to help us develop and grow. If a more advanced study of vitamins and minerals is appropriate, more detail can be found in Lesson 1 of the Secondary Level.

Objective 2 introduces the importance of getting a variety of foods to meet our nutritional needs. A simple picture is presented to show the different kinds of foods we need and to illustrate a typical meal pattern that is followed in many parts of the world and provides variety.

Objective 3 presents the scope of the problem of hunger and identifies those most at risk of hunger. It is important for students to understand the magnitude of the problem, without feeling hopeless about it. One way of achieving this is to emphasize that all countries and regions have hunger, to some degree, and that we are working together to solve the problem of hunger. Additional information providing an overview of the current world situation is available in “Hunger and Malnutrition in the World” in the Introduction.



Objective 1 To understand the consequences of hunger and malnutrition

Materials



Fact Sheet: Food Gives Us...

Concept

Adequate food is essential for an active and healthy life

Content



Food is essential for life. To be healthy and well nourished, we must have adequate amounts of a variety of good-quality, safe foods. Without adequate nutrition, children and young people cannot develop their potential to the fullest and adults will experience difficulty in maintaining or expanding theirs.



Food provides us with the energy we need for growth, physical activity and the basic body functions (breathing, thinking, temperature control, blood circulation and digestion). Food also supplies us with the materials to build and maintain the body and to promote resistance to disease.



These different functions are made possible by the nutrients contained in food. The types of nutrients in food are carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, minerals and water. All foods contain one or more of these nutrients in varying amounts. Each type of nutrient serves particular functions. This is why diversity in our diets is important for good health. We need all of the nutrients, provided by a variety of foods, for all of our body processes.



Too much food or an improper balance of food can contribute to poor health and the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

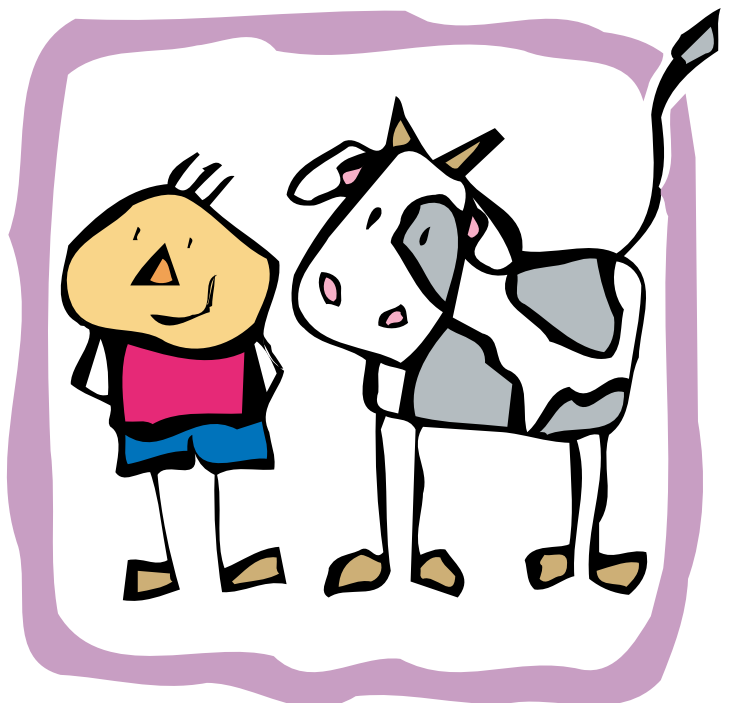


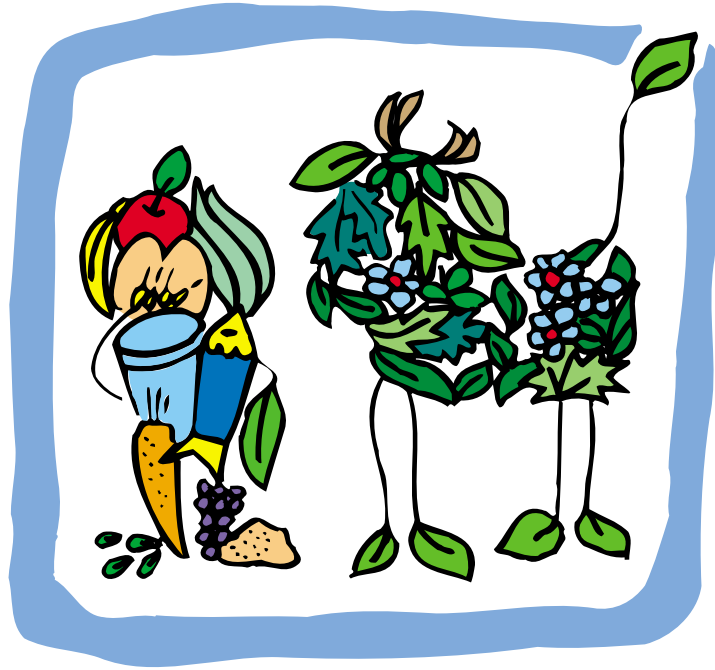
Good nutrition also depends on keeping food safe to eat and preserving its nutritional quality.


Activities




Discuss the above, points listed as time allows and according to the students' background and needs. Tell students that food contains substances that are essential for life. Some of these are in quantities that are so tiny that we cannot see them, but without them our body systems will not work. These substances are all found in food, but in many different foods, so we must eat a variety of foods to make sure that we get all of them in our diets.






 The fact sheet *Food Gives Us...* provides general information on nutrition, including the functions of the energy nutrients: proteins, carbohydrates and fats. Food sources are listed for these three energy nutrients, as well as for four vitamins and minerals: vitamin A, B vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin D and iodine. Pass out or hold up the fact sheet and discuss the nutrients listed. Ask students to make a list of the foods they eat in a typical day, to see if their foods provide the variety needed to obtain the nutrients listed. For instance, do their lists contain foods rich in protein, vitamin A, iron? If they do not contain foods rich in one or more of the listed nutrients, discuss with students what foods could be added to their diets to provide the needed nutrients.

Concept Hunger affects the well-being of people, nations and the world

Content  The strength of a nation depends on the strength of its people. When people are healthy, strong and well nourished, they have the energy, creativity, security and courage to solve problems, create great works of art and music, contribute to scientific advances and live their daily lives with dignity and joy, ultimately advancing civilization to new heights. Well-fed citizens are productive citizens who contribute to their society. People who are not well nourished do not have the energy to work or to learn and often need constant medical care. The costs in lost potential, as well as the costs of the health care system, can be staggering for a society.

Activity  Discuss the issues listed above with students. Ask them to name great people in their community, their country or the world, from either the past or the present. List the names of other people, whom the students might recognize, who have changed the course of their nation or world. Ask students to imagine the difference in the world if these people had been too malnourished, hungry or ill to do the work that they did. Tell the students how important it is to all of us that each person in the world be able to function at their full potential. Lost potential hurts us all.



Objective 2 To know that we need many different foods

Materials



Picture: We Need Many Different Foods

Concept

People need many different foods to be healthy and to grow

Content



Even if we get enough food to meet our energy needs, we can still be unhealthy if we do not get the right kinds of different foods that we need. Because different nutrients are found in different foods, we have to eat many kinds of foods to get all of the things that we need.



Most regions have a traditional or local pattern of eating that provides the variety needed for health and growth. For instance, a staple food such as rice, wheat, maize, cassava or potatoes will provide the main food, to which smaller amounts of vegetables, meat, fish or poultry and sauces are typically added. When the accompanying foods provide a variety of vegetables, meats or legumes (beans, peas and nuts), as well as sauces containing fat and sugar, the traditional, local diet will provide the nutrients needed for health and growth.

Activities



Tell students that people all over the world have very different ways of eating. Pass out or hold up the picture *We Need Many Different Foods* and describe the meal that is being served to this family. It is made up of a large portion of a staple food such as a starchy vegetable or grain. Ask students what it looks like (rice, cassava and potato). Ask the students what else they see in smaller amounts (fruit, meats, vegetable slices and sauces).



Tell students that this is how most people in the world eat. They have a staple food, then add smaller amounts of accompanying foods. Discuss how staple foods around the world are typically starchy foods such as rice and other cereals, potato and cassava. Discuss how the accompanying foods may be vegetables, beans, peas, nuts, meats, fish, egg or sauces made from these foods.



Tell students that the accompanying foods provide the different kinds of nutrients that we need to be healthy. And that we should try to eat different ones every day. We should also try to eat fruits after meals or for snacks.



Ask the students what their meals are like and ask if they also have a staple food with smaller amounts of accompanying foods like the family in the picture.



Using the picture as a guide, ask students to create a list of their own local staple foods and the accompanying foods they add. This activity can be combined



with the last activity and use the list of foods previously created, if appropriate. Ask students to count how many different accompanying foods they can list and explain how having many different kinds of foods provides the variety of many different nutrients that they need to grow and to be healthy.



Objective 3 To know who is hungry and malnourished in the world

Materials



Picture: Map of World Hunger
Fact Sheet: Who is Vulnerable?

Concepts

- Hunger is not getting enough of the right kinds of foods to meet nutritional needs
- All countries and regions have some people who are hungry

Content



Hunger is not having enough food and not having the variety of foods needed to meet nutritional needs. Hunger is a problem all over the world. Every country and every region has some people who do not get enough to eat. While hunger is present in every country, some countries and regions have a greater problem feeding their people.



In the year 2001, 800 million people are hungry and do not get enough to eat all year long. The goal of the new millennium is to make sure that everyone has enough food and the right kinds of food to eat.



Hunger exists for many reasons, and it will take much work to solve the problems it causes. Many people are working together in all parts of the world to identify causes and search for solutions to the hunger problem.



All people, including students, can be a part of this effort by learning as much as they can about hunger and how to prevent it.

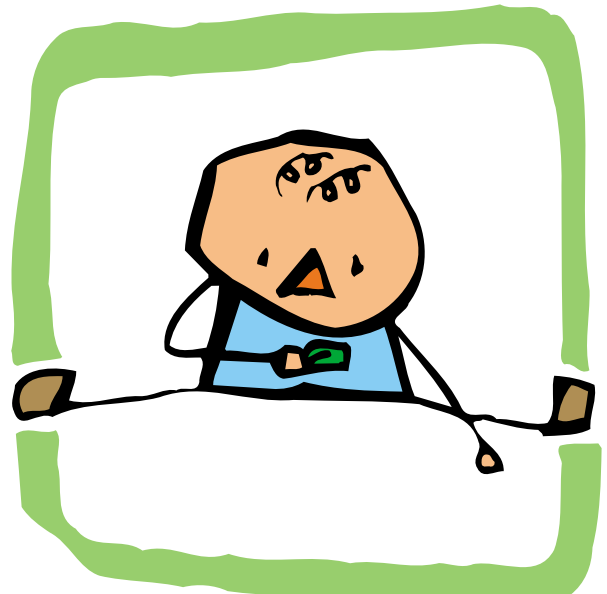
Activities





Hold up the picture *Map of World Hunger*, which indicates areas with serious hunger and malnutrition problems. Explain how the map shows the areas where many people do not get all of the foods that they need. Point out the areas with the largest numbers of hungry people. Explain that all countries have some hungry people.




Identify your area/region of the world and discuss your own area's problem with hunger. Ask students if they know who might be hungry in their area.





 Discuss how hunger occurs for many reasons, how it takes much work to solve the problem, and how many people are working to learn why people are hungry and to find ways to ensure that there is good food, all year long, for everyone.


 Discuss that the people in the world can work together so that everyone will have enough and the right kinds of food to eat.

Concept Hunger and malnutrition exist in some form in every country among certain vulnerable groups

Content  Although some countries have more hungry people – both in terms of total numbers and as a percentage of the population – no country is free from hunger and malnutrition. To work toward solutions to the problem of hunger, we must know who the hungry are.

 The fact sheet *Who is Vulnerable?* provides a list of vulnerable groups throughout the world. Discuss how, within each area, the people who are most likely to be hungry are the poor, people without education or a secure job, people without land on which to grow food and people with special nutritional needs, such as children (who need to grow) and pregnant and nursing women. Wars, civil disturbances, climate and environmental changes and other emergencies such as floods and earthquakes often cause both short- and long-term hunger in an area.

Activities  Review the list of vulnerable groups given in the fact sheet *Who is Vulnerable?* As time permits, ask students why each group is vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition.

 Relate the hunger problems in your area to the vulnerable groups. How many of the hungry people are from the vulnerable groups listed? For instance, is your local problem with hunger more related to victims of conflict, to those who are socially disadvantaged or to migrant populations? Ask students if they can think of other groups in their area who might be vulnerable to hunger, and why.

Summary

Lesson 1 introduced students to the importance of food for growth and body functioning, in order to provide a context for the discussion of hunger. The scope and global perspective of hunger were presented, as well as an overview of the groups who are vulnerable to hunger throughout the world. After completion of Lesson 1 students should be able to state that:

- Food and the nutrients it contains are essential to life.
- We need a variety of foods for good health.
- Many of the traditional diets that are healthful contain a starchy staple food and smaller amounts of accompanying foods.
- All countries have problems with hunger and malnutrition.
- Certain groups are more vulnerable to hunger.
- Hunger in the world affects everyone.



Fact Sheet: Food Gives Us...

Food gives us the energy and nutrients the body needs to maintain health and life, to grow and develop, to move, work, play, think and learn.

The body needs a variety of nutrients – proteins, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins and minerals – and these come from the foods we eat.

- **Proteins** are needed to build and maintain muscle, blood, skin and bones and other tissues and organs in the body.
- **Carbohydrates and fats** mainly provide energy, although some fats are also needed as building materials and to help the body use certain vitamins.
- **Vitamins and minerals** are needed in smaller amounts than protein, fat and carbohydrates, but they are essential for good nutrition. They help the body work properly and stay healthy. Some minerals also make up part of the body's tissues, for example, calcium and fluoride are found in bones and teeth and iron is found in the blood.
- **Fibre** (or roughage) and **clean water** are also needed for a good diet.

All foods contain nutrients but different foods contain different amounts of various nutrients.

- **Foods rich in proteins** are all types of meat, poultry, fish, beans, peas, soybeans, groundnuts, milk, cheese, yoghurt and eggs.
- **Foods rich in carbohydrates** are rice, maize, wheat and other cereals, all types of potatoes, yams and starchy roots and sugars.
- **Foods rich in fats** are oils, some meat and meat products, lard, butter, ghee and some other milk products, margarine, some types of fish, nuts and soybeans.
- **Foods rich in vitamin A** are dark-green vegetables, carrots, dark-yellow sweet potato, pumpkin, mango, papaya, eggs and liver.
- **Foods rich in B vitamins** are dark-green vegetables, groundnuts, beans, peas, cereals, meat, fish and eggs.
- **Foods rich in vitamin C** are fruits and most vegetables, including potatoes.
- **Foods rich in iron** are meat, fish, groundnuts, beans, peas, dark-green leafy vegetables and dried fruits.



Fact Sheet: Who is Vulnerable?

Victims of conflict

- internally displaced people
- refugees
- landless returnees
- landmine disabled
- war invalids
- war widows and orphans

Migrant workers and their families

- migrant herders tending other people's herds
- migrant labourers seeking seasonal work
- female-headed households left behind by migrant male labourers

Marginal populations in urban areas

- school dropouts
- unemployed people
- rickshaw and motorcycle taxi drivers
- recently arrived migrants
- people living in slums on city outskirts
- dock workers and porters and construction workers
- workers in the informal sector
- homeless people
- orphans
- street children and people living alone on small fixed incomes or without support (elderly, pensioners, widows and widowers, divorcees, invalids, handicapped people)
- beggars

People belonging to at-risk social groups

- indigenous people
- ethnic minorities
- illiterate households

Some or all members of low-income households within vulnerable livelihood systems

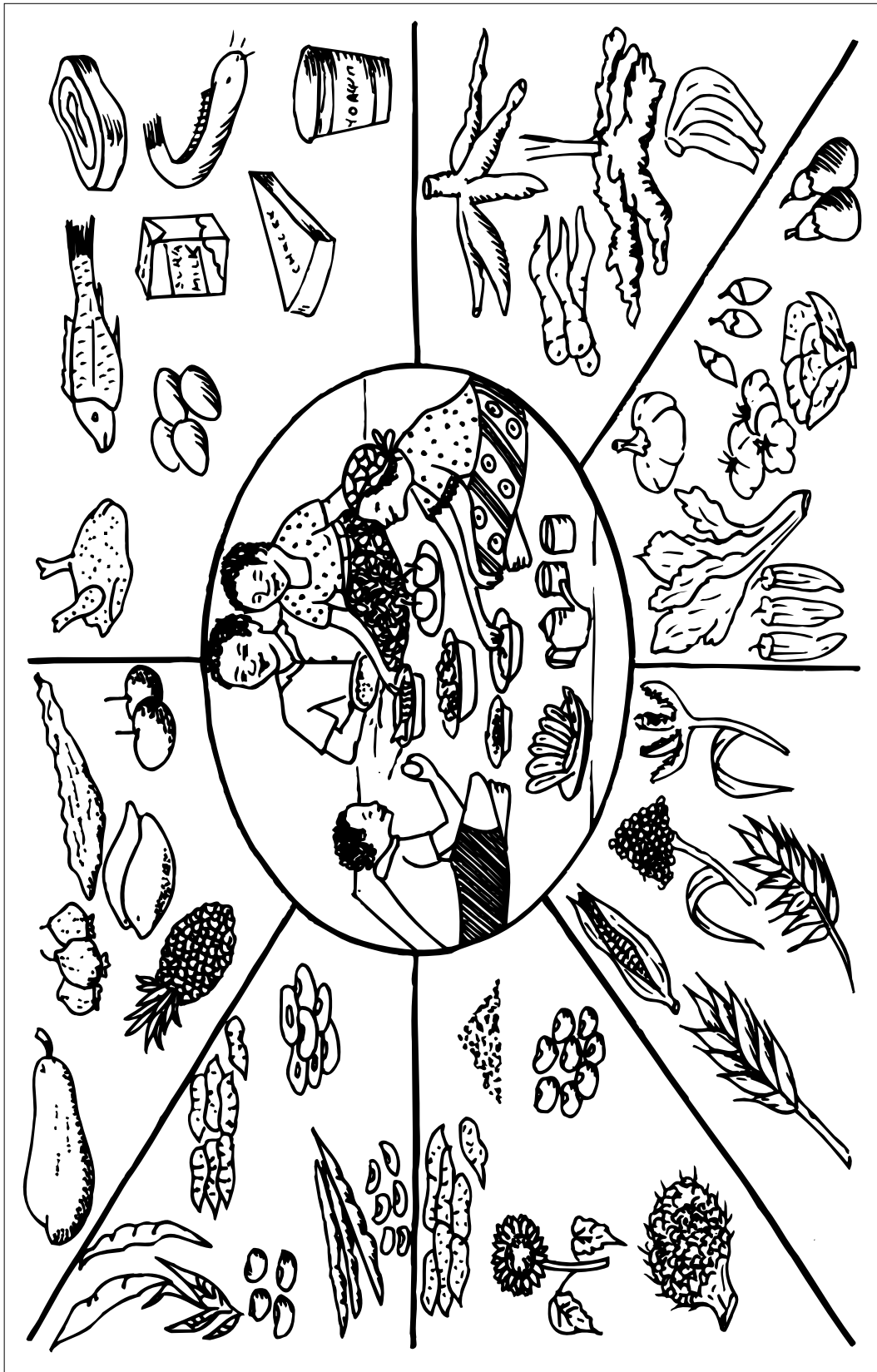
- subsistence or small-scale farmers
- female-headed farming households
- landless peasants
- agricultural labourers
- fishers
- nomadic pastoralists
- sedentary herders, small-scale livestock producers and agropastoralists
- forest dwellers
- peri-urban small-scale agricultural producers and market gardeners
- day or contract labourers

Dependent people living alone or in low-income households with large family size

- elderly people
- women of childbearing age, especially pregnant and nursing mothers
- children under five years old, especially infants
- disabled and ill people

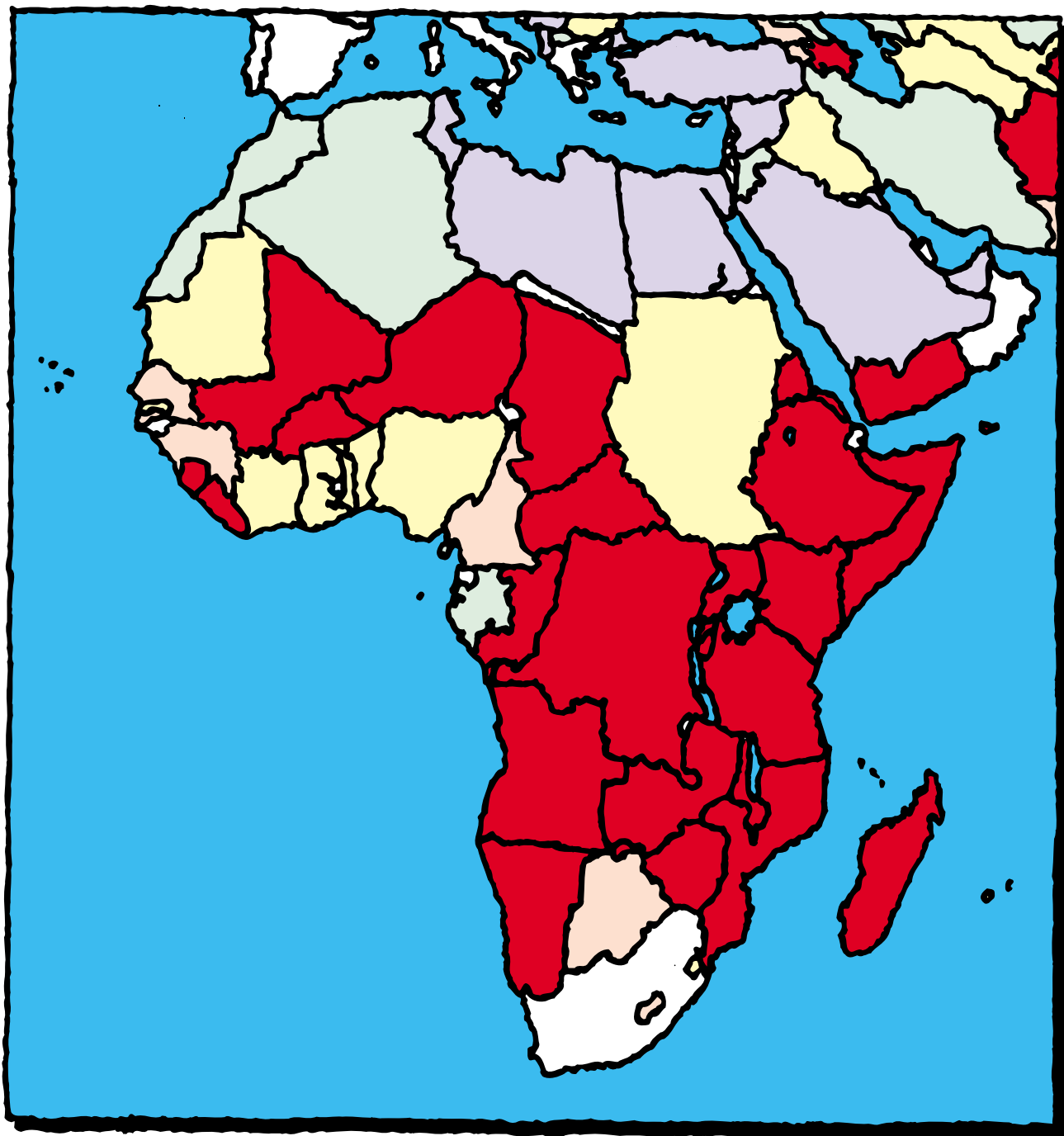


Picture: We Need Many Different Foods

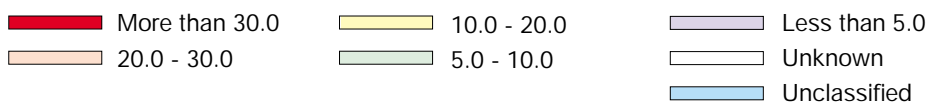




Picture: Map of World Hunger
Proportion of undernourished people (1996-98)
Africa



Percentage of undernourished individuals



Source: ESN/WAICENT-KIMS, 2000



Picture: Map of World Hunger
Proportion of undernourished people (1996-98)
South America



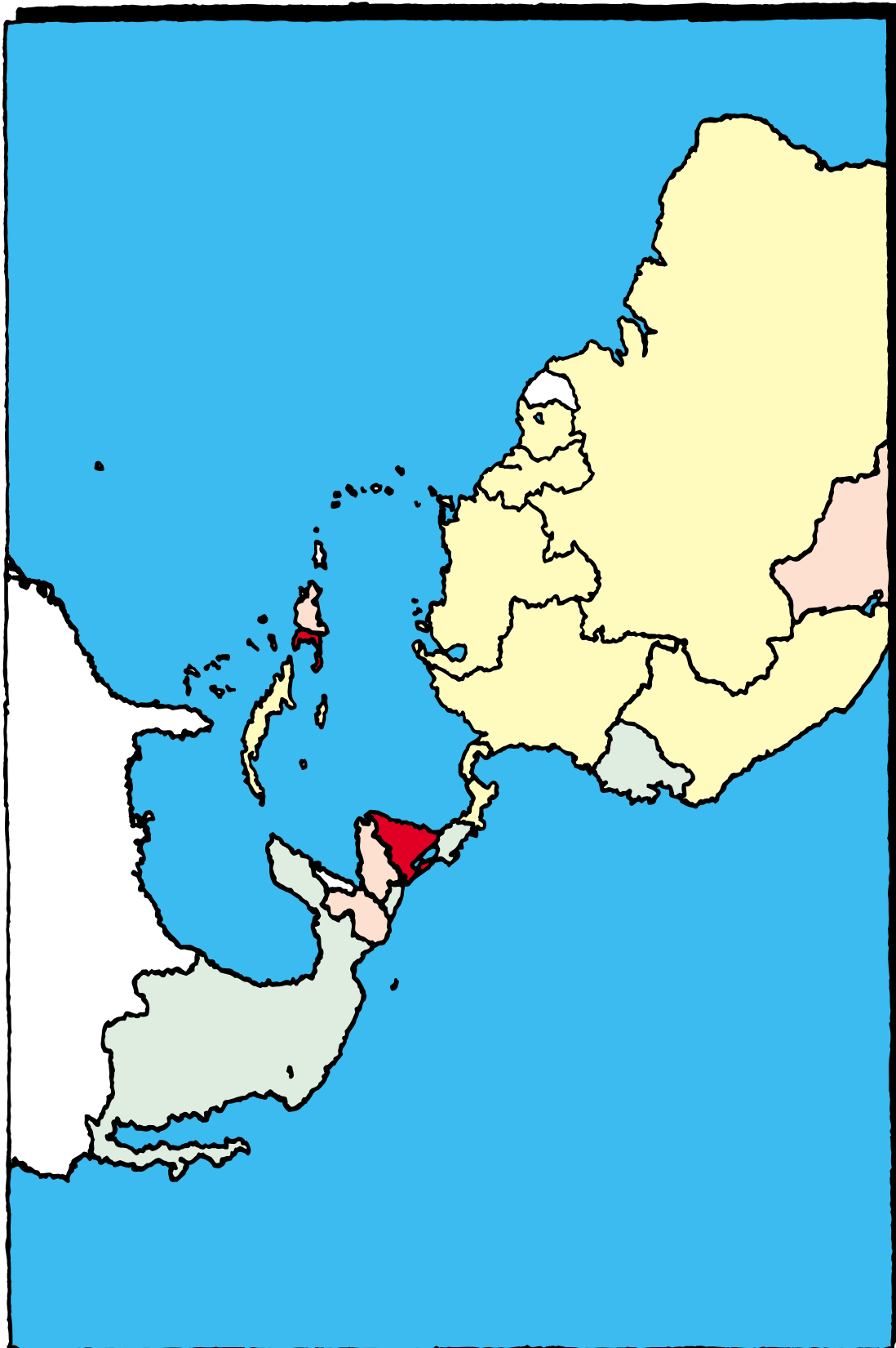
Percentage of undernourished individuals



Source: ESN/WAICENT-KIMS, 2000



Picture: Map of World Hunger
Proportion of undernourished people (1996-98)
Central America



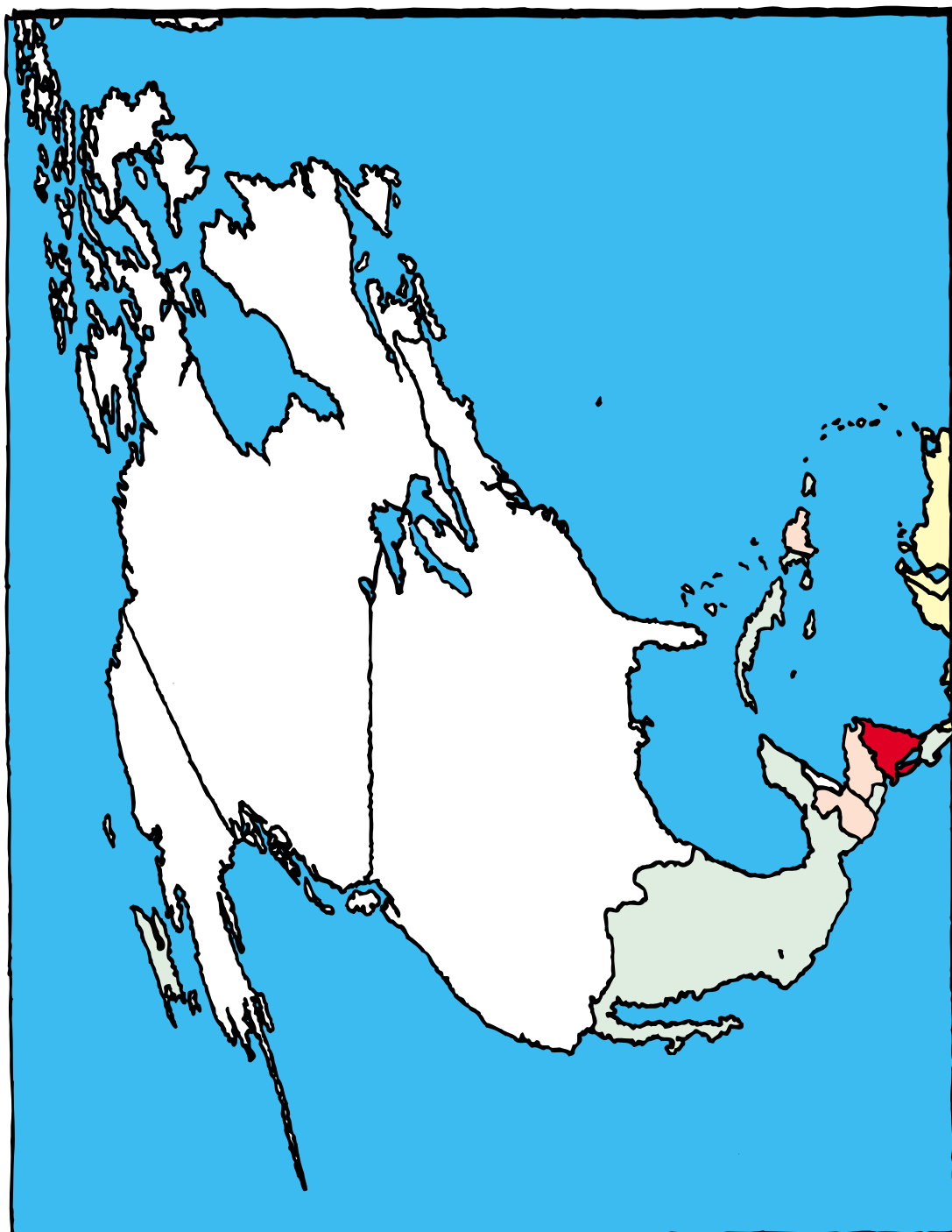
Percentage of undernourished individuals



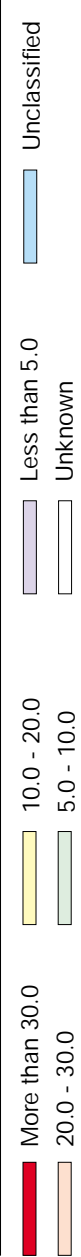
Source: ESN/WAICENT-KIMS, 2000



Picture: Map of World Hunger
Proportion of undernourished people (1996-98)
North America



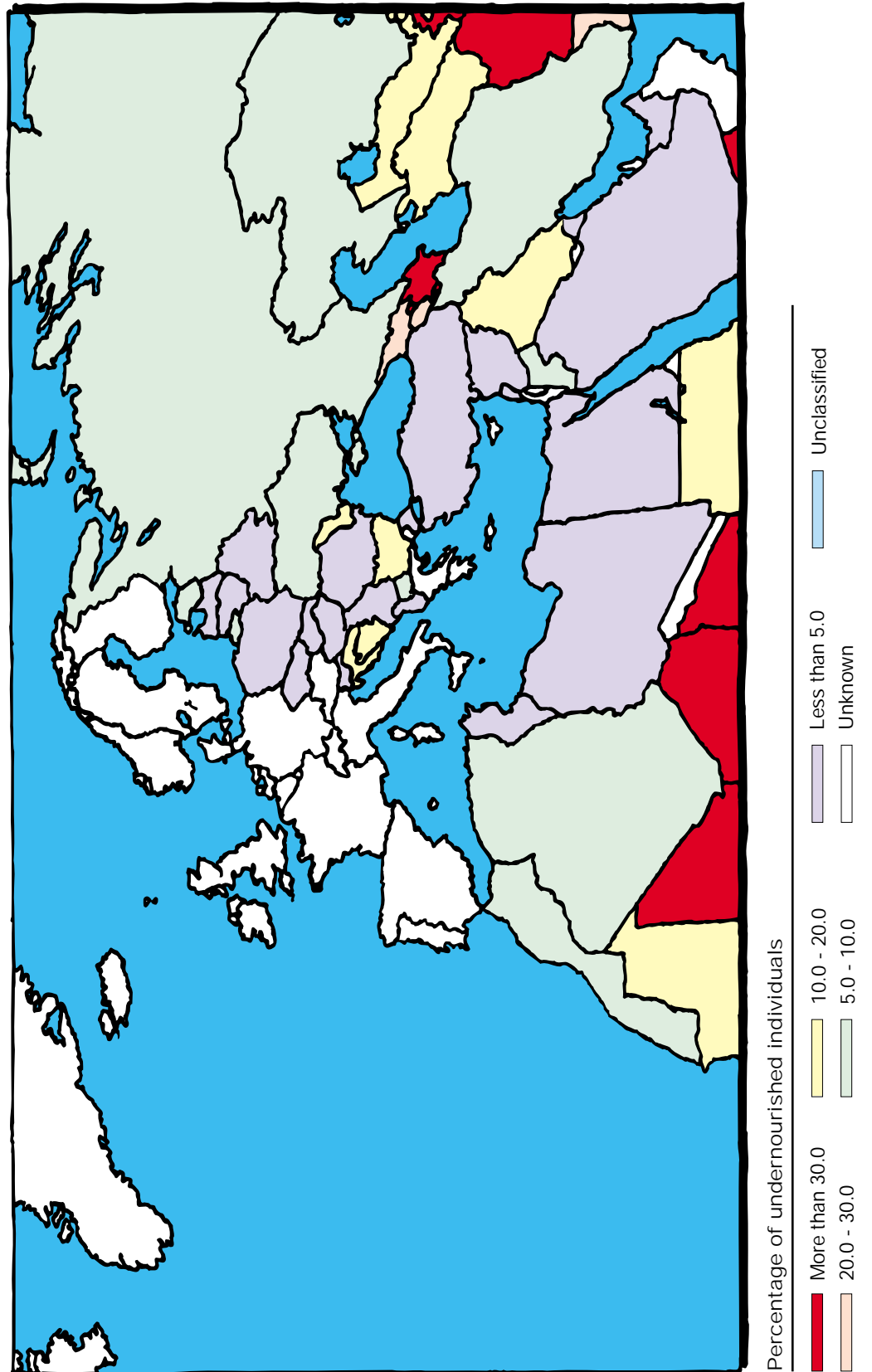
Percentage of undernourished individuals



Source: ESN/WAICENT-KIMS, 2000

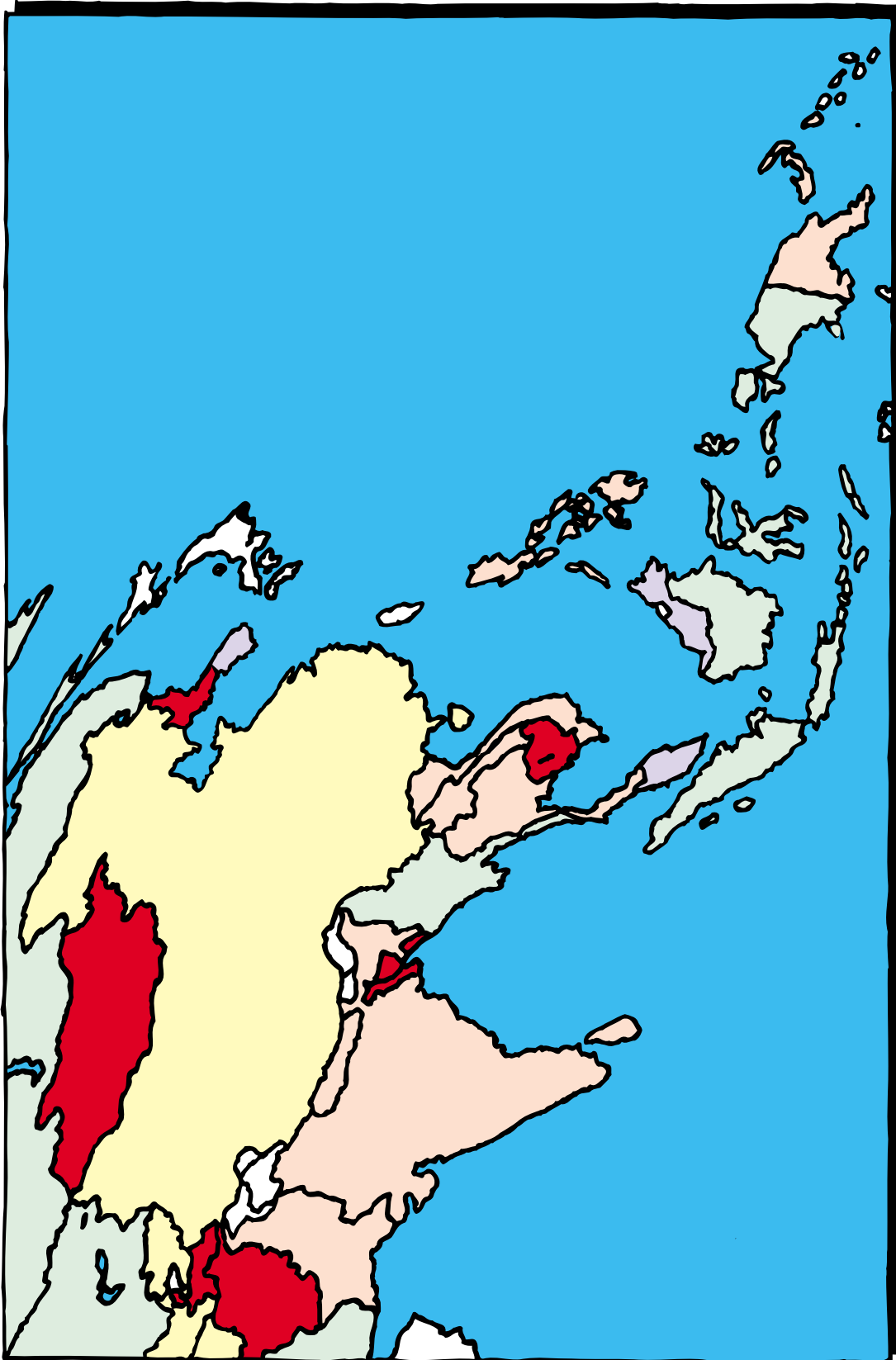


Picture: Map of World Hunger
Proportion of undernourished people (1996-98)
Europe





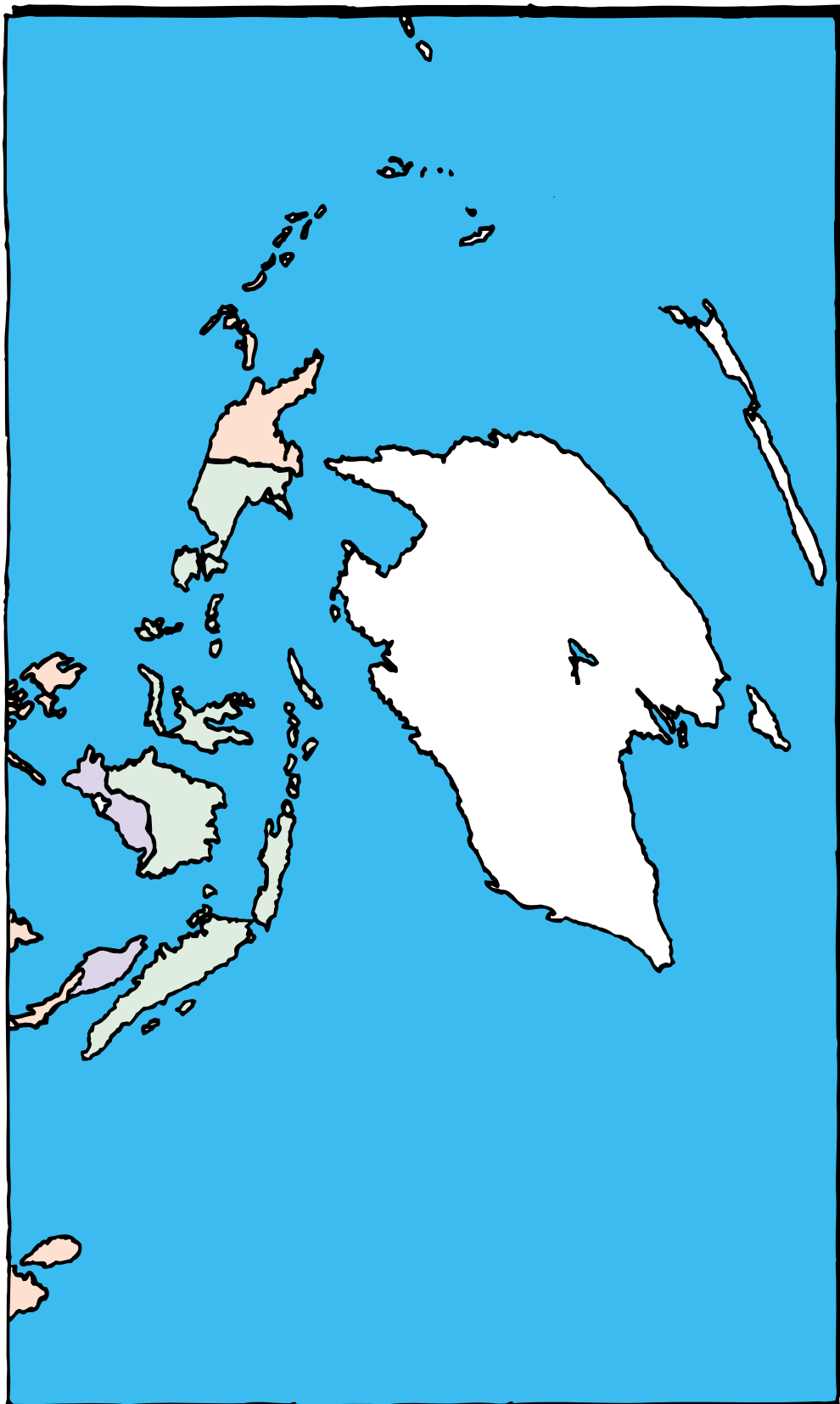
Picture: Map of World Hunger
Proportion of undernourished people (1996-98)
Asia



Source: ESN/WAICENT-KIMS, 2000



Picture: Map of World Hunger
Proportion of undernourished people (1996-98)
Oceania



Percentage of undernourished individuals



Source: ESN/WAICENT-KIMS, 2000