

# Selling Starvation – now updated with Cereal photo, SCF advert and comment from World Food Programme

---

 [blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2010/07/14/selling-starvation/](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/polis/2010/07/14/selling-starvation/)

2010-7-14

The new CEO of Save The Children UK , Justin Forsyth has tweeted this appeal:

*400,000 children face starvation in #Niger over the summer. Any ideas v welcome on how to get this hidden emergency some attention?*

This was the subject for today's session of the [Polis Summer School](#), looking at Representations of Suffering.

First, a lecture on how journalism portrays poverty, injustice and deprivation as well as emergencies such as the haiti Earthquake.

Then we had a very good guest speaker, Elizabeth Ford, from the [Guardian Katine project](#) who explained how they tried to bring complex African development issues to life through their multi-media platform.

Then I got the students to try to answer Justin's question. They role-played as tabloid hacks, serious online journalists and NGO communications officers.

What was interesting was how quickly they adopted some pretty hard-nosed tactics for getting attention for a little known story: celebrities, graphic photography, Facebook groups etc. Loads of clever, direct, practical ideas.

But my favourite was the one that I am almost certain wouldn't work.

How about getting Kellogs to put pictures of Niger children on their cornflake packets?

You could connect to parents through their children looking at pictures of (happy, smiling) Niger children argued my wannabe humanitarian communicators. Add in some basic information and links and you can bring the issues literally into people's homes.

I am still not sure if this is genius or just sick. Selling starvation with your morning cereal is either an act of gross irony or a brilliant way to connect.

My second favourite idea was to create a version of, or application for Farmville that somehow incorporated African pastoralists and used the social media game to raise the cosequences of food prices and drought. But I can't believe someone hasn't tried that already.

Well, that's a flavour of what we came up with in a 60 minute seminar. I wait to see what Justin thinks.

UPDATE!!

Well it's not Niger and starvation exactly but it is selling anti-starvation on a Crunchy Nut Cornflake packet:

And here is how Save The Children actually chose to publicise the cause in The Guardian newspaper on the Saturday after our seminar:

- Copyright © 2014 London School of Economics and Political Science



**FIRST THE LAYER OF FAT UNDER THE SKIN BREAKS DOWN. THEN MUSCLES START TO WASTE AWAY. WITHOUT NOURISHMENT THE LIVER, SPLEEN AND KIDNEYS BEGIN TO FAIL. THE VITAL ORGANS, IRREPARABLY DAMAGED, CONTINUE TO SWELL AND FINALLY STOP WORKING ALTOGETHER. THIS IS HOW STARVATION COULD KILL 400,000 CHILDREN IN NIGER.**

Poor rains and high food prices have left Niger on the brink of a food crisis. Without aid, an estimated 400,000 children could die this summer. Save the Children have people on the ground, but we need your help. Just £50 could save a child through one of our treatment programmes. Please make a donation today. Call 0800 8 595 021 or visit [savethechildren.org.uk](http://savethechildren.org.uk)



**Save the Children**