



ETHICAL EVENTS  
learning to manage a small planet

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Dear Richard Maylan

There is a global food famine looming round the corner, which will bring anything up to 2 billion people seriously to the brink of starvation. The catastrophe is likely to reach us in the next 18 to 24 months. There are various forces at play that will make this almost inevitable.

Whilst more food than ever before is being produced, it does not reach the poorest. Firstly there is a decrease in arable land and water in some of the places where food is already scarce. Deserts are advancing, rainfall patterns and seasons are changing. More and more food is being diverted to biofuels for the North and to feed animals for food for the middle classes of Russia, China, India. More countries that have traditionally exported food (including Vietnam and Thailand) are severely restricting the amount they export. Population is increasing in the poorest countries and more people are moving to the cities, both factors that increase the demand for food. The price of oil, essential both to transport food and in the production of fertilizers, is set to increase. The decline of economic activities in the North - with less FDI, fewer overseas holidays, less expenditure on imported goods, all will reduce the amount of foreign currency available to the South. Aid being diverted to catastrophes such as the Haiti earthquake. The only land that is available to grow the food the world needs is in Africa. Here there is a colossal land grab under way, with countries as varied as South Korea and Kuwait seeking to produce food for their own people and removing millions of acres of land from local people. The poorest of Africa will suffer disproportionately. It is a perfect storm of misery.

I have recently published "*THE ATTACK ON WORLD POVERTY ... back to basics*", a book that explains why all this is happening and suggests some possible remedies. The book has been published in cooperation with Merlin Books, a small and courageous publishers. Mainstream publishers did not seem prepared to publish what they must have feared would be the criticism of the vested interests I attack.

I thought that I should tell things that many people in the aid and development community do not like to address, not because they are not true, but because we all become prisoners of the very systems in which we operate and no one likes to rock the boat. This is true of academics, as it is of aid personnel and

staff of DfID. Whilst I am a keen and active supporter of a more just and fair society, I feel that a lot of the ineffectiveness of aid at present is due to the fact that we are not attacking the true causes – which I see as the lack of economic opportunities – and instead we spend too much on supporting governments and structures. These suit us and generally work in the North, but in most of the South, with very different approaches and contexts, they have no parallel meaning. Aid is an extension of welfare, badly needed to prevent death and starvation, but not a vehicle for development.

I have no grand position in any aid agency or organisation and have no full time academic position, therefore my book will attract too little attention. But I am glad to say that quite a few people whose views I respect, people who are working at the coalface of development, have supported my approach and been supportive of the book

I hope that I can persuade you to ask your library to order a copy of the book. Please have a look at what various people have said on google. If you want to get a copy from me, I shall be happy to write a dedication; you won't get that from Amazon!

**Best wishes,**

**Benny Dembitzer,  
Director, Ethical Events**

**(If you received this in error, please let me know)**

**the book details:**

<b>title</b>	The Attack on World Poverty
<b>author</b>	Benny Dembitzer
<b>publisher</b>	Ethical Events Ltd / Merlin
<b>ISBN</b>	978-1-85425-099-5