

40 Chances: Finding Hope in a Hungry World
The Photography of Howard G. Buffett
December 15, 2020 - March 6, 2021

FAQs for Media Interviews

Tell us about the exhibit.

“40 Chances: Finding Hope in a Hungry World” turns the lens on global hunger and poverty through the photography of philanthropist Howard G. Buffett. The 40 photos in the exhibit chronicle Buffett’s decades-long journey to end world hunger and reveal the underlying connections between hunger, poverty, conflict and lack of opportunity for women. The exhibit also highlights the International Women’s Media Foundation’s Anja Niedringhaus Courage in Photojournalism Award, dedicated to female photographers who risk their lives to cover these important issues around the world.

What does the title “40 Chances” mean?

The title “40 Chances” comes from Howard G. Buffett, who believes that each of us has about 40 years to accomplish our life goals, just as farmers have about 40 growing seasons to improve their harvests. The words are a call to action, encouraging each of us to reflect on how we can make a difference in the world.

Why did the Newseum decide to do an exhibit on world hunger?

Hunger rarely makes headlines, but hunger and malnutrition are the biggest threats to health and education in the world. More people die every year from the effects of hunger than from malaria, AIDS and tuberculosis combined. We felt it was important to highlight the work Howard G. Buffett has done to call attention to these issues. We also wanted to demonstrate the power of photojournalism to raise awareness and bring about change.

How did you decide which photos to include?

Howard G. Buffett has traveled to more than 130 countries in his quest to end world hunger, taking thousands of photos. For this exhibit, we selected 40 of his most powerful images to illustrate the causes and consequences of hunger. The photos are grouped into seven themed sections focusing on hunger, poverty, women, conflict, fear, water and hope.

Is there a particular photo that stands out for you?

Every image tells its own story. One of the most poignant images for me shows a young boy shackled in Senegal. The look of pain in his eyes is unmistakable. He is one of many children who are starving and forced to beg on the streets. If they disobey, they are locked up or beaten. Another 10-year-old boy in Sierra Leone digs for diamonds for 10 hours a day in return for 12 cents and a cup of rice. Many of the people pictured in this exhibit are children and I think that their youth and innocence highlight the horrific injustices they suffer.

What's the connection to Anja Niedringhaus and the International Women's Media Foundation?

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation has been a longtime champion of women journalists in partnership with the International Women's Media Foundation. When Associated Press photographer Anja Niedringhaus was killed in Afghanistan in 2014, Buffett's foundation sponsored an award in her honor to celebrate the courage of female photojournalists around the world covering conflict and war. This exhibit features photos by freelance photographer Heidi Levine, who won the award in 2015 for her photos of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

What do you want people to walk away with from this exhibit?

Howard G. Buffett's photos give faces to the statistics that nearly 800 million people around the world live with chronic hunger. We hope that visitors will walk away from the exhibit with an emotional response and an understanding of how they can help make a difference. We also wanted to call attention to the extraordinary courage of photojournalists around the world who risk their lives to shed light on these important issues.

How can people get involved in Buffett's 40 Chances campaign?

The exhibit includes an interactive kiosk, which highlights several organizations working to make a difference around the world, from Feeding America — the nation's largest domestic hunger relief organization — to the U.N.'s World Food Program. We hope that the messages of these organizations will inspire visitors to get involved in the fight to end world hunger and its causes.

Is the Newseum contributing to these charities as part of the exhibit?

The Newseum is a nonprofit and is not contributing directly to these charities. However, we hope that the exhibit will encourage visitors to examine their own 40 chances and consider supporting these and other charities fighting hunger around the world.

What do you say to criticism that Buffett is using the people in these photos for his cause?

I think that Buffett's track record speaks for itself. Many people with his wealth and his position might sit back and spend their money. But he is devoting the rest of his life and an estimated \$8 billion to fighting world hunger. He works on the ground with farmers, activists, governments and nonprofits, helping people pull themselves out of poverty.

Do you consider Buffett to be a real photojournalist?

While he does not work directly for a news organization, Buffett acts as a photojournalist by publishing his images to call attention to under-reported issues such as hunger and poverty.

Did Buffett pay for the exhibit?

The Howard G. Buffett Foundation's support helped develop the exhibit including the International Women's Media Foundation content.

How much did they give?

We're grateful for the foundation's support, however we don't discuss details of the gift.