



Food and Hunger

Young people on the global stage: their education and their influence

Teachers in Birmingham, Berlin and Madrid have developed some teaching ideas for exploring key global questions. The ideas are aimed at students 11 years old and above, and cover different subjects and abilities. We think they are most useful as a stimulus for teachers working together to develop ideas for their students in their classrooms. We invite you to try the ideas below and share your learning with us.



How can we feed our cities?

And how can we feed our communities? Our countries? Our world?

As the world moves forward from the Millennium Development Goals, the UN's High Level Panel of Eminent Persons have declared that:

"We can be the first generation in human history to end hunger and ensure that every person achieves a basic standard of wellbeing"

Executive Summary of "A New Global Partnership"
[UN, 2013].

With 50% of the world's growing population now living in cities, and increasing the pressure on the world's limited productive land, how can we make sure that everyone is properly fed?

We ask this question at a time when even the richest countries have seen a growth in food banks and families relying on charity to meet this most basic human need.

We could start by looking at the figures for a city. If it takes 1.8 billion calories to feed Birmingham's 1 million people each day, how many calories is that per person? Why do we think the statisticians have used that figure? How many calories are recommended for students of our own age, size and gender? How many calories would be needed each day for our own school?

The website www.worldometers.info offers a range of real time global statistics that students can look at.

One Birmingham school asked, "Can Baskerville school feed itself? What would we need to do if we wanted to grow all our own food? What changes would we need to make? How would we use the land and the buildings? Could we actually do it?"

[This school, for young autistic people, has a Land Based Studies faculty, and pupils grow a lot of food on site].

Activity:

'The most delicious thing in the world.'

This activity explores questions about food and hunger in a creative way, using a North Korean poem. There is a lot of great writing about food, mainly celebratory and focussed on positive aspects. The following poem from the North Korean writer Jang Jin-sung, who recently defected to the West is very different. It will need very careful handling, but it is certainly powerful and memorable.

The poet reads it live [in Korean] on the BBC i-player at www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-27337643 [04:25 onwards]

The most delicious thing in the world

Three months ago my brother said to me
The most delicious thing in the world
Was a warm corn cob.

Two months ago my brother said to me
The most delicious thing in the world
Was a roasted grasshopper.

One month ago my brother said to me
The most delicious thing in the world
Was the dream he ate last night.

If my brother were alive today
What would he say this month, or next,
Is the most delicious thing in the world?

Jang Jin-sung

Discussion point

What might the brother have said, were he still alive?

Activity

Using the same structure as a template, students write their own sequels – this month, or next, as the poem suggests.

Extension work

What is the most delicious thing in the world? This could be explored literally, through tasting unfamiliar foods, discussion, food diaries. What words would we use to describe the most delicious thing?

It could also be explored metaphorically: are there values, sensations, human qualities etc which are more delicious than actual food? This lends itself to Circle Time or a Community of Enquiry.

Teaching challenge

How can we ensure that we use this powerful poem in a way which opens up, rather than closes down, learning? Ensure that it not merely propaganda? How do we help students contextualise it? And how can we use its power, while also encouraging students to look at positive solutions to the very real problem of hunger in the world?

At the UK project launch, we looked at some of the following activities as ways of exploring this key question.

Students interview local farmers and food companies about what they are doing, including the problems and opportunities they face.

What are our own cities doing to meet the demand for food? What standards of nutrition should be used? What food is available within school? Students research local resources, including those of the head teacher, local council and business groups and prepare presentations with their conclusions.

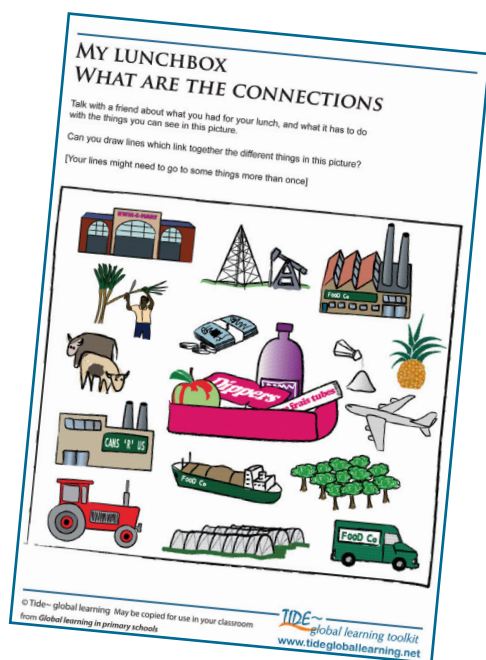
What are the debates about different means of achieving this end [eg local food production versus a globalised economy, biotech versus 'green' food technologies, arguments about ethical trading, tariffs, food miles ...]? Students work in groups, each looking at a different controversial issue around food production, and create posters that share some of the main arguments.

What are the historical trends around food related to health, accessibility and production? How do healthy diets compare across the years? Where can we find reliable information about this?

One school planned an off-timetable day to look at how cities feed themselves. This included:

1. A lunchbox/package activity. Students looked at food packaging. Where have the products come from? What does the packaging say about them? Teachers brought in real food products to start asking questions about. Large world maps were provided so that pupils could link products/ingredients to particular places.

2. A field to plate activity, including looking at ideas about farmers and growers. Students looked at the journey of food. What's involved in getting food from grower to consumer? 'My lunchbox. What are the connections?' [tidegloballearning.net/sites/default/files/uploads/GI%20a.7%20lunchbox.pdf](https://www.tidegloballearning.net/sites/default/files/uploads/GI%20a.7%20lunchbox.pdf) can be used as a stimulus. They looked at images of food producers around the world and compared them with their previous ideas of what a farmer looks like.



3. The most delicious thing in the world [above].

4. Celebrating food ... by firing up a new wood-fuelled oven in the school grounds, and baking breads from around the world.

Taking this further

The following are some ideas that we would like to see developed as part of the project.

Patterns of consumption.

How do we make sense of key statistics, for example those for meat consumption around the world such as chartsbin.com/view/12730 Is this fair or sustainable? Can it be managed more sustainably or fairly?

Who benefits?

Building on the field to plate activity, where does the money go in food production? How does this differ from one product to another, and why? How do we make sense of figures such as those on www.bananalink.org.uk/sites/default/files/documents/BL%20resources/banana_links_poster_2008.pdf

Daily bread

As part of food technology and Science, looking at different bread and flours from around the world, what they are made from and how they are made. This could include opportunities to experiment with the qualities of different grains and materials.

Exploring cultural perspectives on food

A comic article has recently gone viral in China, about the things the British eat. It seems it's potatoes, potatoes, and potatoes. How true is that? What ideas do we have about what people in a variety of communities and countries eat? And how true are they?

Why don't things change?

Despite initiatives on health and nutrition, slum clearances, water and sanitation programmes, many problems including poor diet, environmental health issues still persist. Why, despite the energy and actions of those promoting change, do these issues still exist? As the Expert Panel suggests, can we now find ways around these obstacles?



Guerrilla gardening at El Campo de la Cebada, in the heart of Madrid



Preserving fish by salting at Tanje, The Gambia



Conservation agriculture at Karen C School, Nairobi

'Young people on the global stage: their education and influence' is a three year creative curriculum development project for secondary students.

Project partners are Tide~ global learning and University of Exeter in the UK, FERE-CECA Madrid in Spain, A Rocha [Kenya] in Kenya and TANGO in The Gambia.



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To find out more about the project and for a full list of those involved in it see www.tidegloballearning.net