



Global learning – lenses on the world

Section 4: Food and Hunger

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Food shed questions; the most delicious thing in the world; growing food

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Section 4: Food and hunger

This thematic section shares teaching ideas for work on food and hunger.

“We need to learn more about where food comes from”

- Young People’s Communiqué



Sustainable Development Goal 2 aims to ‘end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.’

As teachers, we have found this a very rewarding theme to work

on, affording as it does opportunities to link very practical hands-on experiences and action to those for deeper learning.

Hunger, food production and sustainability are interconnected. As adults or young people, we cannot comprehend hunger without factoring in food production and the element of sustainability. When we view the three elements as interdependent then we are talking about food security.

The following pages explore the idea of a ‘food shed’ - a concept that, like a watershed, brings all of the processes together involved in food production and consumption.

How can we plan so as to make sure that different subjects offer us diverse perspectives on the issues? For example:

- In Geography, we might map malnutrition and protein consumption worldwide, or look at where our food has come from and some of the human and environmental issues involved;
- In Science, we might look at science-based solutions, such as UN research on whether eating insects offers a sustainable way forward, or debates on GM crops such as ‘golden rice’;
- In Religious Education/Philosophy, we might look at what it means to be ‘starving’; or at ethical questions about what we eat [eg vegetarianism - what is a ‘mind’ and how far are animals essentially different from human

beings? What do philosophers say about this?]; what about religious or cultural taboos on particular foodstuffs?

- In Mathematics we could make calculations based on calorie intake.

Key questions for teachers

- Is it more important to look at malnutrition than hunger as such? That way, we can make connections between poor diet in different places, and related social and economic factors.
- When focusing on hunger, how do we deal appropriately with the question of pity and representations of ‘pictures of starving babies’?
- How can we contextualise questions about hunger and poor diet, including the self-help and mutual assistance measures being put in place by communities all over the world?



Projects on Food and Water at Braeburn School, Nairobi

“Hunger is when your stomach is speaking to you in a loud voice and you can’t answer it back”

- UK Teacher

Food security

Food availability

eg What are the growing seasons? Are there times when key foods become scarce?

Stability of supply and access

eg How could this place feed itself if there was no transport available?



Access to food [physical and economic]

eg How easy is it to grow or get a proper meal? Is good food affordable for families on benefits?

Food utilisation

eg How much food gets wasted or spoiled?
What gets added to it during processing?

*We could consider food security as having four essential elements.
What questions would you ask?*

Downloads and links

- Download: Teaching materials on food and hunger generated by project teachers [PDF]
- Download: Focus on Kenya: Food and hunger statistics [PDF]
- Download: Practical booklet from A Rocha Kenya on their approach to Conservation Agriculture [English only, PDF]
- Video: Defining ‘Punger’ [Poverty and Hunger combined] - Moseley School, UK.
- Video: Compost-making at Karen C School, Nairobi.
- The Global Hunger Index gives some key figures worldwide, much as the poverty and wealth figures did in Section 3. See: <http://ghi.ifpri.org>



Teaching about Food and Hunger

Food shed

How can we feed the world? Including our own communities?

We have found the concept of a 'food shed' really helpful in thinking about food security. A food shed is the geographical area where food is produced and consumed. It is similar to the concept of a watershed: tracking the journey of a substance from its origin to its final destination.

A food shed examines food in its geographical context, for example:

- where is food produced?
- where is the population the food is supplied to?

The food shed concept allows us to examine existing food systems and their impacts on society, the economy and the environment.

We illustrate the food shed idea here by taking maize as an example of one food which has a global impact and reach. This example focuses on the Science and Geography curriculum, with some pointers to a wider cross curricular project. However, we think that food shed is an idea that could be developed a lot further: with other food stuffs, activities, and into other subject areas. How would you run with it?

A maize food shed

As a stimulus to draw out students' prior knowledge, you might use the following:

Picture sources of maize plants and products [familiar and unfamiliar to your local cultures], for example <http://maize.teacherfriendlyguide.org/index.php/what-is-maize/types-and-uses-of-maize-cat/types-and-uses-of-maize>

Follow the things <http://www.followthethings.com/grocery.shtml>





Material on maize in culture, art and music, such as maize collages and other art work, musical instruments using maize plants, the role of maize in classical mayan civilisation [<http://www.exchange-values.org/> offers examples using banana crops]

In Science, you could go on to investigate some products bought locally and containing maize; the nutritional value of maize [eg via food tests]; the place of maize in food chains.



Planning a food shed project

This planning scheme uses the global learning lenses. It could also be adapted for student use. It is available as a download.

 Context / opening for discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify a food for the food shed• Look at whether this food is part of a local or global food system. Briefly describe it.
 Interdependence / critical thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are students connected to the food?• What about other people and other places?
 Diversity of perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider the connections between social, economic and environmental factors.• Consider how to incorporate the perspectives of the people and places involved at different points within the food shed
 Focus on solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What actions will enhance positive impacts and minimise negative ones, throughout the food shed?
Useful links and references	<ul style="list-style-type: none">••

Food shed mapping

As project work, use online mapping tools to build up an interactive map of the maize food shed. Start by identifying maize growing countries, then go on to research the processing of maize, its economic impact. Map journeys of maize around the world and locally. Proportional circle and arrow mapping will help students build up their visualisations. [See for example <http://indiemapper.com/app/learnmore/>].

Impact of maize

What is the impact of the maize food shed: social? economic? Ecological? To explore this, young people build up the 'stories' of a group of key figures who play a part in the food shed. Creating role cards or back-stories could be useful here, for example for:

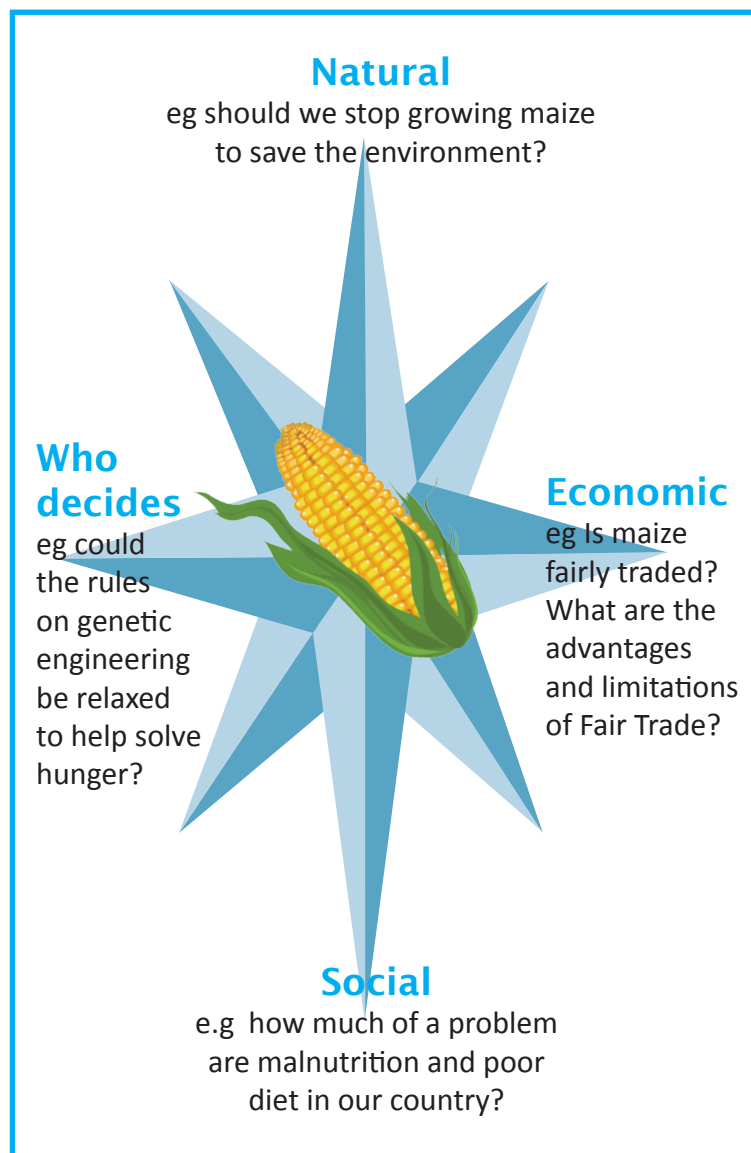
- Small farmer
- Large farmer
- Conservationist
- Processors
- Ministry of Agriculture

To research this students could establish video links with students, conservationists and small farmers in other localities or countries, through intermediaries such as A Rocha, Kenya <http://www.arocha.or.ke/> As a result, they might add in video or audio links to the mapping activity above.

Focus on Solutions

Students explore the impact of the maize food shed that is closest to their own home area, and consider positive options for personal and community action. As they look at potential solutions, they are also invited to explore how these too might impact on the wider food shed, and on hunger and development more broadly. For example, if growing is done locally, how do we set potential environmental benefits against possible reductions in the market for growers in more distant places?

Having researched the key roles, use the development compass rose to organise debate points:



Downloads and links

- Download: Planning sheet for developing your own food shed ideas [PDF, Word]
- Download: The Development Compass Rose - a framework for questioning [PDF]
- Food production - a resource to support debating: <http://www.face-online.org.uk/docman/teaching/debating/download>
- Some ideas on mapping food sheds from Edible Madison: <http://ediblemadison.com/articles/view/foodsheds-part-1-restoring-our-sense-of-place/full>

Food and Hunger: activities

Food shed extension questions



We think that there are a lot of ways in which you could build on a food shed enquiry. The following are just a few enquiry questions for potential further exploration:

- Why is cheaper food usually less nutritious?
- Is there local hunger? What are the solutions?
- Can we map a food shed of the school canteen?
- Does the local market or supermarket have an impact on the food shed?
- Can we grow food locally to feed the school or community?

The most delicious thing in the world



[English/Literature/RE/PSHE].

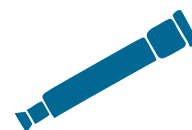
There is a lot of great food literature around, much of it celebratory and positive. This activity uses a North Korean poem, 'The most delicious thing in the world,' by Jang Jin-sung, which is very different. It will need careful handling, so as to open up [rather than close down] learning, but it is certainly powerful and memorable.

What might the brother have said, were he still alive? Students write their own sequels - this month, or next, as the poem, suggests - using the structure of the poem as a template. They could go on to discuss: 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.

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

Growing food

[Agriculture and Land-Based Studies / Science].



In their communiqué [Section 5], young people from across the project remind us that one way to work towards food security is "to develop and implement school and community approaches that provide food locally." Downloadable materials include resources from several such food growing projects, which will help you to start your own. Such projects were enthusiastically taken up by young people in all the participating countries.

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



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

"We need to learn more about where food comes from, how we can produce our own food, and take action to improve food distribution locally and globally."

- Young People's Communiqué

A few other ideas

Looking at key terms around hunger: what are the UN recommendations for calorific consumption? Who consumes what and where? Can we identify patterns?

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?"*

Can we plan a school garden with food security in mind? What might its local and global impacts be? Investigate farmers and farming: how far do they confirm to our stereotypes [eg the majority of the world's farmers are women in the global South]?

Can we find local examples of guerrilla gardens, where people have reclaimed underused urban land for food production? What are the rules about such projects, and how would you set them up?

Students looked at the journey of food. What's

involved in getting food from grower to consumer? They could use the downloadable resource 'My lunchbox. What are the connections?' as a stimulus: <http://tidegloballearning.net/sites/default/files/uploads/GI%20a.7%20lunchbox.pdf>

Downloads and links

- Download: Teaching materials which evaluate the different technologies available for fish preservation in Tanje fishing village, The Gambia [PDF]
- Download: Jang Jin-sung's poem is part of teaching materials which explore issues about hunger and food [PDF]
- The Tide~/FACE resource 'Food and farming, local and global' offers materials and images for teaching about the issues. Available from www.tidegloballearning.net