

The Global Food Crisis

Assembly for World Food Day – October 16.

Age Range 7-11

Introduction

This assembly is intended to raise learners' awareness of the extent of the Global Food Crisis and engage them to take action to alleviate hunger.

World Food Day is observed on October 16 in more than 150 countries. It celebrates the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations on this date in 1945.

The right to food was recognized as a basic human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. However many of the world's poor still go hungry. Steep rises in the price of food are currently seriously exacerbating this situation. This assembly examines the reasons for this and what can be done.

Timing

The assembly should take 15 minutes and includes learner participation.

Preparation

Learners present the assembly using drama. This will require prior discussion and rehearsal.

The props required are:

- A shopping basket containing everyday food items the learners are familiar with



- Two plates of uncooked rice – the rice on one plate should be approximately double the volume of the rice on the other.

For example:



- These images are available with the online learning resources for use as PowerPoint slides or OHPs if desired.

Follow up

There are opportunities to follow up the assembly through taking action and through classroom learning. These are outlined at the end of the assembly.

What to do

1. Learners make a brief presentation about the price of food in the UK. They discuss and explain how the price of the items in the basket has gone up in the last year and the impact this has on families.

Key point: An average family in the UK earns £600 per week. How are they affected if the price of the items in the basket goes up from £60 to £70.

(Figures are based on UK averages)

2. Learners make a brief presentation about the price of food in a developing country (the example used is Cambodia). The slide illustrates the amount of rice a farm worker's wages could buy in July 2007 on the right and July 2008 on the left.

Key point: A farm worker in Cambodia may earn £3 per week. How is he or she affected if the price of the rice required to feed the family rises from £2.40 to £4.80

(Figures based on Oxfam research)

Comparing the two scenarios could be used to provoke discussion.

- Learners review the causes of the price rises affecting people in all countries of the world. Teachers and learners could find suitable images from the internet to support this part of the presentation as part of their planning. Alternatively images from Oxfam's archive are provided below.

Key points

Three main causes of the rising price of food for everyone in the world are as follows. All three points could be expanded through discussion, research and local examples the learners have knowledge and experience of.

Rising Oil Prices – oil and petrol are becoming much more expensive. Farmers depend on oil for farm machinery and for transporting food to the shops. Sometimes food is transported around the world from the farm to the shops. When oil and petrol are more expensive the price of food rises.



Petrol station in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Rising population – the world's population is 6.7 billion people and it's getting bigger. All these people require food and it's difficult to make sure that there's enough food to go round. When this happens the price of food goes up.



Mexico City

Climate change and bad weather mean that farmers are not able to harvest all the food they plant. Sometimes there is too much rain and the fields even flood. Other times it's too dry. When farmers cannot harvest all their crops there is not enough food to sell in the shops. The price of food goes up.



Nepal 2007

4. Take action ([*taken from Oxfam's '4-a-week' campaign*](#) - a poster for this campaign is available with the online learning resources).

Here are four actions learners could take and/or discuss with their families. They will help reduce their own families' food bills and help support the incomes of the poor in developing countries who are struggling to afford food.

Buy one more Fairtrade product and put more money in farmers' pockets in the developing world. Even though they're farmers they still have to buy food to feed their families.

Buy one more food product from a developing country (eg: Kenyan green beans). The farmer who grows it depends on us buying his crop so he can afford his own food shopping.

Throw one less food item away. Don't waste food. It has cost your family money. So just buy what you need. And if we waste less there is more food to go around for everyone.

Eat one less portion of meat. The animals we eat have to eat a lot of grain first. It takes 7kg of grain to produce just 1kg of meat. So going veggie one day a week means there's more grain left over to feed people in developing countries.

Follow up

The message and content of the assembly could be followed up through classwork.

For example images used in the assembly could be pasted in the centre of a large sheet of plain paper and the learners asked to recall and brainstorm and explain impacts, causes and personal actions relating to the Global Food Crisis.

Learners could complete additional research and/or select alternative images in preparation for their own presentations about the Global Food Crisis.

The topic could be re-visited in the future to review how the Global Food Crisis is developing over time.